

THE NEW CREATION

A publication of the Christian Discipling Ministries International (CDMI)

A magazine published bimonthly and dedicated to the spiritual welfare of God's New Creation on earth.

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NOTE: The thoughts presented in the articles are those of the writer and are not necessarily totally endorsed by the New Creation Staff. *“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* – 2 Timothy 2:15.
“Prove ALL things and hold fast to what is good.” – 1 Thess. 5:21.

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Assembling Together



Summer is usually the convention season, and this year, summer is no exception. My wife and I recently returned from a convention in Moscow, Idaho. The natives are sensitive to the pronunciation. It is Mos-coh, not Mos-cow. Tell one you are going to the latter and his face will drop. I had never heard of Moscow, Idaho before, but this year the Bible Students General Convention was held at the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho. Surprisingly, the attendance was very good, 393 attended. The convention went for a week, and we slept and ate together on the campus, staying in dormitory college rooms. There were discourses, and panel discussions, and testimony meetings. My favorite is the testimony meeting. I get to hear of the experiences of my brethren - their trials as well as blessings, and then I identify with their experiences and think about how the Lord is leading me.

As I am writing this, at the very end of July, I realize that in another week there will be another conference, this time at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. Many will come from all over, especially from the east coast since that is where the conference is located, even as many Canadians came to the General Convention up in the Northwest. When you read this, of course, the conference at Gordon College will be over. Right now, it is from the perspective of another week ahead. I am sure that many of you would find attending the Gordon College Conference a great blessing in your Christian walk, the same blessing as received by those attending the General Convention of Bible Students, and I would dare say the blessing is wherever there are conventions. The gathering of brethren of like precious faith develops in one another a renewed yearning to follow our Lord and be faithful unto him.

The important thing is not to isolate yourself from your brethren and think that because they believe a little different from you, I should not go there. There are fundamentals on which we all must agree: our relationship to God through Jesus Christ and his sacrifice, our commitment or consecration to do God's will, even sacrificially, the development of the church now for the blessing of the world later, and the kingdom which will bring light and life to everyman that will at that time accept of the free grace of God in Christ Jesus and be restored from Adamic condemnation to everlasting life. Other matters seem to take a lesser importance in our relationships. However you see it, don't isolate yourself. Associate with your brethren in the fellowship of a conference if you can, or by any other means. The Lord has designed it such that we need one another, both in support and encouragement, in order to develop the Christ-like character that can be rewarded with the heavenly nature. *"Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."* Heb. 10:24,25

R. Whittaker

Labor Day

When we consider our wonderful country with its God-given beauty and abundance, we should be moved, knowing in our hearts that we are blessed. When we consider our nation's holidays and remembrances like Labor Day, and the order of things, even the relative civility we enjoy, and our great accomplishments like landing a vehicle on Mars that is 33.9 million miles away, these all are a result of man's abilities working together in their daily labor, celebrated by Labor Day. But more than this, it is a testament that man was created a *"little lower than the angels,"* (Hebrews 2:7) as also evidenced by what God, our Creator, testified to in Genesis 11:6 concerning a "united" people, saying *".....nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do."*

Although there is much to be frowned upon in a world fraught with evil and great suffering, the Lord has put governments and their leaders in charge over us to help keep order and punish law breakers (1Peter 2:13-14; Hebrews 13:7). We should also be thankful not only for this, but what this tells us, for all nations are subject to the Lord, just as every living soul on the planet (Matthew 10:29). This understanding should always cause us to "count our blessings" and as the hymn says, "name them one by one", being ever mindful of what God has done for us. Our hearts should be thankful, even in the adversity that God permits, which helps us to grow in humility, thereby understanding our dependence on the Lord for our very existence. Job who suffered greatly, afterwards expressed, *"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye sees Thee."* (Job 42:5) How many today have eyes to see the Lord?

Much of what is expressed above applies to physical blessings...the fruits of our physical labors, gathered by not being "sluggards," but following the example of the hard-working ant (Pr. 6:6). Labor Day, held on September 2nd, honors hard-working Americans, who too often, are motivated by self-interest and the benefits of their labors that are

embodied in the self-interest of Capitalism. Although hard work is honorable, the focus of mankind and each of us individually should not rest on self and the material, but rather our desire to be pleasing and faithful to God. Our labor and focus should be on the two great commandments that Jesus, our Lord and Savior, gave us in Mark 12:30-34:

*“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, **Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.**”*

So what is this Kingdom of God? Concerning what our labors should focus on, Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:33, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* So our labor should be on doing the will of God.

Romans 14:17 tells us, *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”* We must be led by the Holy Spirit to do the will of God by loving our neighbor as our self as the "Good Samaritan" did, thereby demonstrating our love for God. Listen to the admonition of Eph 4:28, *“Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, **that he may have to give to him that needeth.**”* If this verse does not escape us, we will indeed as Jesus said be seeking the Kingdom of God, and will be blessed, not only in this time, but in the age to come.

Remember Cornelius, *"whose prayers and alms went up for a memorial before God,"* (Acts 10:4) and Job, described by God, *"that there was none like him on the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil."*

Remember what Job expressed concerning why he was blessed in Job 29:12-16: *"Because I delivered the poor that cried for help, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out."*

With our life to soon disappear as a vapor, let us first seek the Kingdom of God, that our labors be not in vain!

J DiCesare

An Important Announcement to our Readers

CDMI has established a dedicated phone line for any who wish to contact us and speak with a live person. If you call and get voice mail, please leave a message with your phone number for a call back. Our phone number is manned by a volunteer and is ready and waiting for your inquiries.

CDMI phone line: **239-237-6319**

My Yoke Is Kindly and Light

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30 NRSV.

The compelling invitation set forth above, must be balanced by what Jesus says elsewhere regarding the demands placed on one who becomes His disciple. For example, He also said, *“Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. . So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions”* (Luke 14:25-33 NRSV).

How can the principle of Christian discipleship being “easy” and “light” be reconciled with the *heavy* demand of that discipleship presented in Luke? *The answer turns on the matter of burden bearing and our attitudes towards such.* As humans, we each carry heavy burdens due to our personal imperfections and the quality of life we live. It is not so much the circumstances we find ourselves in but how we evaluate those conditions that determine the weight of burdens we bear. Burdens are increased or lessened by the spirit we possess. If we live out the spirit of resentment, anger, selfishness, envy, pride, self-pity and other such negative and hurtful attitudes, life will be a heavy burden no matter what the general quality of our circumstances may be. On the other hand, if our mind and heart are dominated by the spirit of gratitude, generosity, forgiveness, patience, appreciation, kindness and mercy, life’s burdens will be decidedly lessened.

Jesus knew, and true disciples experience, the transforming power of God’s Holy Spirit acting upon the heart and mind. *It is within this transforming experience that the disciple undergoes the removal of those heavy burdens that rob him or her of contentment, joy and hope.* Discipleship, even though it demands *all* of us in every way, thus becomes something both desirable and rewarding. Those who have experienced and are

experiencing God's Spirit within them causes them "*both to will and to work for his good pleasure*" (Phil. 2:13). Such ones experience the lifting of burdens caused by worldly (sinful) thinking. The new burdens of discipleship are truly light in comparison because they are viewed as precious opportunities to show gratitude to God and faithfulness to Jesus as Lord.

This new life in which the Spirit of God ultimately dominates every thought and action is the realm of reality in which the disciple experiences peace and joy. It is not that life's difficulties are removed, but rather that they are viewed from a different perspective—a perspective made possible by the Spirit of God. When it becomes *natural* to put the interest of others ahead of one's self; when it becomes *natural* to love God and Christ more than any other human relationship; then, and only then, will we understand what Jesus meant when He said, "*my yoke is easy, and my burden light.*"

R. Frye

A Perfect Trust

O blessed peace of a perfect trust, my loving God in Thee;
Unwavering faith, that never doubts Thou chooseth best for me.

Best, though my plans be all upset; Best, though the way be rough;
Best, though mine earthly store be scant; In Thee I have enough.

Best, though my health and strength be gone, though weary days be
mine. Shut out from much that others have; Not my will, Lord, but
Thine!

And even though disappointments come, They too, are best for me,
To wean me from a clam'ring world, and lead me nearer Thee.

O blessed peace of a perfect trust that looks away from all;
That sees Thy hand in everything, In great events and small;

That hears Thy voice – a Father's voice – directing for the best:--
O blessed peace of a perfect trust, a heart with Thee at rest!

Poems of Dawn

In My Father's House

Part 2

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.
John 14:2-3

(This is the concluding part of the article begun in the July/Aug NC. It continues a consideration of the Jewish marriage customs and the spiritual lessons there pictured.)

The father had total control of when to go for the bride. The son would never think of making a move to go for his bride without his father's permission. When the house was almost finished the son might go to him and say, "Is it time yet?" Dad would say, "Not yet, son!" It usually took about a year but one evening the father would say, "Son we are ready. Go get your bride." A wedding party would be formed. The members of the wedding party would accompany the groom through the narrow streets, bearing flaming torches. The groom would wear particularly splendid clothing. Many times he would wear a crown. He would be dazzling in his appearance. The bride was never told exactly when the wedding party was coming. So she had to be ready. During the year she had been busy learning domestic skills and accumulating supplies she would need. When the time drew near her female friends would gather to help her. They took part in the bathing, dressing, and perfuming of the bride. She had to be ready to go at a moment's notice. When all was in readiness they waited with her. They talked, laughed, and socialized. As the hours grew late they often grew sleepy and sometimes went to sleep. Jesus' parable of the 10 virgins is based on this time of waiting for the bridegroom.

As the wedding party came into hearing distance of the bride's house, a shofar was blown. The notes of the ancient ram's horn announced to the bride and her party that the groom was coming. The girls began to fill and trim the lamps they

would carry in the procession. The bride was lifted on a chair and carried back to the insula. In a ceremony that sounds strange to our Western ears, the bride and groom went into the new house and consummated their physical relationship. The friend of the groom stood by the door and listened for the groom's announcement of its completion. Then the friend of the bridegroom announced this to the guests who began a 7-day wedding celebration.

Edersheim relates some interesting comments about the woman's creation...“God had not formed woman out of the head, lest she should become proud; nor out of the eye, lest she should lust; nor out of the ear, lest she should be curious; nor out of the mouth, lest she should be talkative; nor out of the heart, lest she should be jealous; nor out of the hand, lest she should be covetous; nor out of the foot, lest she be a busybody; but out of the rib, which was always covered. Modesty was therefore a prime quality.”

Quickly a few applications for us...Our bridegroom has come to ask us to enter into betrothal with him. Do you remember what Christ said to the disciples at the last supper? “This cup is the new covenant in my blood.” As those shocked men heard him say that, they realized that he was proposing to them! Of course we understand that he was proposing to the church. The Son of God, the ruler of the universe wants us to be his bride! And unlike the Jewish groom who usually didn't have to pay the price of the covenant, our bridegroom knew full well the awful price he would pay at Gethsemane and Calvary. And even with this knowledge His love for us was so strong that he offered the cup signifying his love for us. And did you know that every time we take the cup of the Lord's table we are saying to Christ, “I love you; I give myself to you; My life will be lived for you alone”? How are we doing at keeping that promise?

How we need to remember the image of the closeness and community of the insula. I think sometimes so many of us are insulated instead of connected to our brothers and sisters in the

church. Many times we don't reach out to help those who are hurting. We are too proud to admit we have a need. Sometimes we are arrogant toward those who express their needs to us. It's as if sometimes we feel it isn't very spiritual to express our needs and struggles.

When we act in this way we short circuit God's blessing which he intends for us to receive from each other in the community of the church. The scriptures are full of commands to share each other's burdens, bear each other's loads and show our love and concern for each other. We are told to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. But sometimes there is just a formal coolness in our relationships with each other. Sometimes we aren't even nice to each other.

An anonymous child prayed, "Lord make the bad people good and the good people nice." Someone has commented on that prayer, "I think we all empathize with that prayer. So often it seems that being religious has a souring effect. We all know people who are undeniably "good" in the sense that they are moral, honest, upright and truthful, but so often they are cold, rigid and unpleasant to be with, not nice at all." Christ said that the world will know us by the love we have for each other. It is amazing to me how glibly some Christians can rationalize the plain commands of Scripture. We know we are commanded to love each other "but" there is always a reason why it doesn't apply to us. In our homes and in our church fellowship we need to be known for our love.

How many blessings do we as a congregation miss because sometimes we don't really act like we are each other's brothers and sisters? The members of the insula were loyal to each other, supported each other, were transparent with each other and defended each other. How we need to learn the lesson of showing genuine Godlike agape love for each other!

Remember it was the Jewish father who controlled when the son would go to get the bride. Do you remember that the Bible

says — “...no one but the father knows the day or the hour when the Son of Man will come”? Let's be sure we are ready.

Remember the friend of the bridegroom who was responsible for arranging the details of the betrothal, dowry and communication between the couple. Our friend of the bridegroom is the Holy Spirit. We are betrothed to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is responsible for helping us to communicate while we are apart. Scripture says it helps us with groanings that cannot be uttered. The friend of the bridegroom was a helper. He attended to details that were necessary. The Holy Spirit is our helper. It comes alongside of us and gives us direction, correction and conviction. It is our divine helper. It will be with us 'til we are safely with our bridegroom.

Remember how hard the young man worked while he was preparing the house? And how diligent the young lady was to learn and obtain the things she would need? What a lesson for us to “occupy 'til he comes”. Remember how urgent the business of proposal was. The young man and his party even refused food until the business had been transacted. How we need to keep a grip on proper priorities during our Christian walk. There are so many things, and so much stuff competing for our time. We need to make our living for Christ, our remaining true to him, our obedience to him, the number one issue in our lives.

Just like all were invited, aren't you glad that the gospel invitation is for whosoever will? Our precious bridegroom has provided salvation for the whole world but only if we accept it and remain faithful to him. What a great insult it is to our precious Savior if we reject that salvation.

Just like the Jewish bride and groom were usually very young we need to remember that Christ will receive more honor from a young life lived fully for him throughout a lifetime than from an old person accepting salvation shortly before their death. Salvation can happen at any age, but statistics tell us that it is very unlikely for a person to be saved in older life. How

this should challenge young people to give their life to Christ and live for him while still young.

There was a great stress placed on faithfulness and chastity for the bride-to be. She would be separated from her beloved for long periods of time. There may be other young men who tried to entice her to sin. But she was required to be faithful. She kept herself pure for her bridegroom alone. When she heard the shofar sounding on the wedding night, she could look forward with joy to her bridegroom's coming. We are waiting for our bridegroom. He is expecting us to remain pure in our devotion to him. We need to be sure we don't allow other interests and concerns to crowd out our love and devotion for our beloved. We need to cultivate the relationship with Christ through communion and fellowship with him.

Remember the "insula's" concern for the reputation of the bride. Let's be careful that we conduct our lives in such a way that they will never bring dishonor to the household of faith. It is so simple for us to undo years of witnessing by a small amount of inconsistent, unholy behavior. We need to guard against deeds that would bring dishonor to the church we are part of. How we need to guard our thoughts, deeds, and attitudes in order that those around us will see Christ and Him crucified.

And of course, our bridegroom has gone back to his father's house to prepare a place for us. John tells us in Rev. 19 that his eyes will be as a flame of fire. On his head will be many crowns. He will be clothed with a vesture dipped in blood. His attendants will be clothed in fine linen white and clean. And out of his mouth will go a sharp sword. He hasn't told us when he is coming back for us, but he expects us to be busy working for him 'til he comes. And someday soon, when his Father says, "OK son, go get your bride", he will come to take us to his Father's "insula". He will blow the trumpet and carry us triumphantly home.

Do you love him? Have you told him today?

D. Gorham

To Choose or Not to Choose?

What to choose is a question with which all people will at one time or other be confronted. Life is made up of myriad choices. Some are easy to make while some are life changing. Many times stepping out of our comfort zone is required of us in making a decision. If we decide to step out, uncertainty is present and there is always the potential for failure. That possibility, and feeling inadequate for the task, often brings discouragement. Thus, the choice is made to play it safe and not take the risk, allowing the opportunity to pass by perhaps never to present itself again.

As Christians, we are presented daily with opportunities to make choices. When we are presented with doing the will of God, it is better to run the risk of not doing the task perfectly than to not do it at all. This is where trusting the Lord comes in, which will play a most important part towards achieving the task at hand. God is more concerned with our obedience and faithfulness in doing His will than He is our success.

For even our failures can offer us a positive learning lesson, and be a stepping-stone in our climb towards reaching our goal. Sometimes we may experience failure because of our own self-confidence in taking what seemed to us the right way without seeking the Lord's direction in prayer. We will never go wrong if we sincerely ask the Lord to direct our path. In fact, Psalms 119:35 admonishes us to direct our steps *according to the Word of God*.

Choosing what seems right for our earthly welfare may not always be a wise choice. This is especially so when we leave the choice up to our natural reasoning and do not take the time to consult God's will on the matter.

An experience Abraham had along this line comes to mind. We read in the 12th chapter of Genesis, verse 1, "The LORD had said to Abram, *"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."* Abram began his journey and in verse 8, we find Him pitching his tent between Bethel and Ai; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called on the Name of the Lord. He sets out again on his journey, but in

verse 10, Abram, in evaluating the conditions confronting him, makes what would seem to be a wise, common-sense choice.

Verse 10 reads, *“Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe.”* But it should be noted that this decision was made without consulting the Lord. In verses 11-13 Abram instructs Sarai to tell the Egyptians that she was his sister and not his wife (a half-truth). Sarai was very beautiful and Abram feared that they would kill him and take her. In verses 14-20 the story continues: Sarai went along with the deception and Pharaoh appropriated her into his harem.

Abram was treated well, being given sheep, cattle, donkeys, menservants and maidservants. Hagar, we believe, being one of the latter. Because Pharaoh took Sarai, God brought serious diseases on the Egyptians. Pharaoh somehow knew that Abram had brought this trouble upon him and his people and on finding out that Sarai was Abram’s wife, he returns her to him and expels Abram from Egypt.

Genesis 13:1-2 goes on to say, *“So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.”* Though he had profited materially during this deception, future accounts show that they brought about trouble between his herdsmen and his nephew Lot’s herdsmen, and they had to agree to part and go their separate ways.

Later on, Hagar was to be such a source of contention in the family unit that at one point she was sent away into the wilderness to fend for herself and her son Ishmael. The problem between Sarai, Hagar and Abram was caused by a decision suggested by Sarai to Abram to have Hagar bear a son for them. They were impatient thinking that the promised seed could come by this means, for Sarai was barren. God was not consulted in this decision either. The lesson is obvious: leave God out of the picture and trouble will probably be right around the corner.

Returning to Genesis 13:3-4, it reads, *“From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier, and where*

he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.”

It should be noted that nowhere in the context of this experience in this self-appointed detour, does it say that Abram communicated with God, nor does it say that God communicated with Abram. He was totally on his own and reaped the results of his choice. Another thing we should note, is that Abram, after all this time, had now returned to the very point where he had chosen to go down to Egypt. He had made absolutely no progress in his journey from the time of that decision.

Although it doesn't say so, Abram probably had come to realize, that his choice was not what it should have been. Now, for the first time since his detour, Abram calls on the Name of the Lord. After this he once again allows the Lord to lead him on his journey.

As we journey towards our heavenly Canaan, let us learn from these experiences of Abraham. Let us never make choices without first consulting the Lord in our decisions, for if we do, the results more than likely will curtail the progress of our Christian walk.

Let our decisions be always as strong and firm as was Joshua whose choice destined him to be a great leader in Israel. Joshua 24:15 reads, *“But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. **But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.**”*

May we always choose to be directed by God's indwelling Holy Spirit to the end that we may serve Him faithfully and to the Praise of His Glory.

E. Weeks

Spiritual success requires consecration without reservation.

Being Overwhelmed by the Word of God

“Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness” (Jeremiah 23:9 KJV).

The anthological reading of the Scriptures is easy for everyone: but it does not honor the Bible that we read. If badly used, this method becomes harmful because **the verse taken out of context becomes a pretext**. I heard preaching on this verse to justify religious exuberance, but the experience of Jeremiah must be contextualized, to benefit fully from it.

It would be wrong to say that an enthusiastic, emotional Bible reading corresponds to what the prophet lived. Jeremiah addressed a strong rebuke against false prophets. It is for this reason that his heart is broken! I was struck by the prophet's reference to the heart.

Elsewhere, he was somewhat pessimistic about this topic: *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”* (Jeremiah 17:9 KJV). Is there a contradiction in Jeremiah? Not at all. Here we must contextualise what he wrote: The Hebrew word *Leb* means the heart as the inner man, therefore the will. When he speaks of his own heart, Jeremiah makes it clear that it is in harmony with God. The Prophet did not write that his heart is like that of others, so the believer should not understand his heart as perpetually corrupt. The goal of every believer is the changing of his/her heart through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. If we believe that the Holy Spirit has been poured out into our hearts (Romans 5: 5), then there can be no pessimism about our new life in Christ.

The holy words involving Jeremiah were not the complete written Bible we possess today. They were oracles of God transmitted to him, called to be spokesman of the Lord. Studying the life of this prophet does not leave the reader indifferent: Jeremiah was a man of God **unpopular for standing for truth**. And this condition **is the same** for the preachers of the Gospel: *“For do I now persuade men, or God?”*

or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10 KJV).

That of being a prophet was not an easy life, and I am not referring only to their unpopularity in the world but also as to the particularity of their experience with God: *“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations”* (Jeremiah 1:5 KJV). When I read this declaration of God to Jeremiah, I believe the evidence points to the ideal that our vocation is an inner prompting from an external source, namely, God Himself. We cannot create it for ourselves.

The life of the prophets is addressed to everyone, but it is not for everyone.

Nothing that I have shared with you here is intended to discourage believers from being passionate about the Word of God. But I conclude with this exhortation: *“Rather than being drunk with wine, rather, let us be filled with the Holy Spirit”*. (Ephesians 5:18)

M. Soranno

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth. John 18:37

It was our Lord’s faithfulness to the Truth that brought upon Him the opposition of those who were blinded by the adversary. It was His witness to the Truth that cost Him His life, and it was the giving of His life in defense of the Truth that constituted the redemption price. Similarly all of the Lord’s followers are to bear witness to the Truth – the truth in respect to God’s character and plan. It is such witness to the Truth that is to cost all the true followers of Jesus their lives in presenting themselves living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God through Christ Jesus. Let each one who hopes to be a joint-heir with the Prince of Life in the Kingdom witness to the Truth – a good confession respecting the Kingdom, its foundation and ultimate superstructure in glory.

Daily Heavenly Manna

The Shout of Victory

At the end of His three and half year ministry of love and obedience to *"the will of my Father"*, after the final 12 hours of excruciating physical, emotional, spiritual pain and suffering, as His life ebbed away on Calvary's cross, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ spoke three words before expiring: ***"It is finished."*** What was finished? Surely His life on earth was over, poured out as a sacrifice just as He said He would do. Was this a final resignation to death? It may well have appeared that way to those watching at the time. This man, beaten to a pulp, sentenced to death, hanging on a cross, sucks in His final breath and in apparent relief, He gives up His Life with *"It is finished."*

Did anyone there, hear the greatest shout of victory in the history of mankind? Do we hear it now? **"It is finished!"** Adam suffered the greatest defeat in human history with a single act of disobedience, thereby putting all mankind under the death sentence. Here, we have Jesus Christ, the Righteous, finishing His perfect life of obedience to the will of the Father and handing that perfect life over as the complete ransom-price to purchase back all mankind from the curse of sin and death. *"For as in Adam all die, even so, in Christ shall all be made alive"* (1 Corinthians 15:22). *"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men"* (1 Timothy 2:5, 6). *"Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all"* (Romans 5:18).

Throughout the history of mankind, there have been many shouts of victory. Often times the shout of victory precludes the massive celebration of those on the side of the victor along with the gloom and despair of those on the side of the defeated. However, those that never hear the shout of victory, that are unaware that the victory has been won, do not know that they have been redeemed and set free, and thus continue to live in captivity. The words *"It is finished"* were heard and recorded from Calvary but only Jesus knew it was the shout of victory *for all mankind*. Satan assumed that it was his victory. Yet, three days later, when the grave could hold Him no longer and God raised Jesus from the dead, Satan's defeat and future was sealed.

The realization that it was a “*shout of victory*” for Jesus and for man was not heard with the ear of understanding by any until Pentecost. After the Holy Spirit of God came down, Peter announced to the crowd and the world, “*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ....Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’*” (Acts 2:36-39) One day, that “*shout of victory*” will be heard and understood by all mankind, and they will have eternity to relish in the Victory of the One who is “both Lord and Christ.” Until then, the world goes on as captives, hoping for a future day when things will be better than now. They know not what those things will be that they wait for, but the Apostle Paul does. In Romans 8:19-21, he states plainly that they are *waiting “in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed”* so that they themselves will be liberated from bondage and decay and brought into “*the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.*” They continue in bondage since they have not heard (understood) the shout of victory: “**It is finished!**”

However, “*for all whom the Lord our God will call*” the shout of victory has become loud and clear, and the celebration has begun. No longer does the fear of sin and death hold mastery over our thoughts and deeds. Christ has won the victory. We have been redeemed and set free. No longer are we slaves of sin but freed to serve the Living God. We have been freed and given the power to comprehend and do the perfect will of God. Have you heard the shout of victory? Have you joined in the celebration? For two thousand years, one by one, individuals have heard the shout of victory and have entered the kingdom of God, joining in the celebration. Read and pray, and you too will hear the greatest shout of victory the world has yet to hear, spoken by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ: “**It is finished!**”

B. Blake

“*They will proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn, for **He has done it.*** (In Hebrew: ***It is finished!***) Psalms 22:31

The Fullness of Christ

Eph. 4:13 shows what is the purpose, scope, and goal of every Christian, not just some of them; not just the local leadership; not just the older brethren, but ALL of them! It reads, “*Till we ALL come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!*” There is no room in this verse to presume this does not address you and me personally. It does! Very definitely. Very clearly.

The first criterion is too often used to disqualify the rest of the criteria. The “*unity of the faith*” is often put as meaning primarily, or even solely a unity of agreement of the plan of God. While that is also a good goal, it is not the sole meaning of “*faith*,” nor even the prime meaning in this context. For in this verse we see it specifically addresses a much more personal cause. There are three more written criteria, and each of them is really a reiteration of the same critical criterion of *attaining to the goal of the full character likeness of Christ*. That such is the “*unity of faith*” must be understood here.

The first goal criterion is “*the knowledge of the Son of God,*” that is, the knowledge necessary for each to begin to learn and continue to apply in their own lives through faithful living, so that each one is constantly putting clearly before themselves the next goal they need to attain, along with an ever clarifying view of the final goal to be attained, *that of full Christ-likeness*. And the daily work is to turn the early knowledge to deeper understanding, and begin applying it in the daily life so it becomes profitable wisdom, and finally ingrained habit of living as Christ would live in our own daily circumstances.

The second goal criterion is “*to a perfect man.*” While Adam was created without sin, he never reached a perfected state where he could no longer sin. Jesus alone attained to this as a perfect man! And note this verse lists all four points as “*till we come to.*” These are not given to us as something already perfected, but something that we live in, and grow in, guided by

the Holy Spirit, while faithfully applying each step of understanding till, finally, finally we “*come to*” that stature of the perfect man, the character likeness of Christ.

The third goal criterion is “*the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*” Can anyone doubt what this must mean? I think not. But can anyone understand and appreciate all that it must mean? I think not also. While we can limitedly imagine the perfection that is Christ, we have no thoughts or words to describe it fully. Yet, seeing in this verse that such is to be our goal, we can each enter into this process in full “*unity of faith,*” knowing that if faithful to the Spirit that leads us, in the providence that God gives us, we will indeed all arrive at that goal. Only in time will we grow into more maturity, understanding, and wisdom that will let us begin to describe that goal.

Maturing in Christ is not something for us to use to point out to others what their needs are, but for each of us to look to ourselves and see how well and how diligently we are living up to these responsibilities in our own life. Can we do this all on our own without encouragement and help? No! But are we personally responsible for attaining to the goal? Yes! With the help and encouragement of the brethren, the Holy Spirit leads us to the understanding and wisdom we need to attain each step of progress, but it is up to us to make the decision to take that step and to apply it and enforce it in our lives.

In Eph. 4:11, just two verses earlier, we read, “*He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.*” He gave all these that each would fulfill their task of responsibility in bringing to our attention that which each was gifted to do for us. In verse 12, we read of their responsibilities, “*for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*” We are each to be “*equipped*” by these servants so that we will be prepared in time to also enter the “*ministry*” and do our own work there in maturing others! Through all of this, the body of Christ is “*edified,*” that is, built up as we have been considering.

If we look beyond verse 13 in this context to verses 14, 15, and 16, we find the same strong and clear theme continues. Verse 14 tells us that we should no longer be children, unstable and undeveloped in our faith so that we could be tricked or deceived by men. We are to grow up to full perfection in Christ. Verse 15 tells us to speak the truth in love; speak what the Spirit reveals to us and speak it in love, so that it can be received by each as God's blessed encouragement for building them up; for agape love is God's perfect will for each one. How wonderful for us to be used to bring His perfect love to others.

Verse 16 speaks of how the body is to work together with all its parts doing their share to bring about the growth, the edifying of itself in the very love that each is trying to bring to the other. In this, we see the whole body growing to share in the fullness of Christ.

As the body of Christ has proceeded through the centuries, it is to have taken babes in Christ and matured them to enter the ministry to help others to mature. So it is to have been a continuing cycle of each entering the walk, being built up, and then entering the ministry to build up others. NONE are to be in the walk to control others, or to develop their own followers, and none are to keep others as babes in Christ. The unity of the faith here is for each to mature in one's own time in the cycle, and then take the responsibility to help to mature others. This can only be accomplished when each is fully involved in the maturing process until they reach this goal. Any attempt to limit the process, or to deviate from the process is fully against the unity of the spirit of this context and of scripture.

Any leaders in verse 11 who try to control others and any brethren who let others control and limit them to this extent are not studying to show themselves approved so that they are better aware of their own responsibilities. The Elders need to be awake to this. The whole local fellowship needs to be awake and not let it happen. It is mutually destructive for the leadership involved and the members of the fellowship who follow such leadership.

In the book of Philippians, Paul addresses this same *building up* in Christ in chapter 3, verses 7 through 16. In verse 14, he points to the “*goal of the prize for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*” In verse 15 he says, “*let as many as are mature, have this mind,*” that is, that all are to be striving after that goal, and helping others to attain to it. He adds that if we have a different thought, God will reveal this to us. *In this way, we can all be united in the faith toward the same single goal of maturity in Christ.* Verse 16 wisely states what the context in Ephesians had detailed, that this is a process of maturing for everyone, and not all are at the same point in the process, but that all must respect the progress of each other and encourage them onward in it, not letting any fall back. Paul says, “*Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule; let us be of the same mind.*” It is not difficult to see how parallel this advice is to that of Ephesians in this process, that we all come to the “*unity of faith.*”

Let us each be alert to maintain our own responsibility in our growth in this maturing process, and at the same time, be responsible to encourage and help others on in their process, without any control, so that we all can come to “*the unity of faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*”

J. Knapp

I cannot do without Thee;
I cannot stand alone;
I have no strength or goodness,
No wisdom of my own;

But Thou, beloved Savior,
Art all in all to me,
And weakness will be power,
If leaning hard on Thee.
(Poems of Dawn)

There Is More to Learn

If I learned my ABC's, can read rapidly, and can write with perfect penmanship, but cannot see God's glory revealed in His created work (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19), *I have still more to learn.*

If I can deliver an eloquent speech and persuade others with my stunning logic, but cannot communicate with the Designer of all language (Psalm 2:6, 119:130), *I have still more to learn.*

If I have read Shakespeare and John Locke and can discuss their writings with understanding, but have not read the greatest of all books, the Bible, and have no knowledge of its importance (Proverbs 2:1-5, 9:10; Eph 4:13), *I have still more to learn.*

If I have memorized multiplication tables and chemical formulas, but have never disciplined myself to plant God's Word in my heart (Psalm 119:104-106; Col. 1:9; 1Tim. 2:4), *I have still more to learn.*

If I can explain the law of gravity and Einstein's theory of relativity, but do not know the unchangeable laws (Malachi 3:6; Jas 1:17) of the One who orders our universe (Genesis 8:22; Psalm 74:16-17; Jeremiah 10:12), *I have still more to learn.*

If I can classify living things by their family, genus and species, and can write an award-winning scientific paper, but have not realized the Maker's purpose in creation (Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 145:16; Isaiah 45:18), *I have still more to learn.*

If I can play the piano and the violin, and can write music that others enjoy, but do not know God's harmonious truths which lead to life (Isaiah 12:2; John 17:3), *I have still more to learn.*

If I can run cross-country races, star in basketball, or do 100 push-ups without stopping, but have never determined to run the race that leads to eternal life (Philippians 3:14), *I have still more to learn.*

If I can identify a Picasso, describe the style of Da Vinci, or paint a notable portrait, but have not seen that all beauty comes from a relationship with God (Psalm 29:2, 90:17), *I have still more to learn.*

If I graduate with honor and am accepted at the university with a full scholarship, but have not considered a career which would be honorable and pleasing to God (Colossians 3:17, 23), *I have still more to learn.*

If I am a good citizen and pursue what is moral and right, but do not acknowledge the sinfulness of man and his hopelessness without Christ (Rom. 3:10, 23, 5:12, 17; Eph. 2:12), *I have still more to learn.*

However, when I begin to see the world as God sees it, and come to know Him, Whom to know is life eternal (John 17:3), and glorify God by fulfilling His purpose in me (Micah 6:8), *then I will have found the true teacher, who leads me ever deeper into a knowledge of things that really matter.*

G. Rice

The Lord will command his loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me. (Psalm 42:8)

IF we are not ready to praise God where we are, and with our conditions and circumstances as they are, we should not be likely to praise him if we were differently circumstanced and our conditions just those which now seem to us most desirable. Daniel could sleep better in the den of lions than Darius in the royal palace; he who could not find rest in a lion's den, when that was the place for him, could not gain rest by a mere removal to a palace. It is the man's self which must be changed, not his circumstances or his possessions, in order to his having a heart overflowing with joy and praise.

Songs in the Night

Preparing for the Kingdom

Whatever view we hold concerning the way the Second Coming of our Lord will occur, the great need is *to be ready* for His appearing. There can be no substitute for readiness or alertness. Knowledge of what is promised, without the resulting preparation of heart and mind, can only result in disappointment. It is an event, which, so far as the church is concerned, should be regarded as something that may occur at any moment. *“Like a man going away, leaving his house, giving authority to his servants, and each man’s work to him, and commanding the doorkeeper to watch. **Watch**, for you do not know when the lord of the house is coming, at evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow: lest he come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all. **Watch**”* (Mark 13.34-37).

Before that glorious event occurs, we are being transformed into the likeness of Christ, so that we may be found worthy to be a part of His Church. Not that we can do this in our own strength, but because we have shown our willingness to follow His will in every aspect of our lives, through the undeserved grace of our heavenly Father, we will be considered worthy to be granted the privilege of ruling with Christ in God’s future Kingdom.

In whatever we are going to do, *the preparation is important*. There is not much point in planting a packet of seeds in the garden if you do not dig and clean the ground first. Unless you *properly prepare the ground*, it is quite possible the seeds will not come up, and even if they do manage to start to grow, the weeds that you did not bother to clear away will probably choke them. Our Lord said much the same thing when He told the parable of the Sower. The seed He was talking about was the seed of the Word, and the ground was the condition of men’s hearts. He was telling us that unless we are of the good soil, the seed of His Word will not take root in us. Some seed fell among thorns. If we do not carefully dig out the weeds of worldliness, the new growth will be choked. Some fell upon rocky ground. If we do not clear away the stones of materialism, the seed will not be able to put down a good root system, and will wither and die in the first spiritual drought. That would be relying on material things to sustain us,

and not the Word of the Lord. What we should be doing is to be cleaning the ground of our hearts, clearing from it everything that could be a hindrance to the growth of the seed, then fertilizing it with study of God's Word, so that no trouble that arises can stop the seed of the Word from growing.

Paul tells us in his letter to the Colossians (3:2) to "*be mindful of things above, not of things on the earth.*" We have, of course, to pay proper attention to some earthly things, such as doing our job to the best of our ability, but we should never put doing earthly things before our duties to our Lord. When we do keep our thoughts on earthly things, we are in effect making an idol of them, which could deprive us of our heavenly inheritance. So our aim should be to become more heavenly-minded, not in a mystical sense, but in the way of *practical Christ-like godliness*.

Our loving Father wants all men to be saved; He would have no man die. Jesus made this quite clear in two of His parables; first when He told how the father, as soon as he saw the prodigal returning to him ran - he did not walk, he ran - to meet the wanderer. Our heavenly Father does not wait for the prodigal to come to Him on bended knee to beg for forgiveness. But as soon as the errant one, of his own free will, turns his face back towards his heavenly home, God in His delight actually hurries to meet the one who went astray and then celebrates that prodigal's return.

We are told that if one of His sheep drifts off, He will search until the lost one is brought back to the fold, and when that wanderer is brought back He rejoices. So if our heavenly Father is not satisfied with only 99 out of a flock of 100, He certainly won't be satisfied until He has done everything possible to prevent one of His children from harming themselves through self-will, disobedience, or just plain stupidity. In these two stories, the prodigal is the one who deliberately follows a life that will take him away from the father, while the sheep pictures the one who drifts away through sheer foolishness, not thinking about the consequences. The whole point of these stories is to show us that *God is more understanding, more merciful, more forgiving, and His love far greater than any man's is.*

Our heavenly Father is preparing a holy spiritual Temple in which He will dwell and we can be quite certain that He has set a time for the completion of His preparations. So far, this heavenly Temple, the Church, the Body of Christ, has been steadily growing for 2000 years, and from all the signs in the world it must be nearing completion: but even though God appears to delay, He is nevertheless active. He is a God of order and organization. He is never too early and never too late. Every member is being prepared according to his attributes. Their abilities are being sharpened and their powers ripened for their work of joy throughout the coming ages, a work that will bring a blessing to all the families of the earth. Then, at the appointed time, we shall arise, equal to the task.

The sons of God must walk by that faith for which we are earnestly to contend, and live by the hope and the earnest desire for the revelation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *"We all, with our face having been unveiled, having beheld the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord's Spirit"* (2 Corinthians 3:18). The work of building our character is going on all the time. From a thousand sources come the influences that make it grow: the lessons we get from others, the influences that friends exert on us, the truths we discover in our reading, the impressions which life leaves on us and most of all the inspiration we receive from the Holy Spirit. The work never stops from the time we first believe until the time we fall asleep. So, *"Consider it pure joy my brothers, whenever you have trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him"* (James 1:2-6 & 12).

J. Haines

Portrait of Jesus: Who Is My Neighbor?



“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How do you read it?’ And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself’. And he said to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.’” Luke 10:25-28

The lawyer went on to ask Jesus who his neighbor was, thinking Jesus would say his fellow Jews, but Jesus proceeded to tell the parable of the Good Samaritan. You all know the story...a Jew is on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho and is beaten, stripped and robbed. A priest and then a Levite see him and avoid him entirely. They see a fellow Jew in need of help and walk on the other side of the road to avoid contact with him. They had a moral obligation to stop and help him; having finished serving in the temple, they were on their way home to Jericho; they really had no excuse for not stopping. But a Samaritan stops and helps the man, even taking him to an innkeeper and paying his expenses. Samaritans were despised by the Jews, they were considered half-breeds. The fact that Jesus made a Samaritan the hero of his parable did not go unnoticed by anyone, especially the lawyer. When Jesus asked him which of the three proved to be a neighbor, the lawyer couldn't even bring himself to identify the Samaritan other than to say, "The one who showed him mercy."

Jesus was trying to show that compassion should not take into consideration status or ethnicity. The Samaritans hated the Jews as much as the Jews hated the Samaritans, but this didn't stop this Samaritan from showing compassion. The parable attacks prejudice and superiority of any kind. Jesus was really attempting to condemn the bigotry of His day, especially among the religious leaders. Jesus doesn't want us to look for individuals who are worthy of love, but to show love and kindness to any kind of person no matter their status. If we are to love as Jesus loved, then every human being is our neighbor and should feel the love of the Savior through us.

D. Mathewson

Children's Story Corner: Set Free



If Jesus is our Savior, we are told that we should live then as “free people.” See 1 Peter 2:16 Have you ever thought about what this means? We live in a “free country,” but do we really live as “free people?”

If you always have negative thoughts and feelings, do you think you are living as a free person? I believe if you think about it, you will see that we would not be free but really slaves, in a way, to our wrong and negative thinking. It has been proven that such thoughts can be very habit-forming, and make us literally sick.

Satan will try to plant negative thoughts in our minds, even as he tried to do with our Lord Jesus. He always began tempting Jesus by saying, “IF you are the son of God...” then you can do this or do that. Satan was trying to place doubt in Jesus mind! We can stop the devil the same way Jesus did - with the Words of the Bible, saying, “*It is written...*” There is a lot of power in God’s Word and in His wonderful promises. If we are fearful, then we are not really a free person. So, when we become fearful, we can say like David the Psalmist said, “*When I am afraid, I will TRUST IN YOU!*” David put his trust in the Lord to help him have courage at difficult times.

The Bible says that we are all born in sin and held as slaves to sin and its sad results, but the Lord Jesus came to pay for our sins and make us truly free. When we come to Jesus and believe on Him as our Lord and Savior, it is like having a BIG burden taken away! We no longer have to be fearful or feel guilty, because the blood He shed on the Cross truly made us free from all these burdens. We may still be tempted by Satan to think we are not free and still have our burdens, but that is when we can say out loud, “*No! Jesus has saved me and taken all my burdens away!*” We guard this precious freedom by faith and then not Satan or anyone can ever take it from us.

It is good to remember that Jesus was always kind and helpful to those who felt the weight of their heavy burdens. We, also, should be very kind to those who are still slaves to sin, selfishness and bad thinking and have never come to Jesus to have their burdens lifted. When you tell others what a wonderful Savior Jesus is, they too, can be truly free and happy!

Joyce Bateman

The Family Corner: Family Time

When people think of family time together, they often think of vacations and occasions for recreation. It might be outdoor activities such as swimming or hiking, or indoor relaxation such as TV, movies, or board games.



God has always provided relaxations and pleasures to his people. The idea behind the Sabbath was rest and restoration. "The seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates." If God's law did not require everyone to rest, masters could have forced their slaves and to work all week long without a break. "The Sabbath was made for man," Jesus said, "not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

Jesus worked hard, first as a builder and then as a traveling preacher (John 5:17). But he was also concerned that his followers have sufficient rest from labor. "And he said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat" (Mark 6:31).

In ancient times, long hours of labor were required just to live. "Leisure" or time free from labor and sleep was scarce. Amusements were simple, and consisted mostly of conversation, reciting stories, singing, playing musical instruments, and dancing. Games using playing boards and small stones are known from Mesopotamia and Egypt more than four thousand years ago. In the time of Jesus, outdoor theater was popular among the Greco-Roman gentiles. There was a large theater at Sepphoris, a short distance from Nazareth where Jesus grew up.

Thanks to the industrial revolution and other technological advancements, we now have more leisure time than ever before. And we have available an endless, even bewildering array of entertainments and amusements: TV, movies, radio, audio and video recordings, video games, sports, amusement parks, and outdoor activities too numerous to mention.

The overwhelming variety of entertainment is not in itself bad. It means that families can easily find a variety of fun ways to spend

time together, which can be a good thing. But we live in a sinful world and we still battle with sinful tendencies, so leisure time and entertainment pose serious pitfalls.

First of all, audio and video entertainment in general (music, TV programs, movies, online video clips) frequently includes bad language, lewdness, violence, and vulgarity. As Christians, we cannot grow weary of rejecting these things. Is it possible to find entertainment that is decent in all senses of the word? Yes, but it takes effort. As families, we always should make sure that what we are listening to or watching is worthwhile.

Second, amusements are so plentiful that they can divide families as each person entertains himself or herself in isolation. How many times do we see children or teens who are mentally absent from their families because they constantly wear earplugs so they can listen to their own private music for hours on end? Or it could be browsing on the internet or watching TV or videos. We all have certain individual activities we like, but if we pursue them to the point that they take us away from conversation with family members, it's not healthy. Families must make a conscious effort to do things together often enough so that bonds between husbands and wives, parents and children, and siblings of different ages get stronger, not weaker.

Finally, we must keep entertainment and amusement in balance. We can compare it to a healthy diet. Most of us have to make some effort to keep enough nutritious foods in our diet, foods with vitamins, minerals, protein, and fiber. We also have to teach our children balance in that area. If children were allowed to choose their foods without any guidance, they might exist on cookies, potato chips, ice cream, and candy. We learn to develop a taste for a variety of foods, to make sure we eat nutritiously, and to avoid overindulgence.

Entertainments and amusements are like snacks and desserts. They have their place, but they cannot be allowed to compromise constructive work, learning, and above all devotion to God expressed in worship, prayer, study, spiritual conversation, and service rendered to others.

Leisure and relaxation have their place, but families are brought closest together by activities that bring them closest to God. Sometimes we can combine the two. When we are on a hike or driving through a national park, we can remind one another that God

has provided the endless panorama of natural beauty that we can enjoy. If we are playing outdoor sports like golf or tennis, we can make sure that good sportsmanship and mutual enjoyment dominate instead of pride and an ultra-competitive spirit.

Paul warns us that in the last days people would be lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:4). As Christian families, we can choose leisure activities that are positive and enjoyable without making them our goal in life or our dominant interest. And all that we do should be to the glory of our heavenly Father, who supplies us richly with all things to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17).

D. Barefoot

How a child behaves in and adjusts to his family can be a possible forecast of how he will function in the world around him as an adult. This is precisely why it is so vital that he be taught to immediately and sweetly obey authority, learn the lessons of self-control over his flesh and feelings, and learn how to lovingly interact with his siblings.

As this happens as an adult he will obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit and mandates of Scripture as a continuation of the obedient character formed within as a child (Proverbs 22:6). He will function as a self-controlled responsible adult who realizes from his childhood training that giving vent to excess and following feelings create problems. More importantly for the purposes of this article a child vigorously trained to responsibly interact with his several brothers and sisters (the Bible presupposes the normal family has many children Psalm 127:5 Psalm 128:3 Psalm 113:9) will be able to successfully integrate himself in most social situations as an adult.

On the other hand socialization and peer interaction of contemporary Christian youth may reinforce hardened hearts and questionable character if the child's home is weak; because youth left to socialize (especially in unstructured, unsupervised ways) on their own will tend to reinforce one another's weakness of character. I am convinced no child should be allowed unfettered and unsupervised fraternization outside the family circle if he is not correctly responding to his parents or siblings.

Thoughts of an unknown Author

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!

Anas, Julie – FL	Jones, Arlene - VA
Allen, Peggy & Russell – VT	Karavas, Anna - CA
Anderson, Family– WI (d)	Knapp, Jamie – NH
Andrada, Delores & Family – CA	Knapp, Joseph & Pat – IL
Bews, Sandra and Family TX (d)	Ketko, Marion – MI
Boswell, Arlene – IL	Leavitt, Denise & Richard – ME
Buxton, Jean & Family - UK	Lepitre Family - IL
Carpenter, Gloria – KY	Howes, Paul & Carla - UK
Caudle, James – WA	Kingsmith, Beresford - UK
Cline, Ruth – MO	Mazzotta, Eva – FL
Collins, Bert - NJ	Miller, Alain – Canada
Cooper, Carmela – NJ	Mitchell, Mitch - France
Csutor, Judith – CT	Moore, Ralph & Maryellen – CA
Day, Ronald – PA	Munoz, Sue - NY
Dickson, Roberta Jo – CA	Newling, Roseanna – NH
Dobbins, Esther - NH	Niewiemiński, Elaine – NY
Donnarummo, Dan – OH (d)	Parker, Geraldine – CA
Duhaime, George & Martha – CT	Penton, Jim – Canada
Dunn, Kim - IL	Phillips, Stella – OK
Fantuzzo, Sharon - NY	Riggio, Fran – NH
Feliciano, Carmen - NY	Rowe, Bryan - UK
Fischer, Mike & Liz – WI	Schultz, Dan – MN
Foster, Jean – IL	Schwartz, Ruth – TX
Gary, Inez – VA	Seminoff, Brenda – CA
Gmiterek Family (d)	Thomassen, Sandy – NM (d)
Hauslein, Karen – MD	Tuscia, Priscilla – FL
Hawk, Barbara – PA	Trent, Frank & Thelma - FL
Hildebrandt, Lois - FL	Weaver, Eddie - NY
Hogrebe, Joan – MO	White, Ken & Joan - NY
Hopkins, Linda & Andrew – VA (d)	Wisdom Hezekiah Ikpo - Nigeria
Iannaccone, Bob & Marie – IL	Zychal, Ruth & Craig– NJ

(d) = death in the family

Entered into rest: Stephanie Gmiterek, IL, July 1, 2019
Tim Thomassen, NM, July 15, 2019

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.

Bible Correspondence Course New Graduates & Websites

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



Basic Course

USA

Kimberle Burrows, Ohio

Uganda

Nelson Oboli

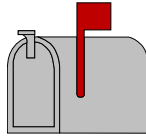
You are invited to view the following websites:

<http://www.cdmi.org> (Christian Discipling Ministries International)
<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.homechristians.net> (Fraser Valley, B.C.)
<http://www.bibelgemeinde.at> (Free Bible Students, Austria)
<http://www.bibelgemeinde.org> (Mission Work Bible Students, Austria)
<http://www.kronline.at/bibelstudien> (Free Bible Students, Germany (English))
<http://www.softgrafic.com/bibbia> (Italian Bible Students)
<http://www.newcovenantfellowship.org.au> (New Covenant News- Australia)

If you have been unable to access any of these websites without success, we would appreciate knowing of the same to remove or correct our postings.

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

Letters from Our Fellowship and Readers



"His Servant" sends a poem:

*In Jesus' name I greet you! A poem to remember every day..
"Speak unto Him for He hears you.
And Spirit with spirit will meet!
Nearer is He than breathing,
Nearer than hands and feet."
Maltbie D. Babcock*

Also, the following: *In Jesus' name I pray for your continued reliance upon our beloved Savior for all things. May His peace be yours in these restless days of our planet.
"His" Servant*

An email was received by Br. Elmer Weeks from **Br. Frazer Nauliya of Malawi, Africa:**

I and people, leaders and pastors we are very happy and blessings THE NEW CREATION MAGAZINES which are helping people to know true of God.

We are ask you to continue to help and developing God's work in our ministries of the CMF here in Malawi.

Many people are coming to join our ministries through your good teaching in THE NEW CREATION MAGAZINES.

We are praying for you daily for the good work which you are doing.

I letting you know that our ministries have reached many places arounding our country of Malawi. We are ask you to continue to pray for us.

Yours in Christ, Frazer Nauliya, CMF Malawi

From Sr. Carlene of Georgetown, CA

Dear Brethren in Christ,

I thank the Lord for your continued labors of love in His vineyard, spreading the good news of God's glorious plan and helping to encourage all those endeavoring to walk in the footsteps of Christ.

Living in these end times is certainly an amazing and challenging experience. To see prophecies in God's word unfolding before our very eyes is faith building. Though our hearts ache for suffering humanity, we can rejoice in knowing that soon this nighttime of sorrow and dying will be over and will give way to eternal life and joy

for all who choose to participate in God's righteous government and arrangements.

I pray we all remain strong, fervent in faith and love, and don't lose heart in the midst of the present fiery trials which test our devotion. Soon this life will be over and the next one begun! May we be faithful and daily seek to praise and honor our merciful Heavenly Father, with thankful hearts, encouraging and uplifting our brethren and yielding ourselves to the transforming work of God's Holy Spirit. Let us always cherish the gift of life we have been blessed to receive from our dear Lord Jesus due to His selfless sacrifice given on behalf of us all.

You're in my prayers for God's strength and continued guidance to be yours in the days ahead. Let us keep our eyes fixed on the Lord and "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering", for He is faithful who promised.

*With my love in Christ,
Sr. Carlene
Isaiah 35*

Conferences & Conventions

No notices of Conferences or Conventions were received for this mailing.

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.

Donations

Many people around the world appreciate the New Creation magazine. For many, it is their only source of Christian communication. Also, for many, they only have it through the generous contributions of others. If you feel moved to help them in continuing to get the New Creation, please consider a donation to CDMI.

Article Contributions

Please send articles for possible publication to Dennis Gorham,
4 Alicia Street Somersworth, NH 03878
email: dennisgorham@comcast.net