A Ministerial Charge

by Elder McKinley Wright
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(In 1990, the author was asked to deliver the charges to both a newly ordained Elder and the church. He combined the two charges into one. That discourse is reproduced here. Some editing has been done for the sake of brevity and clarity).

As I have thought about this service, I have had many emotions. One of them has been my remembering when about forty years ago I sat where you are sitting now, not literally, of course, but in a similar place in another church. I am sure that at the time, I never realized what a serious work it was that I was beginning. I was young, energetic and had some big ideas. Since then I have learned to appreciate what you expressed a little while ago about the importance of little things.

As I come to deliver this charge, I believe it is the first time I have ever given the charge both to the person being ordained and to the church. I suppose it might be because of our desire to have things done in a big way that we give a part in the service to as many as possible of the preachers who are present. So one preacher usually gives the charge to the person being ordained and another gives the charge to the church. There have been times when I have given the charge to the church. At other times I have given the charge to the person being ordained. I have never felt very comfortable giving either of them because, as I would deliver a charge to an individual, there were things that needed to be said in the church in connection with the same subject. And, in delivering a charge to the church, there were things that needed to be said to the individual. The duties and responsibilities of a church and her pastor are so intertwined that it is impossible to speak of one to the exclusion of the other. So, I think it is very fitting that on this occasion the charge is combined to include both the person being ordained and the church.

Maybe we should preface the reading of Scripture with some kind of introduction because someone might not know just what the circumstances were when Paul wrote these words. As Paul went about the countryside establishing churches, others helped him. One of these helpers was a young man named Timothy. Usually Paul would establish a church and get it started functioning, and then leave one of these helpers to take the oversight of the church until she had grown to the point that she could ordain her own pastor. Old Baptists might be departing from the gospel standard in this regard. Many times a church brings a pastor in from somewhere else. She sets him up on a pedestal and looks upon him as being somewhat superhuman. Then, when she finds that he is human and has faults just like the rest of us, her disillusionment causes the Cause of Christ to suffer. In the Apostolic Era, each church ordained her own pastor. The result of this practice is that she knows his weaknesses and that she needs to be praying that God will give him the strength and wisdom that he needs to be her pastor. Timothy had been left to have the oversight of a church when Paul wrote this letter. Paul now writes to him telling him how to instruct the church in the business of ordaining her own pastor. When Timothy has done this, he can leave this church functioning under the leadership of the Holy Spirit working through her new pastor, and can go and help Paul in another place. As Paul left Timothy there with the instruction to ordain an elder or elders in the church, he told Timothy qualifications that they must have before being ordained.

Now we read, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, no covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall in to the condemnation of the devil" (I Timothy 3:1-6). This Scripture contains the qualifications that Timothy should look for in those whom he would ordain as elders in the churches where he was laboring. I am not going to put a lot of emphasis on these because I feel sure that the church authorizing the ordination has already considered them. If she hasn't, we are in trouble, because if she hasn't, the Cause of Christ is sure to suffer. I mention them that we may realize that this is a high calling. It is not a work that just anyone can expect to perform. It is a serious calling. In the opinion of the writer, the office of pastor of a church is more important than the office of president of the United States. It is such a high office because the pastor watches for our souls.

As Paul gave Timothy this list of qualifications, he did not tell Timothy to ordain elders who met some of them or even most of them. **They must meet ALL of them**! They were required not only to meet these qualifications when they were ordained as an Elder, but they must continue to meet them if they hold the office. Most of the qualifications relate to things we do. They are things in which we can fail. For instance, one of them says "not given to wine." When I was ordained some forty years ago, I was not given to wine. The church that ordained me made sure of

that. But in the years since, I could have fallen and become an alcoholic. By God's mercy I didn't, but I could have. If I had done so, I would have immediately disqualified myself as far as being an Elder is concerned. So, the first charge that I am going to make to you, pastor, is that you should guard your life in such a way that you will **continue to meet all of these qualifications!**

I then charge the church that if your pastor should happen to fail in this responsibility, the church should labor with him quietly and in kindness to try to save him to the ministry and to the church. But if all of her efforts toward this end fail, she should be faithful to terminate his ministry and his Eldership. The mechanics of doing this is easy. There will be a credential given to your pastor tonight that he will hold as long as he holds his office. If he should disqualify himself, the church should be faithful to God and ask him to relinquish this credential. Now let us move on to the body of the charge.

In this charge, there are three points that I want to make. First of all, I want to speak of the principal duty of a minister. Secondly, I want to exhort your pastor and the church to be alert with regard to his being distracted from this principal duty by other things. And then, the third thing that I want to talk about is finances. Some people do not like to talk about money in the church, but we are living in the earth and for some strange reason, we must have money. So it needs to be talked about. In each of these three areas, I want to study the responsibilities of both the elder and the church. We now look at the first point.

The primary duty of an elder is, as Paul told young Timothy, **to preach the word.** No other duty approaches this one in importance. Some churches and pastors do not know this. Paul was writing to young Timothy telling him how he should conduct himself in and before the church. We read in II Timothy 4:1, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; **Preach the word**." Then he elaborated on the idea, "be instant" (that means be ready to preach) "in season, out of season." There will be times when your pump is primed and you just can't wait for the time for preaching to arrive. That is when you are "in season." Then there will be other times when you will feel that preaching is impossible. You are "out of season." Paul did not tell Timothy to preach the word when he felt like doing so. He said, "be instant in season, out of season." This means that he is to be ready to preach both when he feels like it and when he doesn't. I remember a meeting that I attended soon after I was ordained. One of the older preachers was teaching this lesson for the benefit of us younger ones. He read it like this: "Preach the word; be instant in season. Out of season reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." He spoke the words correctly and in the right order. But the inflections he placed on the words taught the wrong lesson. The lesson that he taught was that when a preacher is in the mood for preaching, he should preach. But when he is not in such a mood, he should just reprove, rebuke or exhort. That is not what the lesson teaches. The lesson teaches that we should always stand ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us. When we give a reason for the hope that is in us, we are preaching. And when we give a reason for the hope that is in us, there will be someone else whose spirit will bear witness with our spirit that they have the same hope. When there is witness borne from one person to the other, preaching does good. Reproof, rebuke and exhortation are not just lesser forms of preaching. They are important! We need preaching grace for delivering them even more than when we are preaching fundamental things.

Paul wrote to another young preacher whose name was Titus (I am now looking at Titus 2:15), "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority." This means that as you preach the word, you are representing God to the people of God. This is the reason this is such serious work. You are not just giving your own wisdom. You are speaking for God! And that means that you must know what God's will and way is in a given situation. There is more to preaching than the preacher just getting up, opening his mouth and finding the right words coming out. The right words do not just automatically come out. The Holy Spirit's guidance is indispensable when we preach, but He does not influence us to the point that we become incapable of making an error. The only way we can deliver God's message to God's people is to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Timothy 2:15). The Holy Spirit leads us as we study, not by removing our individualities and overpowering our wills, but by leading us to understand certain principles. He then guides us as we build on these principles.

This first point in which I am charging you is to preach the word. Preach it with authority. Preach it as a result of the study of it. You must know what the word says because that is the only way you can preach it with authority. Now I speak to the church on the same point.

As your pastor preaches to the church, he is representing God, and the church is to hear that word and realize that **this is a message coming from God**. But the church is to hear that word judgementally. She needs to be charitable, but she must be judgmental. This, then, means that the church also has the responsibility to study the word. If the time comes that the church finds that your pastor is not preaching God's message, the church should have enough principle to say, "Pastor, we just cannot recognize this as being God's message." But if the church takes this position, she should be absolutely certain that he has devi-

ated. A church charging a minister of God with preaching error is a serious situation. Even though he is studying and is preaching God's message, there will be times when the church will not recognize it as being God's message. When the preacher comes right down home and starts pointing out what we are doing that is wrong, it is hard for us to recognize it as coming from God. And I am charging the church that you remember that he is bringing a message from God. I am charging the church that unless you recognize that he is bringing a message from God, the church will suffer because of her failure.

I charge the church to pray for him. I hope the church already prays for her pastor, and I feel that you do. I believe you have been praying for this service because I can feel a presence here that would not be here if people were not praying about it. Continue to pray for him! Uphold him with your prayers because he needs them! Every man has problems in his life. But the pastor has special problems because he is touched by your problems in addition to his own. If he is not touched by your problems, he is not worth his salt. This is a country expression that means he is just not any good at all if he is not touched by the feelings and problems of the people of his flock. He needs to be prayed for!

Listen to his preaching! Listen carefully! He is capable (every man is capable) of expressing something wrong. If you think he has expressed something wrong, go to him in a loving way and talk to him about it. It might be that he will convert you. And if his understanding is according to the Bible, he ought to convert you. If you just disapprove and don't say anything, or whisper to someone next to you that he is not preaching the truth, before long the church will be in turmoil. But if there had been communication, the differences would have been ironed out in the first place and the church would have been spared. I exhort the church to follow his teaching. Do not wait for him to order every detail in your lives. He is dealing with principles. But you should take the principles that he deals with from the pulpit and use them in your lives. Adopt them as your principles. If you do so, you will encourage him and will honor God.

The second point that I want us to think about is the possibility of the pastor's allowing himself to be distracted from his primary responsibility. One activity that might distract you from preaching the gospel and preparing yourself to preach is visiting the sick. Visiting the sick is important. When a person is sick, especially if the sickness is serious, the presence of the Man of God is very comforting. So **visiting the sick is a commendable work!** You should not draw back from this work unless it reaches the point of distracting you from your primary work of preaching the word. There are administrative duties associated with the church. This might come as a surprise to some, but it is true. The Bible says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." So, no matter how small a church is, there are some administrative affairs that need to be taken care of. Many churches have a secretary or clerk who should be doing these administrative things. But it is easy for the pastor to become distracted and spend too much of his time doing these kinds of things. So I exhort your pastor to be alert to keep this from happening. I am not saying that he should not do any of these kinds of things, but he should not allow them to distract him from his first responsibility which is the preaching of the Gospel.

To the church I would say on this point, "don't put your pastor in such a position that he has to do these things." You should designate some individual or group of individuals besides the pastor to be responsible for these things. Then you should give them the guidance that they need to be able to do them like the church wants them done. If a pastor has the ability to do a certain kind of work, the church might ask him to do work of that nature that is needed. If he has the time available, there is nothing wrong with his doing it. Both he and the church should, however, be alert to keep such things from distracting him from his primary work -- the preaching of the word.

I am going to pass something on to you that was given to me early in my ministry. It was not part of the charge that was given to me when I was ordained. I do not remember much about that charge. The emotions of the time blocked out these memories. But a few months later, I was visiting in the home of the late Elder V. F. Agan, and he gave me some advice. He reminded me that a day is easily broken down into three 8-hour segments. He urged me to spend one of those segments in the word of God and thinking on spiritual things, to give one segment to my family, and to use the last segment for bodily rest. I cannot improve on this schedule. He warned me of my being liable to take parts of the first segment and use them for the other activities. To impress me with the importance of this first segment, he cited the Scripture in the Revelation where John saw the man with the little book in his hand, and the man gave him the little book and told him to eat it up. In that lesson John is representative of the Gospel minister, and the eating of the book speaks of the great responsibility that we have to take the word of God and devour it. That does not mean that we should tear the pages out of the Bible and literally eat them. It means that we should absorb their teachings into our lives and they should become as much a part of our lives as our natural food becomes when we eat. Food is taken into the body and digested. It comes out in the form of physical energy. So God is saying that we are to take the Gospel, the Bible, and incorporate it into our lives to the point that our lives reflect the teachings of that Gospel exactly as our lives reflect the natural food that we eat. Eight hours per day for spiritual things might be a little high for laymen, but the principle of regular Bible study is certainly applicable.

The third point which I want to discuss is finances. The background Scripture is I Timothy 5:17-18. The exhortation here is primarily for the church: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." Paul is saying that the church should have an exceptionally high regard for her elders. We have already dealt with this idea at some length. The idea that we want to look at is in the next verse: "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." We are looking particularly at the expression "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." It might be easy to misunderstand this Scripture. Early in my ministry, I thought the passage meant that if a person were plowing with an ox and it strayed over the row and walked on the plants, it should not be punished by having its mouth covered with a muzzle. It was not the ox's mouth that destroyed the plants. It was his feet. To muzzle him, then, would be purely an act of retribution with no correction being involved. I thought this was the meaning of the passage. But when I tried to apply my idea to the gospel minister, the facts just did not fit. My explanation must be wrong. One day the Holy Spirit showed me the true meaning.

Long ago, farmers did not have equipment that would go into the field, cut the wheat, thresh it and leave the straw in the field. They had to cut the wheat by hand and carry it to the threshing floor, a space with a hard floor (usually wood) from which the threshed wheat could be swept up and removed. When the wheat had been brought to the floor, an ox would be brought to the threshing floor where he would walk around on the wheat. As he walked, his feet would shatter the grain out of the husks. After a while, the farmer would remove the straw and gather the wheat into the barn. Paul was telling Timothy that the Old Testament Scripture that says, "don't muzzle the ox that treads out the grain," is talking about the gospel ministry -- that the gospel minister is represented as treading out the grain. The ox that was treading out the grain was not to be muzzled. As he walked on the floor, he was to have the privilege of eating some of the grain. Paul is saying that the Scripture teaches that the responsibility rests upon the church to provide for the needs of her pastor so he doesn't have to neglect his primary responsibility while he labors with his own hands to provide a living for his family. There are circumstances that must be taken differently. Some churches are so small (weak) that they cannot care for a pastor. But there are churches that say their circumstances dictate differently when really they don't. No matter how small a church is, she can be of some help to her pastor. God makes her responsible for doing whatever she can.

If a church is too small to support a pastor, the pastor should work to support himself. Paul labored with his own hands to provide for the things that he needed when the churches did not care for him as they should. But God tells the church to care for her pastor the very best that she can. At the same time, He tells the pastor to care for the church in spiritual things without regard to how she has cared for his natural needs. One of the qualifications that we read as we began this discourse was that the elder is to be "not greedy of filthy lucre." The Bible speaks of the fact that the elder must be willing to spend and be spent for the gospel. Paul wrote to the churches at Corinth about the fact that the better he was to them, the worse they treated him. But even though he realized that it was this way, he never adjusted his care for them according to their care for him. He was still faithful to them because he realized the responsibility that he had for their souls, for teaching them the word of God. If a church or pastor fails in caring for the other, they are not rebelling against the other. They are rebelling against God.

In this discourse I have dealt with three ideas. The elder's first responsibility is to preach the word and to prepare himself to do so. I have exerted to be alert to prevent anything from distracting him from accomplishing this first responsibility. I have exhorted the church to be aware of the most important work of her pastor, and to support him in his labors by praying for him and keeping non-essential work to the lowest possible level. I have looked at the responsibility of the church to care for the natural needs of her pastor and his family, and at the pastor's responsibility to give himself to the church even when his sacrifice is not appreciated. Other ideas could have been advanced. These three could have been covered more completely. Please look charitably at my failings.

A church and her pastor are a team. When they work together following the rules of the Bible, God is glorified. When they don't work together, His Cause suffers. **May we all examine ourselves in the light of the Bible, and change those things that should be changed.**

Pastoral Wisdom Addresses Complaints

Copied

A pastor had on his desk a notebook labeled "Complaints of Members Against Members." When one of his people called to tell him the faults of another, he would say, "Well, here's my Complaint Book. I'll write down what you say, and you can sign it. Then, when I have time to take up the matter officially, I shall know exactly how you will testify."

The sight of the open book and the ready pen had its effect: "Oh, no, I could not sign anything like that." And no entry was made.

The pastor says he kept the book for forty years, opened it a thousand times- BUT never wrote a line in it.

Are You Experiencing Anguish?

by Elder W. A. Mullis
(deceased)

(Please prayerfully read Hebrews 12:1-6 before reading this article. Thank you!)

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (James 5:11).

"Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling? As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work: So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good.

Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the **anguish** of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why has thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? For now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be" (Job 7:1-7, 11, 20, 21).

INTRODUCTION

First, we would like to define the meaning of the word "anguish." The word comes from a Hebrew word, as it is used in our printed scripture: meaning a narrow or tight place which causes great distress and trouble in soul or body. This is the primary meaning of the word in both Old and New Testament.

When anguish takes hold of a person in his soul or body, it is not easy to hide. It should be noted that many times conditions of anguish are brought about because of disobedience to the word of God.

In Romans 2:6-9, God said to the saints in Rome: "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and **ANGUISH, upon every soul of man that doeth evil,** of the Jew first and also of the Gentile." Disobedience of the word of God by the people of God brings the indignation and wrath of God, which results in anguish of the soul! Most of the distress and trouble of soul comes because of disobedience, but not all.

WE SAW THE ANGUISH OF HIS SOUL

When Jacob had sent his sons into Egypt to get corn because of the famine in the land of Canaan, the brethren of Joseph who had sold Joseph into bondage did some reaping of **anguish** in their own souls.

In Genesis 42:21, Joseph's brethren were in Egypt in prison, "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother (Joseph) in that **we saw the anguish of his soul,** when he besought us, and we would not hear: THEREFORE is this distress (anguish) come upon us." After more than twenty years since these sons of Jacob had sold Joseph into bondage, they could still remember the anguish of Joseph's soul the day they sold him. The anguish they saw in Joseph that day must have made a great impression upon them for them to remember it for more than twenty years! Even at this late date, they were reaping according to what they had sown! "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7). Joseph's anguish of soul, the day he was sold, was not for his evil doings; but the anguish of his brethren in Egypt was because of their evil doings.

JOB'S ANGUISH

In our Scripture lesson, Job in his great distress and trouble of soul was pouring out his complaint to God in the bitterness of his soul. He was not bitter toward God, but his soul was in bitterness because of the greatness of his **anguish** and trouble.

As we study this lesson about Job's anguish of soul, we should not forget that the Scripture says in Job 1:1: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." Also please read the words of God in Job 1:7 and 2:3.

God has never promised His people a life of ease and freedom from anguish even in obedience to His word. As we look back through the ages of the world in the study of the Scriptures, the people of God who have been the most dedicated in service and faithfulness to God have had the greatest crosses to bear in trials of their faith. Those who have endured their trials, by the grace of God, through faith, receive greater blessings in this life than any people in the world!

In James 1:12 the Scripture says: "Blessed is the man that **endureth** temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the **crown of life** which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." That "crown of life" is a foretaste of heavenly blessings from God in this world, not in eternity.

In the midst of Job's trials and troubles, he said in verse six of our Scripture lesson that his days "are spent without hope." This does not mean he

did not have "hope of heaven" in his soul, because his words teach that the hope of heaven never diminished in his life. He was "without hope" of being any better off than what he was in this world. In verse seven of our printed scripture, he said, "mine eye shall no more see good."

JOB ENDURES

In James 5:10-11, God uses Job as an example of suffering affliction and of patience: "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

The "patience of Job" is the endurance of Job. Very few people **understand** the meaning of this word "patience." It means **"endurance"** in **suffering afflictions**. The word "patience" in James 5:11, comes from the same Greek word as the word "endure" in James 5:11 and the word "endureth" in James 1:12. So the word "patience" and the word "endure" are synonyms: they mean the same thing. Job endured all the trials of afflictions he had in the service of God, and remained faithful to God through them all. Job's faith in God never wavered even in the midst of his **anguish of soul!**

Job was not an hireling in the service of God. Job was serving God because of his faith in God and love for God. This is the reason why he was able to endure all the trials and afflictions of his life, and remain faithful to God through them all. In the end of Job's life when he had endured the great trials of his faith, he received "the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1:12). God blessed "the latter end of Job more than his beginning." (Job 42:12a). This is the "end of the Lord" spoken of in James 5:11.

"THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION"

In Acts 14:22b, we find these words: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." According to Strong's concordance, the word "tribulation" here means basically the same thing as the word **"anguish."** Strong's concordance says the word "tribulation" in Acts 14:22 means "pressure" and it gives "anguish and trouble" as a meaning of the word tribulation. God says, "we must through much tribulation (pressure---anguish---trouble) enter into the kingdom of God." It is the firm conviction of this writer that no person who is born of the Spirit of God will ever enter the kingdom of God without **enduring "much tribulation"** (i.e. **anguish** and trouble) in trials of their faith in the true worship and service of God. Their faith in God and love for God must be strong enough for them to be able to suffer the loss of all things for Christ. Paul said in Philippians 3:7; "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." He said again in II Timothy 2:12a; "If we suffer, we SHALL also reign with him." This is speaking about reigning with Him in His kingdom in this world!

Christ said in Luke 13:24; "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able." Many of the people of God seek to enter into the kingdom of God, but "are not able" because they are not willing to suffer what they have to suffer to enter the kingdom!

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS--LOOKING DILIGENTLY"

Please read Hebrews 12:1-8 and 15-17. This writer sees a very positive connection between the expression "Looking unto Jesus:" in Hebrews 12:2, and the expression "Looking diligently" in Hebrews 12:15. The truth contained in both these verses are teaching that the people of God must "lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience (endurance) the race that is set before us, **Looking unto Jesus** the author and finisher of our faith... **Looking diligently** unto Jesus), lest any man fail of the grace of God..."

If any person who is born of the Spirit of God ever takes his spiritual eyes off "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," he will fail to endure, and he will fail to enter the kingdom of God in this world.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

1. Define the word "anguish."
2. Discuss the different conditions that bring about anguish of the soul.
3. Contrast the anguish of Joseph with that of his brothers.
4. Discuss Job's life as described in Job 1:1, 7; 2:3.
5. Discuss the "patience of Job" in James 5:11.
6. Did Job receive any blessings in his life in enduring the afflictions of his life, and remaining faithful to God?
7. How must the people of God enter into the kingdom of God in our day?
8. Discuss the benefits of Hebrews 12:1-2 and 15-16.

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Take Heed

by Elder Chris Hill
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"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (I Timothy 4:16). Paul here was writing to a young preacher by the name of Timothy whom he calls his own in the faith (I Timothy 1:2). That is, Paul had begotten Timothy to a knowledge of the truth through the gospel (I Corinthians 4:15), and he was Paul's "spiritual child." He found Timothy in Derbe, a city located in Lycaonia, a small Roman Province in Asia Minor.

Paul evidently saw something special in this young man because in Acts 16:3, Luke records, "Him would Paul have to go forth with him." Some time after this, while writing from a Roman prison in his second epistle to Timothy (II Timothy 1:5), Paul called to remembrance the unfeigned faith that was in Timothy, which dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, and he was persuaded in Timothy also.

Yet we find in our text that Paul exhorts Timothy to **TAKE HEED**. The phrase "take heed," or some variation of it, occurs about sixty-eight times in the Scriptures. This many references in itself calls attention to its meaning.

The word "heed" means to give careful attention to or take notice of something. We, as God's people, are to **take heed** to the word of God. There is not an idle word in God's Bible! Even if we only find one reference to a particular matter in the Scriptures, that should not diminish its importance to us!

The Lord told Jeremiah in Jeremiah 26:2 to "diminish not a word:" when he spoke to those who came into the Lord's house to worship. It's the writer's desire in this article to examine the importance of Paul's words here to Timothy.

TAKE HEED UNTO THYSELF

Paul first tells Timothy to **take heed unto himself!** He wants Timothy to keep himself in the love of God (see Jude 21). This is something that each of us must work at each day of our lives. To enjoy God's blessings, we must be careful to take heed to what He tells us to do. This involves putting off the old man and putting on the new man (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10). It involves keeping ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27b). Paul expressed it this way in Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, **denying ungodliness and worldy lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;**". In order to do this, we must lay aside what are called sins of commission (doing what we shouldn't do). But there is another equally important aspect of taking heed unto ourselves. It concerns our service to God here in His kingdom. We must lay aside sins of omission (not doing what we should do).

Prior to our text verse, Paul exhorts Timothy in verse 14 to"neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Timothy was a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This was his service in the Kingdom of God. God gives each of His children gifts of service. Whatever gift God has given to each of us, we must be careful to utilize it to God's glory and the church's edification. If we neglect the gift that is in us, then it will surely be taken away and given to another. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Matthew 25:29). This verse comes at the conclusion of the parable of the talents. We often think of the talents as being the abilities God has given us. If we look closely in Matthew 25:15, however, we see that the talents were distributed to every man according to his several ability. The ability was already there before the talents were given. The same is true in our service in the kingdom of God. God endues each of His children with the ability to serve Him in His kingdom. He then opens up a door of opportunity whereby we may utilize our ability. Solomon expressed it this way, "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men." (Proverbs 18:16). Who are great men? Great men in the eyes of God are those who are least in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus told the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons in Matthew 20:26-27 that "whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant;". He who quietly serves his God is a great inspiration to me. It encourages me to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:14). Much more could be said about Paul's admonition, "take heed unto thyself," but let us move on to the next phrase.

TAKE HEED UNTO THE DOCTRINE

After Paul tells Timothy to take heed unto himself, he exhorts him to **Take Heed unto the doctrine**. Aside from Timothy's personal conduct, Paul was greatly concerned with preserving the doctrines of grace in their purity. He sets this forth in the beginning of his letter. "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, **that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,"** (1:3). The great truths of salvation by grace, as embraced in the doctrines of election, predestination, limited atonement, effectual calling, and the final preservation of the saints in glory, reveal God's eternal plan for His children, and cannot be altered by the hands of men. Men can and do, however, fall into error. Paul tells Timothy in II Timothy 4:3-4, that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they

shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." It was because of this falling away that Paul admonished Timothy in verse 2 to "preach the word." When the minister preaches the word, whether the people receive it or not, he is pure from the blood of all men. Paul told the Ephesian elders, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." (Acts 20:26-27). In doing this, the minister is **taking heed unto the doctrine** as our text verse says. In doing this, he is obeying the admonition, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it."

CONTINUE IN THEM

After Paul exhorts Timothy to take heed unto himself and unto the doctrine, he tells him to **"continue in them:"**. What good would it do us to take heed to ourselves and the doctrine one day, and then turn away from it the next? God's people must **persevere** in order to enjoy His full blessings! Jesus said in John 8:31, "...If ye **continue** in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;". If we do not continue in the word, then our latter end will be worse than our beginning. The Apostle Peter states it this way: "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (II Peter 2:21). It is only when we "abide in the vine" that we are able to "bear much fruit" to God's glory and our good.

SAVE THYSELF AND OTHERS

Finally, after he takes heed to himself and unto the doctrine, and has continued in them, Paul tells Timothy what the result will be: **"for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."** We must immediately establish what kind of saving is under consideration. If this refers to eternal salvation, then Timothy and every other gospel minister has the power to save himself and others for the eternal heaven's pure world. We know this is NOT the case, so what kind of salvation was Paul talking about? The word "save" means to deliver from one state to another. Paul is saying that by taking heed unto ourselves, unto the doctrine, and continuing in them, we will be delivered or set free from the bondage of ignorance and unbelief and dead works which are by the law. Then we will be made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, to experience the **joys** of salvation while we live here in time. We will know that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! This is what Paul meant when he told the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." It is my prayer that each of us will TAKE HEED to God's word, and in so doing, **He has promised to bless us as we walk here in His kingdom!**

* *

Grow in Knowledge

1. "A time to rend, and a time to sow; a time to keep _____, and a time to speak;"

2. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day _____."

3. "Therefore the _____shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time."

4. "Unless the Lord had been my _____, my soul had almost dwelt in silence."

5. "But the Lord is in His holy _____; let all the earth keep silence before him."

6. "I have set _____ upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence."

7. "Keep silence before me, O islands: and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to _____."

8. "The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and _____ silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth:..."

9. :He sitteth _____ and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him."

10. "And when he had opened the seventh _____, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

"No Power on earth nor under the earth can make a man do wrong without his own consent."

The Power of Persuasion

by Bro. David B. Durrence
Waycross, Georgia

We are often persuaded to believe something based upon the evidence presented to us. An example might be that if you were selected to serve on a jury, there would be two views presented to you. Both of these views would be presented to you as truth, but you must decide which argument has persuaded you to believe as truth. You will also need to draw from your personal knowledge and wisdom. You will probably believe the one that presents the most credible evidence.

To persuade people is to prevail a certain belief upon them, or to induce a belief by convincing someone to yield to a prescribed thought. There are many ways that we are persuaded to believe or to do things. The rod of correction will often persuade children to be obedient. Sometimes people who have broken the laws of the land may be persuaded to change their ways by time spent in a prison or correctional institution. And sometimes we are persuaded by the encouragement of a dear friend or person in whom we hold in high esteem.

Pastors and preachers proclaim the word of God to persuade us to believe God Almighty, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, to believe that the Bible is truly the inspired word of God, and that God is a Spirit and we that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and Truth. As the people of the living God, we ought to be witnesses for God to persuade others and to be persuaded concerning the truth. We ought to believe the word of God, and we ought to teach others the word of God. Sometimes our experiences in life, and the things that we have both seen with our eyes and have felt in our hearts, and believe in the word of God are great sources for persuasion for ourselves and for a witness and persuasion to others.

For an example, let's consider the Apostle Paul. Before he was called Paul, he was Saul. Saul loved God and was busy about serving God, or so he believed, as he was seeking out Christians to persecute them, put them in chains, and even to approve of them being stoned to death. Saul was very misguided. Saul was convinced that Christians were against God! He went about to capture and persecute them. As Saul traveled to Damascus to find and persecute Christians, he had a dramatic experience with Jesus. Saul was out to persuade the Christians that what they were believing was wrong. Instead, he was persuaded to become a Christian!

A Christian is not just someone who professes the name of Jesus. Christians are those who "do the will of the Father". Remember the words of Jesus in Matt 7:21-23:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

After the Apostle Paul was converted (another name for persuaded), he believed God. His whole life was changed. Paul was "persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Paul spent the rest of his life preaching Jesus Christ and persuading men to follow Jesus. Please consider a few scriptures from the book of Acts which teach us that Paul reset his goals in life and gave his life completely to persuading others concerning Jesus:

Acts 13:43, "speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God".

Acts 18:4, "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks".

Acts 19:26, "Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:"

Paul even went before King Agrippa, in his own defense, and he told King Agrippa about how Jesus came to him on the Damascus road, and how Jesus was the one prophesied by the Prophets.

Acts 26:(24) "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. (25) But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. (26) For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. (27) King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. (28) Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. (29) And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds".

Paul was persuaded that God "is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 2:12).

Paul was a great man of God. He was convinced that Jesus is the Christ,

the promised Savior spoken of by the Prophets of old. He spent his life, since the Damascus Day experience, persuading men to believe and follow our Lord Jesus. He suffered greatly for his faithful service. However, he never wavered from his mission, which was to preach (persuade men) to believe and follow the Master. Paul lived and died for Jesus, for he was fully persuaded that Jesus was the Christ, "for he (Paul) mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18:28.)

Concerning Abraham, when God promised him that he would be the father of many nations, knowing that he was about 100 year old and his wife Sara was barren and her womb was dead, scripture tells us that "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness" (Romans 4:20-22).

Let us consider our own selves and ask, "What have I learned about God during my life? Am I persuaded that God is real and that He is alive and on His throne, ruling and reigning today? Do I believe that God is in control of the world? Am I persuaded that God has redeemed me from my sins and quickened me and made me alive in Christ Jesus? Have I learned that God loves me, and when I walk in the paths of righteousness God hears and answers my prayers? Am I fully persuaded that God is able to save me and protect me, no matter what comes in this world?" We should desire to be like Job, who said, "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25).

Conclusion

1 John 2:1-6, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we (we are persuaded) that we are in him. [6] He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked".

Dearly beloved, if you are persuaded that you are born again, and that the Holy Spirit abides in you, then you ought also to walk, even as Jesus himself walked. May God give us courage to walk like Jesus, and to persuade others to do the same

* *

Answers to Grow in Knowledge

1. silence - Ecclesiastes 3:7
2. long - Psalm 32:3
3. prudent - Amos 5:13
6. watchmen - Isaiah 62:6
7. judgment - Isaiah 41:1
8. keep - Lamentations 2:10
9. alone - Lamentations 3:28
10. seal - Revelation 8:1

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My Amazing Bible

By: Joseph Baldwin Haston

My Bible's a source of surprising wealth,
A storehouse of food for the spirit's health;
A refuge of peace from a world in strife;
a place of surcease from the storms of life:
A firm foundation beneath my feet;
A shelter and shield from
the noonday heat;
An unfailing help in the time of need;
A joy and comfort to all who read;
A Book that presents, as I read it more,
A friendly Face and an open door;
A plan for the man who is down-and-out;
A foal for the soul that is torn by doubt;
A chart for the heart that has lost its way;
A light in the night and
a guide by day;
A cure that is sure for
the sin-sick soul;
A calm and a balm
that can make men whole;
So planned and so grand
that it stands alone,
The greatest Book that the
world has ever known!

Salt of the Earth

by Bro. Richard A. Lee
Waycross, Georgia

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden underfoot of men" (Matthew 5:13).

Naturally speaking, we use salt for many purposes. One is to flavor our food. If the salt we use has no flavor, then it has no other purpose. If the flavor has gone out of the salt, then we may as well throw it out into the dirt.

As Christians, we are called to be different than the rest of the world. If we are just like the rest of the world, then we have no savour and are of no use to God. He will not allow us into his kingdom nor will He use us to further His kingdom.

Jesus said we are to be the salt of the earth. How are we to behave ourselves in order to be the salt of the earth? We are to be completely obedient to God's instruction through His word. Not only are we to obey the commandments by not committing the sins which aren't allowed, we are to do the things we are instructed to do.

The point is that through our beliefs and actions, we can have a positive influence on those around us who are living ungodly. In this way, we can be the salt of the earth! Remember, when we lose our savour, we have become just like the world. At that point, we have no more purpose and are good for nothing. We could be cast out and trodden under the feet of men.

While we are being the salt of the earth, I think it important to remember what happens naturally when we over salt our food. Too much salt can ruin the taste of our food, can cause us to have to throw the food out. We can't eat it. The same is probably true of those on whom we are trying to have a good influence. If we sprinkle the right amount of salt, it will improve the taste. There is a reason that a salt shaker has small holes: to be sure we don't use too much. Remember that it is God that gives us repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil,…" (II Timothy 2:24-26). We need God's wisdom to know how much salt to apply to a situation.

In Mark 9:43-50, we read where Jesus teaches that if our hand, foot, or eye offends us, that we should cut off or remove that part in order to save the rest of our body from hell fire. He describes that hell fire as a place "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" in all three examples.

Mark 9:49-50 says, "For everyone shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."

It seems that salt represents change, examination, correction, and judgment in the lives of God's children. Jesus said, "have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." I think He is saying that we should expect to see the necessity in making changes in those around us as they stray from God's word! We should also be making changes in our own lives as we stray from the straight and narrow way. If we have not lost our savour, we can see how we have strayed and will have a desire to correct the problem before we accept that sin and have our whole body cast into hell fire while we are on this earth. Jesus said in the last line of chapter 9, "have salt in yourselves, and peace one with another." How can you have peace? By having salt in yourselves. Be willing to examine yourself and make corrections.

In Luke 14:34-35, Jesus says, "salt is good: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus repeatedly warns us NOT to lose our savour if we want to retain any usefulness to Him.

Another natural use of salt is for the preservation of meat. Salt was once used to preserve meat by simply covering the meat with salt. The presence of salt prevented the meat from spoiling by first preventing the insects from being able to get to the meat. The salt also removed the moisture from the meat so the bacteria that would have spoiled the meat could not grow. Naturally, if you don't apply salt within the first 4 or 5 hours after slaughter, depending on the temperature, then the meat would probably spoil because the bacteria growth is so fast and the bacteria has reached a point that salt alone will not reverse the bacterial growth and decaying process. This is also true in our lives. When a child of God is left to himself it will lead to the complete destruction of that child of God. The same is true of a family, church, or nation that is not "salted with salt."

In a spiritual sense, the insects and bacteria could be temptations of the devil attacking a child of God. As noted, the bacteria can't grow in the absence of moisture. By removing the moisture, the meat won't spoil. Sin grows the best and goes most undetected in the presence of pride in the life of either an individual, family, church, or nation. Remember in I

Corinthians 5, when Paul rebuked the church in verse 2, “And ye are puffed up and have not mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.” I Corinthians 5:6 says, “Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump?” Paul was referring to the pride in the church, the fact that they were proud that they were showing love to that person that should have been removed from among them. Through Paul being the salt in this letter to them, he taught the Church at Corinth (and us today) that they should separate that man from the church, for correction, that he could repent and then be rejoined to the body, the body of the church having been purified. Paul helped them remove pride, brought humility, therefore preventing the ruin of the church. He was salt to them!

As we can see, salt is used to change things as well as to preserve or keep things from ruin. Jesus has emphasized in each example that if the salt has lost its savour, then it is good for nothing. Actually salt that has lost its savour is no longer salt. It has been changed. In order to be the salt of the world, we must be different from the world and apply ourselves in the different situations that surround us! By being what we should be according to God’s word, by being positive examples that do not follow the devil, and by warning others when they stray from the straight and narrow way we will be “the salt of the earth!”

What Do You Say?

by Elder Don McWilliams
(deceased)

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." (II Corinthians 9:15).

How often do we coax our children to show their appreciation for a gift? Whether it be a piece of gum, candy or any present, how often have we prompted our children with the words, "What do you say?" We always expect the proper responses of **‘Thank you!"**

It seems to me that I am often trying to prompt God's children into saying, "Thank you, God, for the unspeakable gift of Your precious Son." I even have to prompt myself to remember to say thank you each day for God's blessed Son, and for giving me the forgiveness of sins and for the assurance of eternal life. **WHAT DO YOU SAY?**

Each day we awaken to the dawn of another day, we have received a blessing from God. Each breath we take, each dew drop, sunrise, sunset, each glimpse of God's fingerwork in the beauty of nature, or hear a child's laughter, we have received a great blessing from God. **WHAT DO YOU SAY?**

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). God's gift of life eternal, certainly, is the greatest of all gifts. We strive in life to acquire fortunes, fame, social standing, political prominence and these all come to an end; but the gift of God is eternal. This truly is the gift that keeps on giving. **WHAT DO YOU SAY?**

Even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). How great God's love for His people must be! I think of the old song we sing, "Why Should He Love Me So?" The great mystery is not why did God only choose to save some of all humanity, but **why did He choose to save any?** In our lost, ruined, sinful condition, we were unlovely, unrighteous, not seeking after God, unprofitable, none good, with no fear of God before our eyes, yet: **God so loved!** He saved us by His amazing grace. **WHAT DO YOU SAY?**

We should ever remember from where our true blessings come. "Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of light, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17). God has given us so much through Jesus Christ, we should at least take time each day to thank Him for the beginning of that day, and at the end for his watch care. **WHAT DO YOU SAY?**



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For Sermons and Prayer Requests



Fishers of Men

by Bro. Joshua Leach
Waycross, Georgia

Matthew 4:18-22

18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 **And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**

20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

What does it mean to be a fisher of men? Children of God should try to persuade men to worship God, to repent from their wicked ways, and follow Christ. Children of God are fishers of men when they try to teach, correct, and encourage other children of God and when they lead children of God to take up their cross, join the church, and serve. Fishers of Men are trying to convert "the sinner from the error of his way" in order to "save a soul from death" (James 5:20). We cannot save someone from the eternal hell into the eternal heaven. Jesus accomplished that salvation on the cross of Calvary. However, we can and should save other children of God from experiencing a soul death (separation from the fellowship of Christ) as they live from day to day here on Earth.

Before becoming a fisher of men, you must follow Christ. Notice that Jesus said, "**Follow me**, and I will make you fishers of men." We must be disciples of Christ before we can make disciples. A disciple follows in Jesus' footsteps and keeps His commandments.

John 13:35 states, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Loving other children of God lures others to follow Christ, but "let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). One of the first things I noticed about the church at Waycross whenever I started attending is the abundant love the members and friends had for me and my family. When my sister's baby was sick, they sent flowers and called and prayed and manifested their love for her in a great way before she joined the church. Before I had been at the church for a month, I was given a mountain of clothing just out of the kindness and thoughtfulness of some of the ladies. When my other sister came over for Christmas from Alabama with a sick baby, some of the members talked to her about the situation and ended up calling a chiropractor who agreed to see her baby on Christmas day and the day after. There are countless other examples of love toward me and many others, and this great genuine love of the brethren is more evidence that these children of God are truly disciples. It lures others to be disciples as well.

Manifesting love requires us to serve one another. In Galatians 5:13-14, Paul states, "…by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In John 13:34, Jesus states, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." How did Jesus love us? "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:27-28). Jesus healed the sick and afflicted, fed the hungry, washed the apostles' feet, and served others throughout His life. To be fishers of men, we must have this kind of love, a love that is seen through the things we do and the way we serve others. It is one of the greatest baits a fisherman must have when fishing for men.

There are many other traits that we must have in order to be effective fishers of men. In II Timothy 2:22-26, we learn that we must "be gentle," "apt to teach," "patient," and meek. These are techniques of a good fisher of men. To "be gentle," we must avoid being abrasive or condescending. To be "apt to teach," we must be able to teach and must know what we are talking about which is possible through studying the Bible extensively. To be "patient," we must not get frustrated when people don't see truth right away and must not try to bombard them with too much at once. To instruct "in meekness" does not mean to be weak, but it means to be humble in your instruction. If we fish with these qualities, God may lead "those that oppose themselves" to "repentance" and to "the acknowledging of the truth" "that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil."

We also learn in II Timothy 2 that an effective fisher of men should avoid "foolish and unlearned questions," that we should not strive "about words to no profit," and that we should "shun profane and vain babblings."

What lures a fish to a hook? The bait! In order to catch a fish, the fish must be hungry. In order to convert sinners, they must have some hunger for righteousness and truth. Those that "hunger and thirst after righteousness" shall be filled, but who can fill a full cup? (Matthew 5:6). If someone thinks that they are not in need of instruction and shows no desire for truth, then don't cast "your pearls before swine,

lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6). "If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest" (Proverbs 29:9). In other words, when trying to fish for men, don't argue with a fool. It will only push him away further, and it will scare all the other "fish" away too.

We also need to use the right bait when teaching and instructing others. In I Corinthians 3:1-2, Paul refers to the recipients of the letter as "babes in Christ" and states, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." We must be careful not to choke babes in Christ with a juicy steak when they need milk. So often, we have "many things to say, and hard to be uttered" that we want to be able to tell others, but sometimes we have to keep planting seeds little by little when fishing for men. It goes back to being "patient." Fishing takes a lot of patience, waiting and reeling slowly. Likewise, we need to be patient when we teach others the truths out of God's word. Use milk when fishing for babes in Christ, but "strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Study Hebrews 5:11-14.)

I pray that we will follow Jesus, that He will guide us and lead us, and that He will make us all great fishers of men!

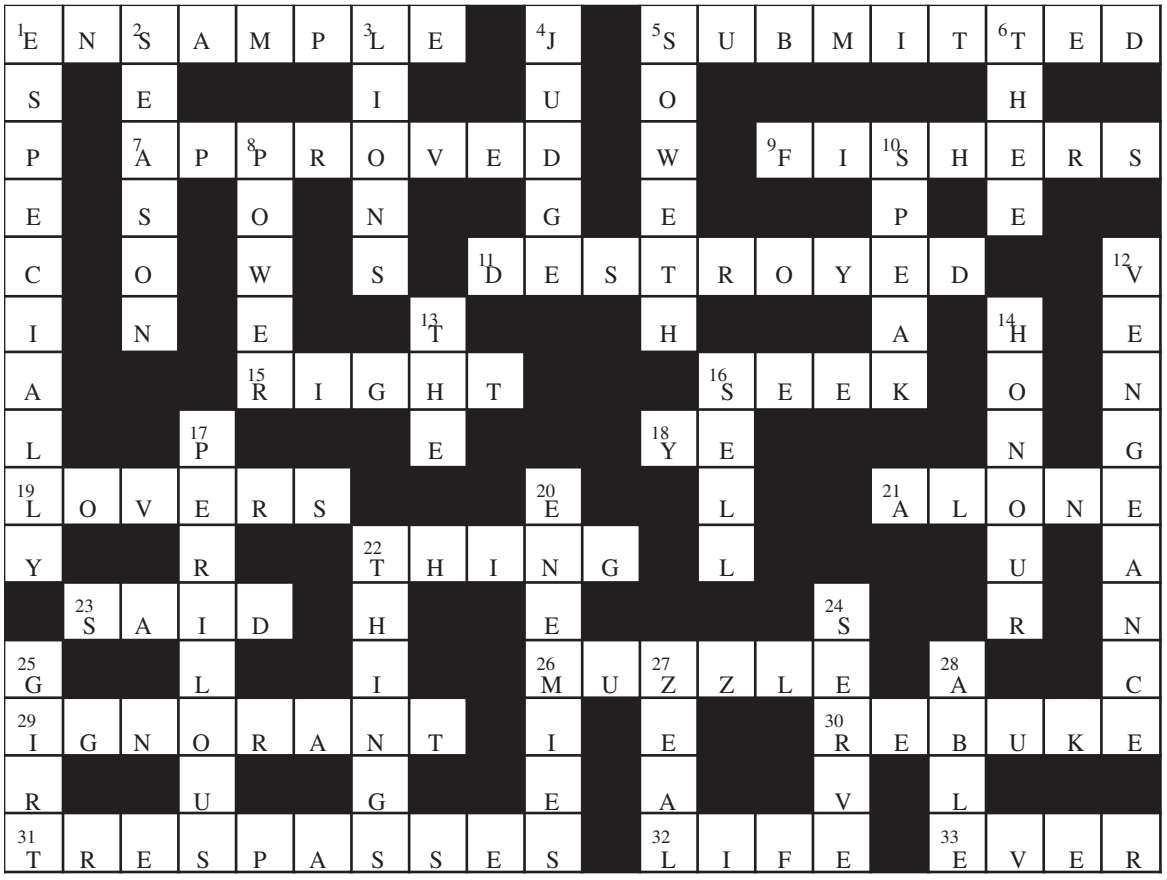
* * * \

Bible Reading Calendar for January

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Genesis 1,2	Matthew 1
2	Genesis 3,4,5	Matthew 2
3	Genesis 6,7,8	Matthew 3
4	Genesis 9,10,11	Matthew 4
5	Genesis 12,13,14	Matthew 5:1-26
6	Genesis 15,16,17	Matthew 5:27-48
7	Genesis 18,19	Matthew 6
8	Genesis 20,21,22	Matthew 7
9	Genesis 23,24	Matthew 8
10	Genesis 25,26	Matthew 9:1-17
11	Genesis 27,28	Matthew 9:18-38
12	Genesis 29,30	Matthew 10:1-23
13	Genesis 31,32	Matthew 10:24-42
14	Genesis 33,34,35	Matthew 11
15	Genesis 36,37	Matthew 12:1-21

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Genesis 38,39,40	Matthew 12:22-50
17	Genesis 41	Matthew 13:1-32
18	Genesis 42,43	Matthew 13:33-58
19	Genesis 44,45	Matthew 14:1-21
20	Genesis 46,47,48	Matthew 14:22-36
21	Genesis 49,50	Matthew 15:1-20
22	Exodus 1,2,3	Matthew 15:21-39
23	Exodus 4,5,6	Matthew 16
24	Exodus 7,8	Matthew 17
25	Exodus 9,10	Matthew 18:1-20
26	Exodus 11,12	Matthew 18:21-35
27	Exodus 13,14,15	Matthew 19-:1-15
28	Exodus 16,17,18	Matthew 19:16-30
29	Exodus 19,20,21	Matthew 20:1-16
30	Exodus 22,23,24	Matthew 20:17-34
31	Exodus 25,26	Matthew 21:1-22

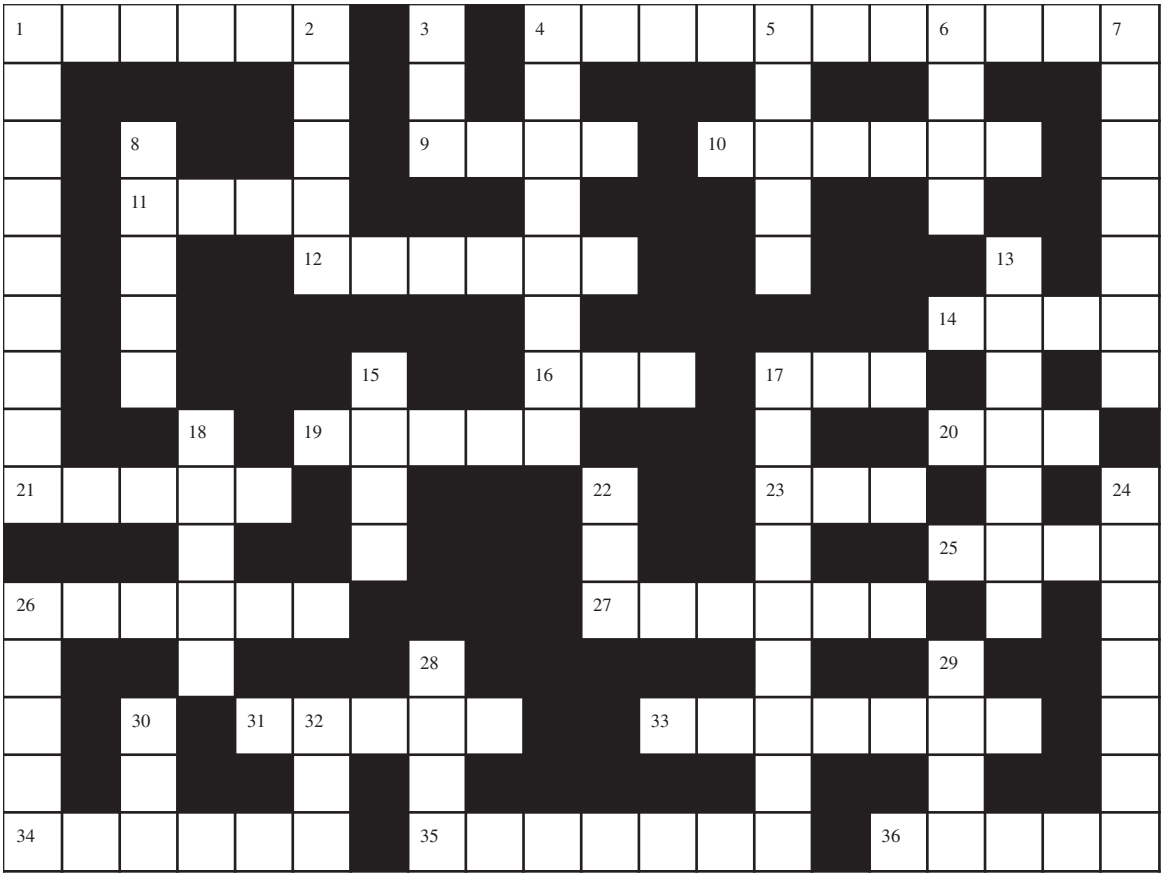
ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE DECEMBER 2014



Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "Therefore they say unto God, depart from us; for we _____ not the knowledge of thy ways." 4. "And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the _____ of the earth:.." 9. "...and _____ can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" 10. "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never _____, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." 11. "He saith _____ them, but whom say ye that I am?" 12. "Moreover he must have a good _____ of them which are without;." 14. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that _____ me." 16. "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath _____ revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." 17. "..._____ my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." 19. "We love him, because he _____ loved us." 20. "_____ the truth, and sell it not:..." 21. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and _____; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." 23. "And they said, Some say that thou _____ John the Baptist..." 25. "For I _____ them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." 26. "...and he that believeth on me shall never _____." 27. "...because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also _____ thee..." 31. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their _____; and my people love to have it so:..." 33. "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not _____ against it." 34. " ....he that cometh to me shall never _____;..." 35. "And ye also shall bear _____, because ye have been with me from the beginning." 36. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation _____ to be revealed in the last time."



DOWN

1. "My people are _____ for lack of knowledge: ..." 2. ‘ ‘Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the _____ of his way shall save a soul from death,..." 3. "...he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I the _____ of man am?" 4. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be _____;..." 5. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the _____ of life:..." 6. "But I said unto you, that ye _____ have seen me, and believe not." 7. "There is a way which _____ right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." 8. "But God said unto me, Thou shalt not _____ an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, hast shed blood." 13. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are _____ as nothing:.." 15. "Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore _____ us this bread." 17. "A bishop then must be _____, the husband of one wife; vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach;" 18. "... lest he fall into reproach and the _____ of the devil." 22. "Blessed are the merciful: _____ they shall obtain mercy" 24. "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all _____;" 26. "Pilate saith unto him, what is _____?..." 28. "If ye _____ these things, happy are ye if ye do them." 29. "...he that winneth souls is _____." 30. "(For if a _____ know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" 32. "Brethern, if any of you do _____ from the truth, and one convert him;"

If I Were the Devil

by Paul Harvey

If I were the Prince of Darkness I would want to engulf the whole earth in darkness.

I'd have a third of its real estate and four-fifths of its population, but I would not be happy until I had seized the ripest apple on the tree- thee!

So I would set about, however necessary, to take over the United States.

I would begin with a campaign of whispers.

With the wisdom of a serpent, I would whisper to you as I whispered to Eve: "Do as you please."

To the young I would whisper that "the Bible is a myth." I would convince them that man created God, instead of the other way around. I would whisper that "what is bad is good and what is good is nerdish."

In the ears of the young married I would whisper that work is debasing, that cocktail parties are good for you. I would caution them not to be extreme in religion, in patriotism, in moral conduct.

And the old I would teach to pray- to say after me- "Our father which art in Washington."

Then I'd get organized.

I'd educate authors in how to make lurid literature exciting so that anything else would appear dull, uninteresting.

I'd threaten TV with dirtier movies and vice versa.

I'd infiltrate unions and urge more loafing, less work. Idle hands usually work for me.

I'd peddle narcotics to whom I could; I'd sell alcohol to ladies and gentlemen of distinction; I'd tranquilize the rest with pills.

If I were the Devil I would encourage schools to refine young intellects but neglect to discipline emotions; let those run wild.

It would take a court order to get God evicted from the schoolhouse but with the assistance of some preachers- I'd get that court order.

With flattery and promises of power I would get the courts to vote against God and in favor of pornography.

Thus I could evict God from the schoolhouse, then from the courthouse, then from the houses of Congress.

Then in His own churches I'd substitute psychology for religion and defy science. That way men would become smart enough to create super weapons but not wise enough to control them.

If I were Satan I'd make the symbol of Easter an egg and the symbol of Christmas a bottle. I would embrace religion until it suffocates.

If I were the Devil I'd take from those who have and give to those who wanted until I had killed the incentive of the ambitious.

I would demand "rights" for wrongdoers until the courts shackled lawmen. I'd let men hide behind a fig leaf of "privacy rights" while they misused their own children.

In other words, if I were Satan I'd just keep right on doing what he's doing.

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Portion of a Letter to a Dear Sister in the Church

You and I have lived long enough to have experienced the best of two worlds: one where times were very hard, times when we had almost none of the "modern-day conveniences. "We lived in the times when family was very important, close, loved each other, when three or four generations lived in the same house together as we took care of grandparents and great-grandparents, times when children honored their parents, obeyed them, did not talk back, and knew what would happen if they "got out of line." We had churches that were full of people and full of the Spirit of God; people really read their Bibles and their word was their honor and people did not have to sign their names to know they meant what they said. We lived in times when there was not such a thing as "insurance." There was no health insurance, no fire insurance, no disability insurance, no medicare,no medicaid, no welfare programs, no car insurance, no crop insurance, no liability insurance... a time when there were very few lawyers, and to "sue someone" was unheard of! We lived in a time when those who did not work did not eat! We lived in a time when we knew it was ungodly to support lazy people, to support women who were having children out of wedlock, to support men and women living together or committing fornication and adultery. We lived in a time when there was no such thing as television; and then when televisions were invented, the programs were only wholesome with good family and Biblical values, good moral lessons were taught, programs were entertaining and pictured complete, godly families. It was a time when "Father Knows Best," "Leave It To Beaver," and all programs pictured godly men and women... women who were homemakers, women who loved their husbands and husbands love their wives, and children honored their parents, and parents loved their children; families where meals were all "home-cooked," eaten together at the table, and family members communicated with each other. Families read their Bibles together and prayed together.

And now we live in another world where we have very comfortable, warm homes in the winter, cool homes in the summer, hot and cold running water, inside bathrooms, washing machines, driers, walk-in bathtubs, food of any kind so easy to get, medical technology able to do amazing works on the body, technology where we can be aware of everything all over the world, communicate with telephones, cell phones, computers, etc. We can now cook meals in three or four minutes, or drive by numerous "fast-food joints" to get delicious junk. In this new world, most families are falling apart: mothers are working outside the home rather than working to make a home, mothers and fathers are not spending time with their children, children have no respect for their parents, or teachers, or those in any position of authority. There are several televisions in each home so each person can watch what they want, and most of the programs are undermining every Biblical principle of righteousness! How many programs show a loving wife and mother who is a homemaker? If a family is shown together, fathers are depicted as worthless morons. Adultery and fornication is the norm, homosexuality is promoted, pornography is rampant, profanity is common-place. The sewage and mind pollution pouring into children and adults is so rampant, going to church two or three hours a week is of little or no value. Even in Church, the standard of righteousness has virtually disintegrated. Divorce and remarriage, adultery, and fornication are accepted in most so-called churches. Now, homosexuality is beginning to be accepted. The singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs has been replaced with entertaining "rock and roll" type music that would have been accepted in the "honky tonks" of the old world we lived in. Preaching the word has become short "sermonettes" and little talks laced with jokes and anecdotes appealing to the flesh.

It is so refreshing to occasionally find a modern-day home with all the modern-day conveniences, but God is still loved and is the Lord of the home! How beautiful to see a husband who loves his wife as Christ loved the Church and is the spiritual leader in the home. It is wonderful to see a virtuous woman as described in Proverbs 31. It thrills our soul to find a family where love for each other, love for God, and love for His word are more important than worldly pleasures. It is a beautiful sight to behold a home where barriers have been established that will not allow the pollutions of the word inside the home. It is a blessing to see parents assume their role as the teachers of their children instead of turning that responsibility over to the corrupt anti-Christ state and government.

How blessed we are to have a few Churches that still stand up for the truth of God's word, that worship Him, where the Spirit of God is powerfully manifest, where voices blend together in spiritual worship in singing, where it is truly a house of prayer, where the word of God is preached in power and demonstration of the Spirit! How blessed we are to see His meeting house filled with His people who truly want to be servants of God, followers of Jesus, regardless of the cost, persecution, or ridicule! "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," to be united in the truth, to be united under the head of the Church, Jesus Christ, to be united as the body of Christ, a building fitly framed together! How thankful we should be to be able to be part of the city that is et on a hill whose light cannot be hid! How sweet it is to want to be in that city instead of in the darkness of this world!

You are one of the reasons the Lord is still blessing the Waycross Primitive Baptist Church. You are a virtuous woman who is a great example to the younger ladies. They love you and look up to you! Your quiet humble spirit has converted several of them to be more like Christ would have us to be. You preach better sermons by your life than I do by mine. THANK YOU for being a sweet sheep in the sheepfold!

We love you!

Bro. Billy