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Biola Hour Highlights

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Featuring Edited October Messages

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A Police Officers View of Life

A Personal Testimony

By: Robert Vernon, Deputy Chief,
Los Angeles Police Department and
Member of Biola Board of Trustees

Policemen aren't a great deal unlike you. As an example, he will experience the emotion of fear. At first that came as a shock to me. It didn't seem that policemen should be afraid of anything. Watching television programs it doesn't appear that they ever get scared.

I had been in the department just a few months, and only out of the police academy a few days. This particular morning when I reported for work I discovered my partner had called in sick. The sergeant announced, "Vernon, you're working by yourself today." I was walking a beat at the time and assigned to one of the tough downtown areas. All at once there was a funny feeling in my stomach. That was bad enough, but when the sergeant told me, "I'd like to see you after roll call," I knew something was up. Reporting to the watch commander's office he explained, "Look, Vernon, we're trying to find a guy who escaped from San Quentin Prison. He's armed and considered dangerous. Furthermore, he vows he won't be taken alive. I'm telling you this because we think he's on your beat!" That was rather unnerving as I thought to myself, "Thanks alot, Sarge!"

With a wave of his arm he sent me on my way with the final word, "Go over to 'R and I' and pick up the guy's mug." At Records and Identification I got a copy of the crook's photograph. It had both front and side views. Not wanting to be too obvious in referring to it as I walked the streets, I took off my uniform cap and slipped it inside where the manufacturer's nametag is placed. Then, putting my hat back on I was ready for whatever might come.

Going down the street, if I passed by a fellow who looked kind of similar to what I recalled of the mug shot, I just sort of raised my hat and took a quick glance. Of course, the fellow wouldn't know what I was doing and I guess these people felt I was the friendliest cop they'd ever seen. This went on most of the day. Finally, about four o'clock in the afternoon I walked into a bar--on business, of course--and right at the end of the counter sits this fellow! Now, I don't mind telling you, that really got me scared. It came as a complete shock to have that encounter. I was afraid! First of all, I had a decision to make. Should I do anything, or just turn around and walk out like I'd never been there? That would have been the easiest solution on the surface. Still, I decided if I was going to be a policeman I'd have to act in spite of my fears.

The fellow apparently hadn't seen me, while most everyone else had. He'd been talking about not being taken alive. One by one everyone else was getting away from

him when they saw me come in. With all the nerve I could muster, I walked up behind him. For a few moments, all the training I'd received at the police academy just kind of left me. I was so scared I did a very strange thing. I took off my hat and shoved it around in front of him, and asked, "Hey, mister, is this you?" I can't believe I really did that. And evidently he was amazed by my approach, too. He could easily see the picture of him with the number beneath it. He knew what kind of hat it was; there was a big badge on the front. He turned around slowly and answered, "Yeah, it sure is."

By then I had my hand on my clamshell holster. This is the type that pops open automatically when you press a button. And it makes a very distinctive sound. If you've heard it once you know immediately what it is; a very sobering sound. As soon as he said, "Yeah, it sure is," whamo, I hit that button on the holster. Now obviously this fellow had been around cops before. He was well aware of the sound. When he glanced up quickly there was my gun just about ready to go off in his ear. Incidentally, I was having some trouble with it...I couldn't keep it still in my hand. Somewhat panicked the fellow urged, "Now, wait a minute, officer, d-d-don't sh-sh-shoot. What do you want me t-t-t-to do?" I reached around quickly and grabbed my handcuffs. "Here," I insisted, "I want to put these on you." Do you know what? He actually helped me put them on.

It was sometime later after I got him booked at the station that the watch commander asked the fellow some pointed questions. "Wait a minute," he queried. "I thought you weren't going to be taken alive! Here the arresting officer tells me you didn't even go for your gun!" Do you know what he told him? He said, "Listen, one look at that kid, the panic on his face and his gun waving around. Boy, I knew one move and it'd be certain death." I guess he was right, too.

Of course, that's been many years ago. The Los Angeles Police Department doesn't operate that way anymore; you can rest at ease. We don't put tookies fresh from the academy out in the field by themselves. Times have changed in these two decades.

Policemen are very much like you in many ways, while at the same time, in other areas a little different. One thing is that we're trained to be objective. We can't allow emotions to cloud our judgment. For example, we can't go into court to testify in a situation and comment, "Your honor, this man is guilty!" The judge would want to know, "Why is he guilty, officer?" Your response wouldn't hold water if you answered, "Well, I just have a certain feeling about it, your honor. He is guilty, I'm convinced of it." The court is only interested in the facts. This is why we're trained to be objective. Some have wondered, how can a person skilled in objectivity not rely on feelings when it comes to Christianity and his personal relationship to God?

Let me suggest that I believe God is for a number of reasons. First of all, there has to be faith as far as one's relationship with the Lord. The Bible reminds us, "But without faith, it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is a vital element. This is the necessary hinge to our relationship with the Lord. At the same time, Scripture urges us, "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15). This suggests that our trusting isn't unintellectual; it has to be based upon reason.

I believe God IS because of the accuracy of His Word. I believe that God IS because of the practicality of having a direct and personal relationship with Him.

Believe me, it works. I have seen lives completely changed. Furthermore, I've seen God work in my own life. The Bible says, "For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation." You see, His authority isn't temporary whatsoever. "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the hosts of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth, and no one can ward off his hand." Never be persuaded otherwise; God is in control.

Not too many years ago, when I was captain in the Venice division, I had an experience which caused my wife and I to fall on our knees before the Lord to admit, "Heavenly Father, you are in control; you really are." I'd been sent out to Venice right after the trouble. The community and the police were against one another. Without going into the details, it finally reached a fever pitch. Several conflicts occurred between the police and citizens so that the captain then in charge was removed. Chief Ed Davis sent me out explaining, "Vernon, I want you to bring the community and the police back together again." Again, there was a good deal of fear and trembling and a lot of prayer. I used to pray every morning on the freeway. I had a set schedule, remembering my family at this turn-off, my friends at that turn-off, some missionaries at another. And when I got to a certain point I began interceding for Venice, "God, give me wisdom to make good decisions today so that the people who live in this area can live in peace."

Well, we had a great year and a half in Venice. The citizens and the police were coming closer and closer together. The Lord was doing some wonderful things for us. At the same time there was a group taking money from the federal government, acting as sort of "buffers" between the police and the community. Since there was really no need for them, their funding was about to run out. Of course, they did not want the money to stop so they started making problems between the police and the community.

All of a sudden things went from bad to worse. Finally, they decided to bomb the station, trying to get me. We had an intelligence officer in their organization who tipped us off so we frustrated their bombing attempts. Then they decided to try to get me personally, trying to find out where I lived. Many nights I recall going home with a helicopter overhead telling about the car tailing me. I'd take certain turns in order to lose them. As you can understand, that was a little unnerving. Not because I was worried about myself, but rather I didn't want anything to happen to my wife and children. I knew they were trying to get to them. Our family was praying in earnest.

Fortunately, all of the enemy's causes were frustrated. Finally, in their last-ditch effort they decided to appear before the County Human Relations Committee meeting in the Venice area on a particular day. Unfortunately, I had only gotten about two days' notice so there wasn't anything we could do to disprove their allegations. We discovered they had paid liars who planned to show up telling false stories about me. Without proper time to prepare, it would be hard to refute. It was a real question how to handle the situation. A spotter in a helicopter wouldn't help me here.

That night at home I told my wife, "Esther, we're going to have to pray extra hard tonight. Something's going to happen tomorrow. They're going to try to get me. It's a last-ditch attempt with a political maneuver." So we prayed and prayed. Just before going to sleep I turned to Psalm 75 since we were going through this book at the time. The paraphrase we were using got the meaning across very graphically. Just listen to the words, "How we thank you, Lord! Your mighty miracles give proof that you care." I stopped and thought out loud,

"I wonder what miracle the Lord's going to work to give proof that He cares, Esther?" My wife agreed, "You really think there might be a miracle?" I couldn't feel it was simply happenstance that we read chapter 75. We had a regular program of Bible reading which made this portion the one for this night.

Going on, we read, "Yes," the Lord replies, "and when I am ready, I will punish the wicked. Though the earth shakes and all its people live in turmoil, yet its pillars are firm." After mentioning an earthquake, verses six and seven affirm, "For promotion and power come from nowhere on earth, but only from God. He promotes one and deposes another." "Wow," I thought. "That's great to know. I don't have to worry about man. The Lord can take care of all opposition."

The last verse tells us in the words of Jehovah, "I will cut off the strength of evil men, and increase the power of good men in their place." What a blessing that was. I had to add, "Amen." After closing the Bible, I went to bed and had a great night's sleep, resting peacefully with that promise until six the next morning. That just happened to be February a couple years ago when we had our famous Los Angeles earthquake. I'm sure those of you in the area remember it. In our house it felt like we were on top of the fault itself. We have a two-story structure that was built in 1901. It's an oldie but a goodie, however, it really shakes! In fact, my boy upstairs literally was thrown out of bed. When the house stopped reverberating, we all gathered in the kitchen, thankful we were all alive and unharmed. Then, all of a sudden, it hit me. I grabbed Esther by the shoulders and said, "You remember what we read last night?" And she lit up, "Earthquake!" The Bible promised, "By my miracles I'll prove that I care." We both agreed. "Wow, kind of heavy, Lord!"

Without even having shaved, I jumped in the car and drove to work. We had to get mobilized immediately with calls coming in from all over. People needed help and evacuation. Those were perilous times. One freeway ramp collapsed along with buildings and hospitals. When I arrived at the station my lieutenants were already waiting. As soon as I entered the room they all wanted to know the plan. Before sitting down, still thinking about God's promise in Psalm 75, I explained, "Gentlemen, you're not going to understand this, but I feel partially responsible for the earthquake this morning." There wasn't time for a full explanation at the moment, but the Lord was wonderfully working.

Those paid informers and liars who had planned to appear before the civil service commission were so literally shook up that they didn't show up. In fact, the only people who did attend the hearing were those from the community within walking distance. They came to testify frankly, "This is a wonderful program Captain Vernon has going for us. We want more of it." So, in essence, the commission commended, "Right on, Vernon. Keep in there pitching." I walked away with a smile declaring, "Praise God; He's in control."

What a realization is this faith experience and the concept that the Lord has the reins. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31). The Lord does not have to remake His decisions. The first time is the right way. He never makes any mistakes, and His wisdom is perfect. He alone knows the human heart and has all of the facts.

I remember boarding an airplane in Yakima, Washington. I'd just spoken to a large meeting of police officials. About 38 of them had come to know Jesus Christ as Savior, including the sheriff of the county. On my way back home I wanted to share this with somebody. Walking up the plane ramp I prayed, "Lord, it's going to be about a two-hour flight. I'd just as soon not waste time. Can you make it

interesting for me? Let me sit next to someone with whom I can share and rap."

Late getting on the plane, I looked around but couldn't find a seat. I had to walk down the aisle, and finally found just one seat left. I couldn't help but think, "Well, this has got to be providential." As I turned to see who would be next to me, I was a little surprised to find a lady in her seventies sitting there. Now, I'm going to have to confess, I was a little disappointed. I questioned, "Lord, is anything really going to come of this? You're sure you have me in the right seat? Why couldn't it be some young businessman with a large corporation who'd be able to contact many people? Why not some young person who has a whole exciting life ahead?" I sat down, and as soon as we were airborne and the safety belt sign went off, this woman leaned over, friendly-like, "Good afternoon, young man." I responded, "Hello, ma'm." She wanted to know, "What are you up here for?" I replied, "Well, I've been speaking to a group of men." She cupped her ear, "What's that?" It was then I found out the second thing about her, she was hard of hearing. So, I had to tell her in a loud voice that I was there to speak to a group of men. Not satisfied, she wanted to know what kind of men. Again I had to repeat the information. Pretty soon everybody in the first five rows knew what I was doing up there in Yakama.

Unfortunately, the elder woman was very inquisitive and talkative. She wouldn't give up, "Well, if you're a policeman and you're speaking, what are you talking about?" I could see there was only one way to handle the problem. I opened my briefcase and handed her my outline, "These are the points right here." But the situation wasn't solved. She told me, "I can't read so well. Would you mind going over them for me?" I had no choice. "All right," I began. "Here's the first thing." Again straining to hear she stopped me, "What's that? I missed it." So, everybody in the first five rows heard what point number one was.

To make a long story short, I went through my whole message, point by point. It must have taken twenty minutes or so. Everybody in the first portion of the plane heard the message. I know they heard, and I'm not exaggerating this, because while I was going over the material she wanted to know, "Does the Bible really say that?" I assured her, "It really does." Then I started reading the passage. The fellow leaned over the back of the seat in front of me and wanted to know, "Where's that found?" After I'd made another point, the man across the aisle made some comment. So, I soon found out that they were all interested.

It wasn't long before one of the stewardesses came by. She saw all these people talking back and forth, over the seats, across the aisle, and wondered what was going on. She looked at me and stopped short, "Wait a minute, mister, what do you have in your hand? Isn't that a Bible?" I held it up so she could see, "Yes, it is." She shook her head in disbelief, "You don't look stupid. How can you really believe that thing?" I let her know my stand without any hesitation at all. Looking at her more carefully, I noted her nametag which was pretty obviously Jewish. I wanted to be sure, "Are you Jewish?" She nodded in agreement. I continued, "Do you believe the Old Testament?" She wasn't so sure, "Well, yeah, I guess so." "Have you read Isaiah 53?" I asked. She thought, "I don't think so." So I turned to it and handing it to her, invited her to read it. She took it quickly and out loud read, "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. . ." "Oh," a light seemed to come on, "You think it's talking about Jesus, huh?" I responded quickly, "I didn't say that." She read on so that others could hear.

Giving the Bible back, I wanted to know, "Have you ever read Psalm 22? It was written by King David." Handing it to her I knew she was reading words that run

something like, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Then it goes on to describe in vivid detail the crucifixion, even to the point of the piercing of the hands and feet, and the casting of lots. She was obviously astonished, "I've never read this before. Excuse me." Moving my hand from the armrest, she sat down on the edge of my seat. She stayed so long that the head supervisor had to come by and order, "Hey, you're supposed to be serving dinner. Get back on your job." Quickly turning, she had a twinkle in her eye, "I'll be back."

I want to tell you, we had a fantastic time all the way between Yakima and Los Angeles. When I got off that airplane I had to pray, "God, forgive me. You don't make mistakes." Friends, I'm convinced, as sure as anything, if you're one of God's family, walking in His will, there's not a thing that can occur to you that isn't by the Lord's design. God's in charge, and someday you'll understand why certain things have happened. The Savior knows you better than you know yourself. God is in complete control. Since He is perfect, and He loves you, why not entrust Him with all of your needs and cares? It'll be the greatest decision of your entire life.

Panel Discussions

Panel: Dr. Chase, Dr. Feinberg and Dr. Sutherland

Q. *"After the Rapture of the Church will the Holy Spirit still be in the world? If so, what will His work be during the Tribulation, and also, what will He be doing during eternity?"*

A. II Thessalonians two helps in answering the first part of this question. Beginning with verse six, "Now ye know what restraineth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now hindereth will continue to hinder until he be taken out of the way." The One who hinders the working of evil is none other than the Holy Spirit Himself. He works in and through His Church. He continues to hinder the mystery of iniquity until the wicked one is revealed whom the Lord will consume and destroy (II Thess. 2:8). The Holy Spirit will not be operating as He is now. His ministry will be more as it was in Old Testament times. He came upon individuals then to guide and direct them. He will be here in the world during the Tribulation in the same way, ministering to the 144,000 Jewish evangelists. He will be touching the hearts of tribulation saints so that they will accept the Lord. We know that the Trinity will be in operation throughout eternity. Whether we will see the Holy Spirit with our resurrection eyes, no one knows. Certainly His presence will be manifested in many ways throughout eternity. Certainly "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him."

Q. *"What do you think is wrong with the doctrine of 'the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man'?"*

A. It may sound good on the surface and thus take some unsuspecting people off guard. It is sad to realize how many things have gotten into our thinking without having any definitive basis in Scripture. Nowhere in all the 66 books of the Bible will you find the expressions, "Fatherhood of God" and the "brotherhood of man." More importantly, you won't discover that for which it stands. It isn't a biblical doctrine. Those who hold liberal views erroneously would teach this. Such suggestions would bypass Genesis 3 relative to the fall of man. It bypasses the need of the Lord Jesus Christ to die on Calvary's cross. He is the just One who died for us the unjust that He might bring us to God. Make this your tell-tale measuring rod. Anything that belittles the work of Christ isn't of God. Anything that makes little of sin, or the actuality of it, isn't of God. If sin is not very bad then you don't have to have a Great Physician, a Great Savior, a Great Deliverer. We admit that one God has created us. But the Fatherhood of God is different than the Creatorhood of God. Everybody ought to believe in the latter. We can only know God as Father through personal faith in Christ (John 14:6). This places the Lord in the highest sense of the term, and makes

every other believer our brother. The truth concerning the Body of Christ is where we know the real brotherhood of believers. It isn't man-made.

Q. "Were angels with God before He created all things in Genesis 1? If so, how did sin come to Lucifer?"

A. We aren't told the specific time when angels were created. Doubtless it was before man because there were fallen angels who followed Satan. We assume that they were created before the world began because Satan was found in the Garden of Eden when man first appeared. We find the answer on how sin came to Lucifer in Isaiah 14:12-14. Six times Satan declares, "I will do this, I will be like that." Sin entered when pride came into the mind of Lucifer, previously one of the highest of the created angelic beings. Unfortunately the sin of pride is the most prevalent today in the minds of human beings. Pride was the original sin. Lucifer committed it first and he has been working effectively on people with that same sin from the time of the creation of Adam even to the present.

Q. "Could you please explain the meaning of the four living creatures and the wheels as they appear in Ezekiel?"

A. This happens to be in a book which has much symbolism. Don't avoid this tremendous book. It is a veritable dictionary for the symbols in the book of the Revelation. "Four living creatures" is the way it ought to read rather than "beasts." These in the first chapter of Ezekiel can be equated with those of Revelation 10:20. They are cherubim symbolizing certain traits of God, administrative avenues and agents in heaven. The wheels don't indicate the machine age as some have thoughtlessly suggested. It is rather as we find in Romans 8 where "All things are working together for good." There is motion, direction, and power. A certain goal must be reached. This first chapter of Ezekiel is one of the fabulous passages of the Bible. Verse 28 of this first chapter gives us a beautiful summary. It was revealed to Ezekiel as "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Notice the spiritual character and nature of God before the incarnation and how it is guarded.

Q. "I work with individuals who aren't concerned with Christianity at all. They simply trample it on the ground and often say things which are very blasphemous. When I hear these things I become very emotional at their insensitivity and overwhelmed with grief. What can I do to control my feelings?"

A. No Christian should ever become complacent or disinterested in our love for the Gospel message. One should be sensitive to blasphemy. There are several ways to overcome your feelings. Most of the time you can walk away from the sort of conversation you have mentioned. By your example you can keep doing your work. Furthermore, let your testimony be known once and for all. It is possible that people blaspheme and say things simply to get your "goat" as a child of God. They would like you to show your feelings of anger even though it may be righteous anger. In this way they feel they have won a victory. The other thing is to control your feelings, tending to your own business. Don't allow them to get you so excited that you are apt to tell them off. They know how you believe and what you stand for. They are the ones who will have to answer to God for what they are saying and doing. You can have victory if you keep quiet. After telling them your convictions, let it go at that.

Q. "I understand the Antichrist will sign a treaty with Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation as the leader of a ten-nation confederacy. How can the return of Christ for the Church be imminent as it seems to me that conditions aren't

ripe? There is no such leader in a position to sign a treaty today."

A. The Rapture is based on a number of passages in the New Testament, particularly I Thessalonians 4:13-18. Christ is now at the right hand of the Father and has been ever since the ascension. He will one day come back to claim His Bride (John 14:1-3). He hasn't failed on any of His promises yet! The specific time of the Rapture no one knows. The Lord has told us to be ready, watchful, alert, and awake! It is correct (Daniel 9:27) that the Antichrist will sign a treaty with Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation. Daniel 2 and 7, and Revelation 13 and 17 tell of the ten-nation confederacy. The one part of the puzzle not yet revealed is the personality. This is because the Church is still here on earth. This sinister figure is not here yet. Never sell Bible prophecy short. No matter how impossible or improbable things may seem, everything God has said will literally come to pass. No word of God shall fail.

Q. "Why were no more books of the Bible written after Revelation?"

A. No one knows, except that it obviously wasn't God's will. The Lord certainly could have chosen to have more books written, but He didn't. The Revelation is the book which presents the consummation of all prophetic Scriptures. In Genesis we find the beginning of this world; in Revelation there is the end of this world. In Genesis we find the beginning of sin; in Revelation the end of sin. In Genesis there is the beginning of the human race; in Revelation, the final destiny of the human race. In Genesis there is the beginning of nations; in Revelation the end of nations. In Genesis the first mention of Satan; in Revelation the final destiny of the devil is shown. There is the promise of the coming Redeemer in Genesis; in Revelation the Redeemer has come and the result of His coming is noted. Genesis is the book of beginnings; Revelation is just exactly what it means: the revelation of Jesus Christ. The whole Bible is the story of the unfolding of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Revelation was completed there was nothing more to say. Everything God wanted man to know is revealed within the 66 books between Genesis and Revelation.

Q. "If a person has vowed to spend as much time studying the Bible, praying and witnessing as he devotes to another activity, may he pay money or do some other kind of service in place of the original vow? How does Leviticus 27 apply to all of this?"

A. Leviticus 27 indicates certain things one may dedicate to the Lord. If he finds he has another use for it, he will then give money in its place. Not everybody could take all of his flocks if he was going down three times a year to the Passover and Feast of Pentecost. It would be a physical impossibility. What he could do is to turn that into money. Then when he got down to the temple he could convert it back into that which could be an offering and the like. We must realize some things that we give to the Lord are to be given Him just the way we say, not taking something else for it. Now we three here are ministers of the Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ. God wants to have and deserves the best. Even the pagans gave their gods the best. Why shouldn't we do it for our heavenly Father? I would certainly take my unauthorized hands off the life of any child of mine if I had dedicated them to the Lord. Remember, the Lord wants us before He wants our money. This is the beautiful principle in II Corinthians 8 and 9 where Paul is talking to the Corinthian believers. The Macedonians, out of their poverty, gave the abundance of their liberality and even plead with them to take it. The secret was that they had first given themselves unto the Lord. This is the same dedication that we need today.

Q. "Why does jealousy still exist in the heart of a believer? The Spirit of Christ is supposed to provide the power to overcome such negative emotions?"

A. The reason is that we are still in the body of this humiliation. Keep in mind that when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior the old nature isn't made over, nor the old nature converted. We become a new creation in Christ Jesus. The old nature of the believer is just as sinful after a person is converted as it was before. If the old nature takes control then jealousy and other contributing factors of the old nature become evident. There is no jealousy in our minds and hearts when the Lord Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit is in control. If we could live moment by moment in such a way that He would have complete control, then there would be no jealousy. We are to reckon ourselves dead unto sin. Still we have to recognize the fact that even the old nature is still active in its death throes. It will continue until we get rid of it in the resurrection. Our new nature will have complete control and we will be like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. "Are we in the Church age to disregard those parts of the Bible written for another age? How are we to decide what sections are for us today? Does this relate to the issue of tongues being for today?"

A. We mustn't ever disregard any part of the Bible. II Timothy 3:16 reminds us that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. That means all of the Old Testament as well as the New. It is all authoritative and inerrant. When God told Adam, "You are not to touch of the tree," you and I don't have to regard that passage as relating to us. We don't disregard it; it has a tremendous message for us today. Whatever God tells us to do is with infinite wisdom. We should pay certain attention to it. Every age has its requirements as well as its blessings. As parents and grandparents we talk to our children a certain way when they were three, a different way when they were thirteen, and still a different way when they were twenty-three. Not that you changed your moral principles or spiritual outlook, but you spoke according to their ability to understand. You unfolded your will to them as they were in their development and growth, able to capture and understand. We in the Church age aren't bound to live by things that are particularly and evidently applicable to another dispensation. In every age there is still only one God. There are still three Persons in the Godhead. The Lord transcends all these things. The Bible tells us that we live in post-Calvary time. The death of Christ is an historic fact. It is the great dividing line of all history. We can never disregard the death of Christ. We must take it into full account and the post-resurrection truth the Bible gives us. In II Timothy 2:15 we have this principle of rightly dividing the Word of Truth. This means, for instance, giving to children the milk of the Word and giving to grown up ones meat. What would happen if you tried to stuff a New York steak down the throat of a little child three hours old? We must give each his food in his season.

Q. "Who are the 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 4:4?"

A. No one really knows the answer to this. Apparently they represent the Church, the whole company of believers. Their names aren't given because as individuals they aren't important. Some have speculated they were the 12 patriarchs of the Old Testament and 12 apostles of the New. There is no evidence for such a view. The work they do and the testimony they present is tremendously important.

Q. "Do you think King Saul was actually saved?"

A. This question comes up quite often. There are equally good men on both sides. We don't take a dogmatic viewpoint. Genesis 15:6 tells us that Abraham believed God

and it was counted to him for righteousness. That is given a beautiful exposition in Romans 4, showing that people of the Old Testament were redeemed just the same as we are now, through faith. With reference to Saul we should consider I Samuel 10:9, "And it was so that, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day." This might lead one to think that Saul was saved. He certainly wasn't a committed believer of God. Scripture does tell us that there was an evil spirit from the Lord upon Saul. Jealousy unbalanced him and any psychologist will tell you this is sufficient to get a person in a very bad way. Don't judge Saul's salvation from that point. It is probable that he was saved.

Q. "In Psalm 139:21, 22 there is reference to the aspect of hating. What does it mean? I thought we were to love our enemies?"

A. These verses read, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those who rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies." There are two kinds of love and two kinds of hatred. We are to love our enemies but we are to hate what they do. We must understand this particular passage here in Psalms to mean that "I hate what they do, those that hate thee, and I hate their actions also." We are greatly grieved and disturbed at what these people say and do who rise up against the Lord. We hate their actions but we must love them as people. We have the perfect example in our Lord Jesus Christ. He loved the sinner but He hated the sin. He gave Himself as the perfect atonement for the transgressions of the sinner because He hated that wickedness so much. At the same time He loved the sinners, which includes each one of us. He hates what we do that is wrong, but He loves us.

Q. "In this day of loose living among professed Christians, many seem to believe that at death or the Rapture all will be settled. Why isn't there a concern or alarm about the Judgment Seat of Christ? For so many the attitude is, 'I'm saved by grace; my sins are all under the blood.' This doesn't seem right or sufficient."

A. Certainly it is correct and biblical to state that one is saved by grace through faith, and therefore all sins are under the blood. This doesn't mean that because of this one can go on living any way he pleases. We aren't to continue in sin that grace may abound. No believer is to live like the devil's own. II Corinthians 5:9-11 reminds us that we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. There are two factors involved in the life of a Christian. One is the judgment of his sins and the other is the judgment of his conduct. Now, in the first instance, no truly born again believer will ever be judged for his nature of sin. That judgment was taken by the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. He has already borne the penalty for our sins. As a result, we are free from the curse of the law. In the sight of God we are complete in Christ. This is what salvation is all about.

The other judgment has to do with rewards. Paul talks about that in the passage just mentioned, as well as in I Corinthians 3:11-15. Our lives should be dedicated to an existence well-pleasing to the Lord. We build upon that perfect foundation of Jesus Christ. Our superstructure will either be of gold, silver and precious stones, or of wood, hay and stubble. The latter category will be destroyed at the judgment. "If any man's work is burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire."

Rewards have nothing to do with our salvation. At the Judgment Seat of Christ our works will be tested. We will receive either rewards for our good works done for the glory of the Lord, or we will suffer loss because the works we have done as

Christians are displeasing to the Savior.

Q. *"When were the Israelites first called 'Jews'? Can you give Scripture for this?"*

A. Several references would be II Kings 16:5 and 6 which deal with Ahaz's rule over Judah. The king of Syria sought to overthrow Judah but was unsuccessful. We do find that the enemy was able to drive the Jews from Elath. Interestingly, this is the area now under question and to which Syria is trying to lay claim. Remember that all in the Southern kingdom weren't from Judah. There were also those from the tribe of Benjamin. Based on this, the first place we find such reference in the Bible would be in the 8th century B. C. Today, all Israelites, those who aren't Gentiles, are known as Jews. In the New Testament it is interesting to read the apostle Paul's background, "I am a Jew of Tarsus in Silicia." We know that he was of the tribe of Benjamin as he so states in Romans 11. So, in one place he calls himself a Jew while in another he says, "I also am an Israelite." Also, in Philippians 3 where he gives his "pedigree" he doesn't hesitate to point out, "I was born a Hebrew of the Hebrews." He has identified himself with all three categories. Here in La Mirada we can be known as Californians, Americans, and also Westerners. None of these terms is mutually exclusive.

Q. *"Can a non-Jew become a Jew by accepting the Jewish religion?"*

A. There were two types of people who did that. Some were true proselytes, having gone through all the legal obligation, including circumcision. Others were proselytes "of the gates," stopping just short of the latter. We see these categories in the early church as recorded in Acts 1. There was a recent colony of proselytes who came from Japan, testifying that they had embraced Judaism and wanted to become valid citizens of Israel. So, such activity still goes on today. In Acts 8:26 and 27 there is the account of Phillip encountering the Ethiopian eunuch who wanted to become a proselyte. When he heard the good news concerning Jesus Christ he became a true child of God through faith unto salvation.

Q. *"Did the Jewish religion have a particular name?"*

A. Today it is generally known as "Judaism." From the Old Testament, however, no specific name is given. We think of Jonah who, when asked, confessed, "I am a Hebrew. I fear the Lord." That would be a good expression, "a God-fearer." This means one who has placed reverential trust in the Lord. "Judaism" as a term for this hour should have further clarification. There is a Judaism that is based solidly on Old Testament truth. At the same time there is that which is known as Rabbinic Judaism. In this system later pronouncements have been added, some really contrary to the Old Testament.

Q. *"Regarding 1 Chronicles 21, David wouldn't offer anything to God which didn't cost him something. Is it proper to claim deductions on our income tax for money given to the Lord's work? This sort of seems to cheapen our gifts to Him."*

A. The question is really one's motives in giving. Our government very wisely recognizes the fact that people want to give of their substance to Christian causes, as well as to other types of philanthropic work. We are allowed to deduct a prescribed percentage from our income tax for such donations. Personally, rather than cheapening the Lord's work, it enables one to become that much more generous. Let us sincerely hope that these laws are never changed.

Psalm 63

How Strong is Your Desire for God

By: Dr. Al Sanders

It is amazing how much one can find of practical value and spiritual challenge from every word of Scripture. For this reason, it is a source of constant delight to study the Book of Psalms. There we can see what the Holy Spirit has tucked away for our admonition and exhortation. The problem is that we are so busy in our work-a-day lives that we miss the really important things the Lord has for us. In fact, one of my most favorite poems succinctly states,

"We mutter, we sputter,
We fume and we spurt;
We mumble, we grumble,
Our feelings get hurt;
We can't understand things,
Our vision grows dim;
When all that we need,
Is a moment with Him."

How true that is!

Whenever the information is available, it's important to understand the background of Scripture and what the probable circumstances were with the writing of the different books of the Bible, and even chapters. This is certainly the case with Psalms. The 63rd chapter doesn't tell us specifics, but simply that David is the author; the time of its writing was while he was in the wilderness of Judah. It seems likely that this portion of Scripture was written when David had to flee from his own beloved son Absalom. Just because he was in a humanly hopeless position, he didn't stop singing. Here, in what must have been the bleakest of conditions, he enjoyed a brand new experience with the Lord. Haven't you found that it's sometimes when we are in the wilderness of life that we find God to be the closest to us? When the bed's the softest, when the food's the most delectable, when the schedule's easy, when the burden is light, it's likely that we may grow lazy and even careless in our relationship to God. So let's thank Him for the wilderness experience, the times when things are desperate, when we get to know Him better. It was one of the early church fathers, Chrysostom, who decreed that no day should pass without the public singing of this particular Psalm.

Here is David's confession, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." "God" appears twice in our English version but actually these are two different words in the original. "Elohim" is the plural noun. God, in the second usage relates to the All-mighty, the All-powerful One.

We are always impressed with the use of many personal pronouns in the Psalms. It

is as though there are only two people involved: me and God. Notice how many times he says "I", "My", and "Thou" and "Thee." There are no cliches, no pretentions; it's just a flat-out expression of a personal relationship with the Lord. Incidentally, the words here, "my God" are the exact same in Hebrew as Christ uttered on the cross when He petitioned, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Next David avows, "Early will I seek thee." It is interesting to realize that 90% of those who accept Christ as Savior do so before they reach the age of 21. After that increasingly fewer people come into this personal relationship with the Lord. What a blessing to begin life, when you are young, with the Savior, continuing on as He guides you day-by-day.

The word translated "early" here is from the Hebrew meaning "dawn." Mornings are my best. Whenever I have big projects or important duties, I try to schedule them for the morning. Later in the day the decisions are not as easy to make, nor can I trust them to be as reliable and fresh. In our troubles, too often do we resort to the Lord when everything else has failed. Seek Him early, both as to time of day as well as at the start of some difficulty.

When you feel an act of kindness, when you think about the possibility of writing a letter to a loved one, especially to someone who may be lonely, when you think of calling a friend and encouraging him in the faith, of baking some special "goodies" to share with those who are less fortunate than you are, do it! Don't put it off, because the longer you do, just like the decision of salvation itself, the harder it is to accomplish. I'm afraid too many of us are like the man who said, "Whenever I feel an act of compassion or kindness I go to bed and usually the feeling leaves me before too long."

One of the most beautiful examples we have of seeking the Lord early is in the case of the heavenly manna which came down to feed the children of Israel. They were to gather enough six days a week, early in the morning, so that they would enjoy the delectable commodity God had provided. The sixth day, of course, they were to gather double, enough for the seventh, since that was the sabbath and they were to do no work on the seventh day. Have you gathered any heavenly manna from the Word as yet this morning, this day? It's well and good to have prayer and Bible study, reading of the Scriptures, before you go to bed. I think it is even more important if you can start the day with the Lord.

Never be ashamed to say, "My soul thirsteth for Thee." How thirsty are we, as far as our souls are concerned, for the truths of God? Only the Lord can satisfy the desire of the heart, that craving which has been aroused by the Holy Spirit Himself. David doesn't say, "My soul thirsteth for water," nor "My soul thirsteth for the blood of my enemies in revenge." All of those things might be a part of human nature, but what he is underscoring is, "My soul thirsteth for Thee."

Ask yourself, "What do I seek more than anything else?" "What are my priorities?" Do we know fully what it means to hunger and thirst for the Lord? Can we declare, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (84:2). Jesus reminds us, "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

Verse two gives us a further indication of our desire to see the Lord. The Psalmist affirms, "To see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." David is longing here to see the Lord, not just in a building of the sanctuary. People come to visit our La Mirada campus and it is exciting to realize on these 75 acres all of the facilities that have been provided, as limited as they may be in

some measure for the needs of all the students. Yet at the same time, the thing that is really fascinating is to meet the young people themselves. It isn't the buildings but it is the students who make Biola. (And I should include there too the staff and faculty.) David was longing not just to see the sanctuary, the facilities of the Tabernacle, but it was to meet the Lord there because this was where He dwelt in the Holy of Holies.

Do you remember the time, perhaps it's been some years since this took place, when you just couldn't wait to get into the Word to study the Scriptures for yourself? Why? Because there is where you met God and where you saw His power, experiencing His glory. When you get right down to it, we thirst so little for the important things of life, and we accept too much that which is strictly superficial.

In the 73rd Psalm there is the downfall of the soul recorded. There the writer is commiserating about the seeming triumph of sin over righteousness. The question is continually raised, "Why should the righteous suffer when the ungodly prosper?" The answer finally comes as the Psalmist realizes, "Until I entered into the sanctuary of the Lord; then understood I their latter end." You see, it wasn't just the magical aspect of going into some religious building, but it was the realization of God's power and God's glory dwelling in the Holy of Holies. Today the sanctuary, I believe, is the Word. It is the place where the revelation of Jesus Christ is seen to the fullest extent.

I was talking to a man last winter in Detroit. I don't know if you remember it, but he was telling me about the terrible ice storm that hit his area. He injected, "Why do you know, even the wires leading into the sanctuary got cut down." He concluded, "We haven't had any power in our church for over a week!" I told him, "I have news for you. There are a lot of churches that haven't had any power in them for a good many years!" The power comes from people who know and love Jesus Christ, and from the pastor who proclaims faithfully the Word of the Savior. So, the sanctuary is the Word of God and it's what will sustain each of us in our wilderness or desert experience.

Verse 3 gives this beautiful testimony, "Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." Psalm 138:2 has this similar declaration, "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth; for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Do you really believe that God's loving kindness is better to you than life itself? Remember now that life is man's most valuable and precious commodity. He clings to it so tenaciously. Death is something that he continually abhors. How much we value our lives. Any surgery is shunned, even amputation is looked upon with horror. But if the time comes when these things are necessary, our whole desire is, "Do whatever you have to do, but spare my life!"

I am sure we have all been on an airplane that has hit a couple of bumpy spots in the road, so to speak. And maybe some of the ill-fitting equipment on that craft has begun to rattle and shake. Right then you may have thought, "Boy, this thing might go down." Perhaps secretly you have prayed, "Lord, not now! Not me! Not this way!" Listen once again to David's openness of heart, "Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." What is God's loving kindness to you?

Have you heard the little boy's definition? From a human standpoint it would be hard to improve upon. He explains, "Kindness is like when I come home tired from school and my mother has a piece of fresh home-made bread waiting for me. That's kindness. But," he concludes, "Loving kindness is like when I come home tired from

school and my mother has a piece of fresh home-made bread with melted butter through and through and covered with her own strawberry jam. That's loving-kindness!" Not a bad picture either because the word simply means a "heaping up of blessings, one upon the other." By faith, this is exactly what God likes to do.

Let us use our lips as a means of bringing glory to our wonderful Lord. Do you think it's possible really to love someone without telling others about it? It doesn't sound like a very deep love if we don't express ourselves in such a genuine fashion.

That wonderful love book of the Bible, Song of Solomon, uses these words in the 5th chapter, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?" Why are you excited about the Lord? What has He done for you that causes a strong desire to share the news with others? And then in verse 16 of this 5th chapter in Song of Solomon, "His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." A tremendous picture there of our wonderful Savior, isn't it?

Verse 4 of Psalm 63 continues, "Thus will I bless thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in thy name." If you can't find anything about you for which to praise the Lord, maybe you don't like your home, you aren't happy with your job, your automobile is falling apart, everything seems so oppressive as well as depressive, then you ought to still be able to praise the Lord because He is God!

All of us are limited in our time and capacity as far as what we can achieve. David made this firm resolution as his continual occupation, "Thus will I bless thee while I live." How much of our time do we use to bring a blessing to the hearts of others by encouraging them with some word of truth from Scripture? Generally the sad fact is that we put off blessing the Lord until we are in trouble, the situation is desperate, and there is some special need.

There was a certain lawyer who was listening to a group of people in his office one day, talking about their fine testimony meeting at church. He knew these folks for what they really were. He could frankly observe, "You know, to an attorney there's a vast difference between a testimony and concrete evidence." Say friend, you can talk all you want, lifting your arms above your head 24 hours a day, but the real "proof of the pudding" is the evidence of a sincere life that has been regenerated through faith, at the same time giving the allowance of the Holy Spirit to work in and through the individual, ultimately to touch the lives of others for their good and God's glory.

In verse 5 we get a good picture of contentment, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." Have you ever wondered what it is that gives people fulfillment and satisfaction in life? We all have goals set out as desired for ourselves as well as for our loved ones. But frequently people make the mistake of thinking that the soul is going to be contented with that which brings satisfaction for the body. For instance, in the parable of the rich fool which is recounted for us in Luke the 12th chapter, the rich man had this same concept. He thought his body was his soul. In the 29th verse we find the quotation from his foolish lips, "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease. Eat, drink, and be merry." But here again you see, let me emphasize, the soul doesn't eat, doesn't drink, and there is nothing from a physical standpoint that could ever possibly bring it contentment. The only thing that satisfies the soul, because it is made to be in a faith relationship directly with God, is that personal encounter of a

growing nature that comes through salvation.

David recollects, "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches" (v. 6). We should take verse 6 in conjunction with verse 5 because he has been talking about the aspect of finding satisfaction for life. And the contentment which comes is in meditating upon the things of God. We discover something similar to this in the 42nd chapter, verse 8. Here there is the assurance, "Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." If you can't go to sleep don't count sheep. Don't go over some new recipe or try to figure out how to play your golf game a little bit better. Sing praises to the Lord!

I have come to the place where insomnia more or less is a thing of the past. I just tell the Savior, "Lord, you know how much sleep I need. You know what work I have to do tomorrow. Let's just talk together until You want me to be drowsy and then I'll say goodnight." That's worked for me beautifully. I don't know whether it would work for anybody else, but it's done wonders for me. Insomnia is a thing of the past.

What do you think of at night? Consider that verse of Scripture that assures, "So he giveth his beloved sleep." God's gift to you is the ability to go to sleep at night. Now, of course, if you have things that are troubling you, or if there is perhaps a physical problem needing medical attention, then you had better see your doctor. I'm not trying to simplify nor to rationalize this. I am just suggesting to you what the possibilities may be for your conquering a bothersome and often debilitating experience.

I like what David says here. He declares, "When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches." When you get right down to it, a man is what he is in the night. He is what he is when all the lights are turned out. Now I don't know about your life and the situation really is between you and God. But what are you like at night just before you go to sleep? What occupies your thoughts? If those concepts are immoral or impure, your very life's going to be like that because what you think about at night can be a reflection of the real you.

We need to refresh our thought on this. David says, "When I remember thee upon my bed." Unfortunately most of us have very good forgettories. The cares of the day may tempt us to forget God. But that quiet of the night should definitely lead us to remember Him. We need to remember God when we go to bed. We should continually reflect on His goodness and mercy to us.

Then David gives us further information by saying he does it "in the night watches." I love to hear the old clock chime downstairs. It's like a sentinel in the darkness, just sort of echoing, "All is well." In the time of the writing of this portion of the Word the Hebrew reckoning of time was only three watches of the night. The third is the early morning described in Exodus 14:24. The second in Judges 8:19, and the first, Lamentations 2:9. In the New Testament we have one extra with four prevailing since this was by the Roman computation.

The other day I came across something over 300 years old. John Wells penned, "Memory is the chest to lay up the truth, but meditation is the palate to feed upon it." Isn't that beautiful? Jeremiah of old phrased it this way, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word became to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." This certainly speaks of personal meditation. It is first the joy and then, like the cow chewing the cud, it becomes the rejoicing of the trusting heart. When you get right down to it, there is actually no better time of the day than at

night to think upon the things of God. If you don't turn your mind on then, there will be other things amid the darkness which seem so foreboding and frightening. We can easily remember the vivid details of a dream, but by morning everything else has flooded in and in the flush of daylight that dream is so soon forgotten. Remember the Lord and meditate upon His goodness day by day as well as night by night.

Verse 7 tells us, "Because thou hast been my help, therefore, in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." Basically pause and consider the reason why God has done so much for us. Take a moment to reflect on it. In the 103rd Psalm the exhortation comes, and beautifully so, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." The old Methodist evangelist Billy Bray used to admonish, "You can forget some of His benefits, but by all means don't ever forget them all." We do have a tendency to forget the blessed truth that we have been kept in the shadow of God's wings.

Consider what all He has kept us from! Doubtless there have been many things about which we have been totally oblivious. Only God could so completely take care of us. No wonder Peter exclaimed, "Lord, to whom shall we go; for thou alone hast the words of eternal life." It isn't saying, "God, you did such and such when you saved me. You helped me out in that circumstance a month ago, Lord. But what have you done for me lately?" No, we don't need any of that kind of erroneous logic.

Think of the shadow He has provided from the scorching rays of the sun, a shadow for shade and protection, as well as for consistent guidance. A solace for sorrow, for "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." "Therefore," He says, because of all the help that God has been in the past, there is ample reason to trust Him even now in this wilderness experience. You need protection, help, provision for sickness, physically, provision from financial distraught, provision from the temptations which so easily can beset us. Note what happens when the Psalmist goes to the shadow of the wings. He doesn't cower, he doesn't shiver, he doesn't quake, but he simply rejoices in all that God has done for him. Charles Wesley said it best in that beautiful old hymn, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." "Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on Thee."

David's testimony in verse 8 avows, "My soul followeth close behind thee; thy right hand upholdeth me." Here it is impossible truly to improve upon the King James Version. "My soul followeth close behind" or "Hard after thee." Have you seen those television commercials sponsored by Elmer's Glue? They demonstrate how that two pieces of metal or lumber can be joined together, bonded in such a way that they are impervious to being pulled apart at that particular juncture even with extreme and unbelievable force. In the original, the words for "hard after" really mean "to be glued" in such a way that we will not come apart from the Lord.

Again verse 8, along with the rest of this chapter, is extremely personal. David isn't talking about someone else. He's describing, "My soul followeth close behind" or "hard after the Lord." In order for this to be true, it presupposes several things. First of all, if you are going to follow "hard after" the Lord, you certainly need to have a previous acquaintance with Him. The relationship must be one of redemption, through personal faith in Christ's saving grace. Thereby we have a strong reason to follow hard after the Lord.

The second thing is that this is entirely expressive of ardent and intense desires. The Psalmist isn't ambivalent about it whatsoever. He expresses, "My soul" without any question being hard after, glued to, bonded and welded to the Lord. In the third place, obviously this isn't an easy situation. It implies laborious

exertion. Some people just don't want to take the time. They can't be bothered to get that close to the Lord. That is a very sad and serious condition in which to be found.

The fourth presupposition is the fact that we are willing to show perseverance in seeking the Lord. The conditions may not be ideal. The emotional feelings may not run toward this particular direction, but the Lord desires that we should seek Him and Him alone at every turn and experience in life. We find the application of that when we look at David himself. When he was smitten with his guilt because of the act of adultery and later murder, he definitely followed hard after the Lord. When temptation came, and surely it did, even after the confession of the sins which he had committed, he followed hard after the Lord. Just as diligently as Saul had hounded his tracks, just as diligently as did his later enemies through Absalom and those who followed his wicked train, so David pursued and became glued to the Lord.

It is so dangerous for us when we walk in our own way. This is why the wisdom of the book of Proverbs declares, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

An interesting Hebrew translation of this simply lays it out, "My soul, fast to thy skirts would I cling." It gives us the picture of a little child hanging onto the outer garment of his mother, afraid to be lost in the crowded confusion of life. You remember the account in Scripture of the woman who had the issue of blood for more than 12 years. She was gravely ill and the physicians had really given up on her, except to take whatever funds she had for treatments. Her claim was, "If only I could touch the hem of His garment." Do you see the relationship here? David earlier had claimed, "My soul, fast to thy skirts would I cling." Are you close behind the Lord? Are your thoughts His thoughts? Are the words of your mouth acceptable in His sight? Are your very deeds those of kindness, love and compassion which He would have you offer, even as a cup of cold water in His name? Let me ask you, as I ask of my own heart, "If God should turn around suddenly, would we be embarrassed by where we were, what we were doing, what we were looking at, what we were thinking?"

Do you remember as children playing that game, "Follow the Leader?" The idea was that you are to do absolutely everything the person in front of you does, and then everybody behind you does exactly the same thing. We can't physically, at our age, I'm sure, play that game of "Follow the Leader," but, in a sense, our soul can. Everything God tells us to do in His Word, every path He tells us to take, let us make certain that we are obedient and follow hard after Him. The wonderful part of it is that such an existence isn't living another childhood game of "Blind Man's Bluff." Those who follow after us, whether our children, our loved ones, our neighbors, our fellow employees, will be following an example that is Christ-honoring in every respect. Covenant that your own soul will follow close behind or "hard after" the Lord, bonded, glued to, stuck and attached firmly to the Lord.

The last part of verse 8 confirms, "Thy right hand upholdeth me." Now the right hand traditionally symbolizes in Scripture three things. First of all, it means power. Those of you who aren't left-handed realize that in the right side of your body you will generally have more strength. The reason is because that portion of your anatomy is more consistently and more regularly used. So there is power in the right hand, showing a close union and a committal of mutual desire. This is what fellowship is all about.

Finally, the right hand in Scripture symbolizes protection, love, consideration

and concern. There are some beautiful precious thoughts in this connection. Just a few verses of Scripture so familiar and yet applicable in this direct sense are Deuteronomy 33:2, "From God's right hand went a fiery law." This, you see, shows His power. Psalm 16:11, "At God's right hand are pleasures for evermore." Here we can see the importance of His fellowship. Mark 14:62, referring to the Lord Jesus Christ who is "sitting on the right hand of power." This firmly indicates protection. The Savior is there now and we are His special consideration. The fact of the matter is, we are upheld not by a book, a creed, or a philosophy, but we are upheld by God and Christ Himself. What a blessed truth to encourage even the most dejected heart.

Verse 9 presents a view of David's concern for the enemy. He explains, "But those who seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth." The purpose of Absalom wasn't only to take over the kingdom but also, in his wicked imagination, he had devised a plan to kill his own father. David's foe, Absalom, is hardly to be compared with our greatest enemy, namely Satan. If by faith we have received Jesus Christ as Savior, the devil knows he can't rob us of our salvation. But at the same time he can bring spiritual defeat into our daily experiences. There are a lot of Christians who are living mediocre, sub-normal lives of spiritual existence, defeated so often because of the overcoming power of temptation.

One translation of verse 9 of Psalm 63 states, "Those who hunt souls shall they themselves be the victims. Into the pits they digged for others, they shall fall themselves." With this explanation there comes to mind from the book of Esther the account of Haman. He ingeniously had devised a plan whereby he might do away with Mordecai. The very gallows which he had erected for the man he hated were eventually used as the means of his own destruction. Evil has a way of rewarding itself with evil. I love the words of Charles Haddon Spurgeon relative to this verse 9 in which he comments, "He who smites a believer drives a nail into his very own coffin." David confirms, "Those who seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go down into the lower parts of the earth."

Never forget that Satan is a defeated foe. His final doom is already assured. He knows it, but we too often overlook the fact. Keep in mind that David isn't speaking from a vindictive standpoint, rejoicing over the eventual destruction of another individual. He is simply stating a fact as to what can be expected to take place to someone who has ruled the Lord out of his existence.

The whole question of the 73rd Psalm, one of the most incisive chapters of the Bible, revolves around this premise, "Why should the righteous suffer and the ungodly prosper?" It isn't until we note the depression of the writer coming full circled to a realization of God's ultimate triumph that the answer is completely given. He has to admit, yet with joy in his heart, "Until I entered into the sanctuary of the Lord, then understood I their latter end." We can never comprehend why the righteous have such a difficult time of it and the ungodly seem to prosper so beautifully until we go to the Word of God. Not until the Holy Spirit gives us His wisdom to comprehend this tremendous fact do we realize their latter end which will actually be located in the lower parts of the earth. One of the translations for "lower parts" has it more appropriately "the deepest graves."

It isn't so much pinpointing hell as being in the center of the earth. Do you remember the account in the Old Testament regarding the rebellion of Korah. He foolishly thought that he had abilities and a calling far greater than that given to Aaron and his family. Korah assumed a position which didn't properly belong to him. He tried to usurp spiritual authority. As a result, the ground opened in what must have been more than just a fantastic earthquake. The graves for Korah

and those who followed after him were far deeper than anyone could possibly ever imagine. Even so Satan's final doom as the evil usurper is sealed in hell because it was for the devil and his demons, the fallen angels, for which hell was originally created. There Satan will be consigned for all eternity, the enemy of our souls forever put out of the way.

Verse 10 gives us a further delineation concerning those who would seek to bring destruction to the child of God. The same punishment awaits those who seek a break in continuity of fellowship which only believers can enjoy with the Lord. David declares, "They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes."

While it isn't a pleasant subject, consider for a moment the complete devastation which awaits the Christ-rejector. We aren't talking about someone who simply has blasphemed the name of the Lord. This has reference directly to anyone who hasn't received Jesus Christ as personal Savior. As a result, he or she has automatically rejected the Lord; there is no middle ground. Therefore this verse shows the final judgment which will befall them. There is an old but very accurate adage which relates, "Those who live by the sword shall also perish by the sword." Such a life will eventuate in destruction.

Most all of us would deplore the wasteful time so easily spent on television programs. The following statistics may not be borne out in your life because you are more discerning. From a standpoint of national application, however, do you realize that the average adult in America spends more than three hours a day in front of the television set? That's right: 22 hours every week! What a sad commentary on our times, considering how unprofitable most activities really are.

"They shall fall by the sword; they shall be a portion for foxes." Beasts were originally given to men for their food, but here men are given the beasts as with a prey. In the days of our Savior's crucifixion, the children of Israel flatly refused "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Instead they chose Herod, known as "The Fox." So they, along with all others who reject the Savior, will have the foxes as their final portion. It isn't a very pretty picture at all, nor is the portrayal to be considered lightly concerning one who faces eternity all on his own, with no hope whatsoever in the world to come without Christ and without God. We can't underscore the sad situation too graphically as a cause for gravest warning!

The final verse of Psalm 63 reminds us, "But the king," despite what others have done, "shall rejoice in God; everyone that sweareth by him shall glory, but the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped." Let me, for just a moment, try to translate this into our own modern-day experience. Never forget our position as a part of the royal family if by faith we have trusted Christ as personal Savior. We are thereby made kings and priests unto our God. As a child of the King, do you find you are really rejoicing in God? Here the Psalmist expresses the fullest confidence imaginable in his wonderful Lord and Redeemer. He further affirms, "Everyone who sweareth by him," that is by God, "shall glory." The glory, you see, belongs to God not to us. In no sense whatsoever will the Lord share His glory with someone else. This shows clearly the complete confidence a child of the King has in his heavenly Father.

Finally, "The mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped." Haven't you often wondered with all the scandals, "Who can you believe today?" Accusations are made and those who are accused speak so convincingly of their innocence. Then we find out later that they weren't innocent at all. They were just trying to cover up their involvement. The conscience of those in the political area seems to have

been seered as with a hot iron.

Too many people when caught are like the man who wrote a letter to the Internal Revenue Service, sending them a check for \$100. The only thing is, he didn't sign his name. He simply included a note which explained, "Last year I cheated on my income tax. My conscience really has been hurting me ever since. I'm sending you the enclosed, trying to salve my feelings." Then at the bottom he put this final note: "P. S., If my conscience doesn't stop bothering me, I'll send you some more." Someday all of the inequities of life will be made right. Those who continually speak lies shall be stopped. In fact, the book of Revelation indicates the place that liars will have in eternal damnation. Everything in that coming hour will be made clearly evident as to the reality of God.

A little girl had been the center of an important court case. She apparently was the only one who had seen an accident. No one else could give a firsthand testimony of the event. Everything rested on what she would have to say. The opposing attorney wasn't concerned because he felt he could discredit her witness very early. When called to the stand he asked her forthrightly, "Young lady, tell this courtroom, is there someone who's told you what to say at this trial?" She looked around the room for a moment, and then, rather sheepishly nodded her head in agreement, with an affirmative answer to his question. The lawyer then demanded, "Tell us who it was that gave you such instructions as to how you should testify." Again the little girl lifted her eyes slightly, looked about the full and hushed courtroom and pointed to the other attorney. The prosecutor was convinced that he now had easily won the case on the strength of this predisposition. So the opposing counsel insisted, "Now, you tell this court, without any more hesitation, what it was that this attorney instructed you to say about the accident." With a big gulp the child slowly began, "Well, he told me that when I got up here on the witness stand next to the judge that there would be some fellow who would come along and try to get me all mixed up. But," she beautifully explained, "he further told me that so long as I just gave out the truth, I could say anything I wanted to." You can imagine the relieved laughter that swept the courtroom. That crestfallen and demolished attorney sheepishly returned to his seat. You see, friend, so long as we speak the truth in love, guided by the Spirit of God, our mouths can be used to bring glory to the Lord.

In summary, let me ask you, as a king before God, do you find that you are rejoicing in Him today? You will only be finding your satisfaction, fulfillment, and contentment if your testimony flows from an eager heart of dedicated desire, as expressed in this first verse of this 63rd chapter. May it be an exemplary thing for us to understand and experience, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, To see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

Titus For Today's Christian

By: Dr. Curtis Mitchell

It is important to make our study of the Bible practical for individual circumstances and needs. Paul, in the latter days of his ministry, just before he went to prison and eventual execution, visited the Island of Crete. Here he became acquainted with a young man by the name of Titus and had the opportunity of establishing some churches. There, in the midst of the Mediterranean Sea, Crete was a rough and rowdy place. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives Titus instructions as to how to complete the organization of the churches as well as how he should conduct himself and his ministry among the people. Paul had used Titus before to help in the ministry. He had been sent to Corinth twice. Titus appears to have been a good administrator and a resourceful initiator. While we never find him preaching a sermon, he was an invaluable assistant for Paul. The apostle refers to him as "my partner and my fellow-laborer" (II Cor. 8:23). He was commended for "walking in the same spirit I walk in" (II Cor. 12:18).

Titus is a short letter with only 700 words in the original Greek document. The only epistle shorter is the letter to Philemon. Martin Luther observed, "It is a short letter and yet such a quintessence of Christian doctrine, composed in such a masterly manner, that it contains all that is needful for Christian life and knowledge." Here is truth that produces God-like living.

The first four verses are the introduction. Paul gives the purpose for his apostleship in the very first verse. He had been called to promote faith in those who had been chosen of God. He wanted not only to see faith initiated but also to have it developed. This is why he urges, "acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." The word "acknowledging" means full comprehension; developing a complete experiential knowledge of God's truth, causing the life of full faith and obedience. Notice the chain reaction: faith, knowledge, and godliness. This is exactly how we should develop too. If you really understand the truth of Scripture it will definitely affect your life. You see, it is one thing to hold a doctrine, but it is entirely another to let the doctrine hold you! Does it affect your daily conduct? Paul's great purpose was, as should be ours, to see people won to Christ, and then that they might develop in God's grace so that others ultimately would be saved.

Verse two reads, "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began." This doesn't mean that we hope to get eternal life. The moment one accepts Christ as Savior everlasting life is the gift of God. This knowledge provides hope. I have a hope of a resurrection body some day, getting rid of all these aches and pains. As believers we have the hope of ruling and reigning with Christ. Biblical hope is anticipation without doubts. We have "hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began."

We serve a "non-lying" God. You can absolutely bank on the promises of our Lord and His Word.

Following the introduction is the first main division which provides, "Requirements for Church Leaders." Elders and bishops both mean the same thing. Different denominations use various titles, all referring basically to the same concept. It is extremely important for a church to function successfully with properly qualified leaders. Specific qualities are necessary before one can be ordained to a position of leadership. The Bible teaches that once a person is ordained as a leader, the local church is to submit to that man or group of men (Hebrews 13:7, 17). This is why the local assembly should be careful as to those whom they appoint. One of the tragedies of church history is that too often Christians have been careless about those whom they have placed in positions of authority. Biblical admonitions aren't followed to the letter.

In verse 6-9 of Titus one, Paul begins to discuss the personal qualities a leader should demonstrate. The local church or fellowship should have a real say in his appointment since they know the most about him. As believers, do everything you can to do more than just act as a "rubber stamp" to the recommendations of an ordination committee. Basically, Paul declares that the man should be blameless. That means "above reproach," not perfect, otherwise there wouldn't be any elders. The man should have a clean record in three areas: his private life (v. 6); his public life (vs. 7, 8); his church life (v. 9).

The apostle declares, "If any man be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly." The home is the crucible of experience. All the service in the world is no excuse for neglecting one's family. We must practice our Christianity at home with those who know us best.

The statement that he must be "the husband of one wife" has been a "battleground" for years. This has been interpreted several ways. The most common approach in the broadest sense that the man isn't a polygamist. There are those who feel more restrictive and include a prohibition to those who have been divorced. The main idea in the Greek is literally a "one-woman man." It is really the kind of person who can be wholly devoted to one woman. It might be well to point out that there is many a man who has never been divorced, nor experienced being widowed, but he still doesn't meet these qualities. He has a roving eye which is sinful in the sight of God. Such an individual should never be ordained as an elder, even though he may be a graduate of an evangelical seminary. An elder must be able to counsel people and shepherd the flock. We must pay close attention to God's established qualifications.

A proper elder must be effective with his own children. If you can't win them, how can you hope to reach those outside of your four walls? He must not be extravagant, wasteful, and have undisciplined offspring. You see, if a man in his private life isn't totally dedicated to his wife, showing the ability to convert and control his own children, he should never be ordained as an elder in the church of Jesus Christ.

It is absolutely crucial for a church to have carefully qualified men in places of leadership. In addition to a circumspect existence toward his wife and children, an elder must be above reproach in public life (v. 7). He has an awesome responsibility as the steward of God. The word "steward" means "managing the affairs of God in the local church." We urgently need high caliber men.

Five things are listed which the elder must not be. He must not be self-willed,

dominated by his own interests. This pictures someone who loves himself, seeking only to please his own desires. This would be a conceited, arrogant, contemptuous type of individual. Never allow such a man to be ordained into the eldership. Also, he is "not soon angry." This is a fellow who doesn't hold grudges, seething underneath. "Not given to wine," is another important quality. There is no place for a so-called "social drinker." He is "no striker." He isn't a violent man or always going around with a chip on his shoulder. He isn't given to filthy lucre. We get the picture of someone who only lives to make money. This doesn't mean elders aren't to be paid. In the New Testament we find that especially teaching elders are to receive financial assistance from the local church. Never though should their motivation be for simply material gain.

From the negative we look at the positive. In verse eight he moves to six things the elder must be in public life. First, he should be a "lover of hospitality," wanting to help strangers, those who have specific needs. He is a "lover of Good men," literally meaning "a genuine lover of what is good." Next, it is the call for sobriety which, in the original means "sound-minded." The idea is of a balanced, sensible, sane individual: one who has command of himself, wisely using every instinct; guided by proper priorities. It is the very opposite of what today's sick society encourages in one "doing his own thing."

The word "just" means fair. "Holy" symbolizes "reverently and respect." "Temperate" literally has in view "power over oneself," or "self-disciplined" (I Cor. 9:27). I don't care how much biblical knowledge a man might have, if he isn't self-disciplined then he isn't qualified to be an elder. You do a disservice to your church if you allow such an one to be ordained. James points out, "He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

From the qualities in public life (vs. 7, 8), Paul moves to discussing an elder's ideal life in the church. Here again he must be above reproach. He must be thoroughly orthodox (v. 9), one who knows God's Word as well as how to use it. This is where Bible training comes in and why we constantly thank the Lord for Biola College and Talbot Theological Seminary. Men who really know the Bible should interrogate this young man seeking ordination, making certain he really knows the Word of God. He must be a man of conviction, "Holding fast the faithful word" (v. 9). The tense of the verb in the original indicates continuously clinging to the Scriptures with a fervent zeal. There are two reasons for this. One is because he has a specific ministry toward believers, "that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince." "Sound doctrine" means healthy teaching. It isn't by psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, positive thinking or anything other than by sound doctrine.

The word "exhort" means to lovingly urge" by healthy teaching along all the lines of Christian development. Churches really ought to be miniature Bible institutes. The elder's main job isn't to organize committees, fix the toilets, or publish the weekly bulletins. By sound doctrine he is lovingly to urge the saints. They ought to have time to concentrate on prayer and the ministry of the Word so they can really feed the congregation.

There also must be a ministry toward unbelievers. It tells us in the last part of verse nine, "to refute those who contradict." A good elder should be able to use the Bible in effectively refuting the opponents, showing them their error. This implies a mastery of the Scripture. Titus is instructed to see that churches choose only this kind of qualified men.

It is absolutely crucial to have quality men in positions of church leadership,

especially considering the moral and spiritual conditions which surround us today. The situation was very similar in Crete as Paul writes to Titus sharing practical insights into how to live victoriously for Christ. Each age category has its own needs and responsibilities. Such pragmatic information is invaluable to real "body life" with the fellowship of believers. In Titus 2:1 to 3, Paul gives some examples for older men. Such individuals should be "sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience."

I have found that the older I get, the more my ideas change as to what makes an ideal aged man. Someone has pointed out, "The young man says, 'Wine, women and song;' while the old man says, 'Metrecal, same old gal, and sing along with Mitch'." That is quite a worldly definition! We aren't told at what precise age these admonitions become applicable. Clearly though there is to be a place of respect for the older man in the congregation. To be sober means to be vigilant, not excitable, nor gullible. The word "grave" doesn't symbolize a "gloomy Gus," but rather a person who realizes the seriousness of life. Our existence isn't just fun and games. We are to be temperate, sound-minded, balanced, and sane. The senior men in the congregation ought to act as sort of "balance wheels" for the assembly. They are to be healthy in faith and in love, not just criticizing everything others do. We know that tribulation works patience. It is tragic to find an older man who has learned little or nothing by experience.

Then Paul moves on to the aged women (v. 3). They "likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things." We can't put a precise figure on when a woman becomes aged. Do you realize that God Himself only gave the age of one woman in the entire Bible? That was Sarah, Abraham's wife. If the Lord will only tell the age of one woman, it doesn't behoove me to reveal when a woman becomes old. Whenever that happens they are to be in behavior as becometh holiness, or reverence. This speaks of conduct or deportment which will exalt Jesus as Lord. They are to have a Christ-like influence over the entire congregation. It is sad to see silly, giddy older women trying to act like teeny-boppers. "Act your age," the apostle is saying.

Don't be "false accusers" or slanderers. It is too frequent that we engage in gossip and scandals, along with unfortunate inuendos. John Calvin made this statement, "Talkativeness is a disease of women, and it usually is increased with age." That shouldn't ever be true of older women of God. "Teachers of good things" means using what is noble, not discouraging the younger ladies, throwing cold water on the plans and enthusiasm of others in the faith. In Hebrews 10:27 we find this apt exhortation that "We should be provoking (or agitating) one another to love and to good works."

Older women should teach the younger to be sober, to love their husbands, and to love their children. Literally, they are to cause the younger women to be sound-minded, trained and cultivated in good judgment. Do you see the picture? Older sisters in the congregation training younger sisters. This is a beautiful way to overcome the generation gap in the local church. Have you ever thought about starting a quilting class for the younger ladies in your church? Or, maybe it could be needlework, canning or cooking. Especially with the nostalgia rage you would find many younger women enthusiastic about such quality arts that aren't so well known today. How it could draw the body of Christ together!

The next series of admonitions are to the youth in the congregation. In verses four and five an important age group is addressed, "That you may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of

God be not blasphemed." Our society today is in big trouble. Everybody admits that one of the great problems is the breakdown of the home. The Bible teaches that the chief factor in the success or failure of a household is the mother (Prov. 14:1). Most experts would choose for success a home with an adequate mother. People today are clamoring for women's lib, unisex, making no distinction between the roles of male and female. This tears down the home even more. In these verses we have an excellent biblical portrait of what should be the norm for the young woman of God. It is true that there were some women in the Bible who weren't ever wives, mothers or homemakers, and yet were very successful. They are always pictured as the exception. The norm should be a domestically oriented person.

While there are some commendable features in the so-called women's liberation movement (if a woman does the same work as a man she ought to get equal pay, etc.), but one of the tragic things is that consciously or unconsciously, intended or unintended, the effect has been to further degrade the role of the homemaker in society. Such a calling is pictured as "the bottom of the barrel." Remember, ladies, the Word of God judges you, you don't judge the Word of God (vs. 4, 5). Be prayerful in approaching these verses because they are desperately needed, even though it may be tragically unpopular. The Bible has a unique and glorious role for the man as well as the woman. The scriptural admonition is basically, "Let men be men, and women be women." As an exception, we shouldn't look down on a woman who feels this isn't what she is cut out for. The biblical admonition is that God has given men certain capacities for a certain kind of role and God has given women certain capacities. Men and women, with equally fulfilling and meaningful responsibilities, should be distinct in what they have as callings in the sight of God.

In the Epistle to Titus we have some very practical and relevant material for our spiritual welfare today. Paul presents some excellent models for various categories of people within the Christian congregation. There should be a distinction between the roles of men and women in today's society. This is clearly taught in the Word of God. To see some of the normal patterns for an average woman, we note from verses four and five three aspects of her character. One, her personal character. What should she be like as a person?

First of all, the word "sober" means wise. In verse five it is "discreet," which means sensible and level-headed. The point is, being a woman of God is no job for "scatter-brains." Such takes all of one's capabilities and creativity. Another thing about her personal character should be purity. The words used are "chaste" and "good." Here is the concept of being pure from defilement, uncontaminated from the world in conduct as well as appearance. She isn't to be deliberately seductive. The Lord continually admonishes women not to be appealing to men's depraved nature (I Timothy 2:9). How this admonition is needed today with all the various styles of dress! Remember, ladies, you don't show Christian love for your brothers in Christ by wearing clothes which appeal only to the flesh. God tells a man not to look on a woman for the purpose of lusting. You make it difficult for men in the faith by being immodest in your apparel.

Women are also to be "obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (v. 5). This idea may not be popular these days. In fact, we have some evangelical Christians who demand egalitarian marriages. There are even some who call themselves evangelicals trying to tell us that Paul and the New Testament writers were wrong when they told wives to be in submission to their husbands. The explanation is that they were just victims of their culture. Such a philosophy is very dangerous. The middle voice in the Greek is used, indicating it is the woman's personal responsibility to be obedient to her own husband (I Peter 3:1).

Even if you have an unbelieving husband you should be in submission to him (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:15).

Following personal responsibilities, Paul deals with a woman's family relationships. Three key words are emphasized in the original. A woman should love her husband, love her children, and be a keeper at home (vs. 4, 5). Men, stop to realize that you aren't complete in yourself. You need someone to complement you. And women, as a husband-lover you can be a "completer" of your man, looking for ways to fulfill him, as well as being loyal to him. Proverbs 31:11 and 12 reminds us that the virtuous woman is one in whom the man can safely trust. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.

You may be sure that men need encouragement. Having worked in the counseling field, one of the big complaints heard from Christian men was, "nag, nag, nag, that's all my wife ever does." Ladies, be a husband-lover! Encourage your man. Make it a rule of thumb that you won't tell him something he does wrong unless you can suggest three things he is doing right.

As a husband-lover you will want to keep yourself attractive. Actually, a literal translation of I Timothy 2:9 puts it, "Adorning themselves in attractive apparel with modesty and good sense." Solomon pointed out, "The virtuous woman maketh herself coverings of tapestry" (Proverbs 31:22). It is a fact that men are attracted by the eye gate. Your appearance is very important to your husband. He takes pride in the wife he chose.

The other thing is that the woman is to be a children-lover. In other words, give attention to loving your offspring. Children need attention and guidance, as well as a feeling of security. In my opinion, this is often the tragedy of the working mother. I know there are some women who have to work. I have nothing but commendation for them. All too often, however, employment outside the home is sought because we have dollar signs in front of our eyes. Everything is for material gain. Don't lose the joy of fellowship, sacrificing your children in this manner. It takes time, effort and creativity to be a children-lover.

Verse five uses the expression, "keepers at home." This should be the woman's major interest. This doesn't mean that you are a "stay-at-home." I Timothy 5:13 condemns women for going around gossiping, idly spending their time. The major intent of this word isn't time, but interest. A "keeper at home" is a woman who has her chief interest in her household. She is a domestically oriented person. Homemaking isn't a hobby; it is her vocation. Like the American buffalo, such are a vanishing breed. In our sick society being a homemaker has been relegated to the bottom of the scale of values. That is a sad commentary on our times. The Word of God clearly indicates that the most noble thing any woman can be is a wife, a mother, and a homemaker. Design your home as an exciting place. That means not just making the beds, mopping the floors and doing a holding operation. Build your home as an exciting place for your husband and children.

Along this line, if there is any college in America which ought to have a first-class home economics major, it should be Biola. This is especially in light of this tide of unisex and women's lib sweeping the country. Our girls ought to be trained to be husband-lovers, children-lovers, as well as professional wives and mothers. The girls want it, too. They have actually sent around petitions to have such developed. We need money and personnel to accomplish it. Would you pray with me about this? It has been on my heart for over a year. We need many Christian people who will give over and above their normal investments to make it possible. Also pray that we can secure a faculty of women who have been wives and mothers, as

well as possessing the academic training. We would desire that they could really communicate to our students the excitement and challenge of being a professional wife and mother. Listen, don't set your guidelines as to what a woman ought to be from the media. Follow the biblical injunctions and one of these days it will pay big dividends (Proverbs 31:28-31). Your children will arise and call you blessed. Such a privilege will mean more than all the new dresses and fancy furniture money can buy. To have the approval, love and admiration of your children is of inestimable value. Let the Lord be your guide, ladies. He made you; He knows what will be meaningful and fulfilling in your life. You will never go wrong if you set your scale of values by the Word of God.

Extremely practical is Paul's epistle to Titus for each age group is underscored for specific commendable qualities. Young men are singled out in verses six through eight of chapter 2. This portion could be taken as a personal admonition to Titus himself. "Sober-minded" means self-controlled, self-mastery, or as we might say today, "having it all together." This word has been used a number of times already (1:8; 2:2-4). Such a scriptural philosophy is completely contrary to our sick culture. Our youth are erroneously encouraged to "hang loose," "no sweat," "do your own thing," be undisciplined. These are all absolutely contrary to being sober-minded. Young men, don't set your guidelines by what everyone else is doing. Look to the Word of God. Be on top of all of your drives and all of your talents. Personal daily devotions will help you develop a sense of discipline and self-mastery. Work out a personal time schedule. This will be a tremendous help in developing such an excellent concept.

In verses 9 and 10 Paul addresses those who are servants. They are exhorted "to be obedient to their own masters." While we don't have slaves in this country, the truths would apply to employees. Additional admonitions are given by Peter in the second chapter of his first epistle. If you work for someone else, here is what God says should be your guidelines. While we hear a lot about labor and management strikes, walkouts, and all the rest, the fact of the matter is that everyone is greedy. This is a part of sinful flesh. To the Christian, the Lord tells us, "Don't let the world brainwash you; don't be conformed to this present evil system." Don't take the same attitude other employees may have on the job.

The first injunction is, "Exhorting servants to be obedient to their own masters." This indicates a voluntary obedience, not going around with a chip on one's shoulder. A Christian is never above taking orders. In I Peter 2:18 employees are instructed to be subject not only to the good and gentle masters, but also to the forward and perverse. "This is thankworthy," scripture tells us. God likes it when we are obeying a boss who may be difficult to get along with. This is exactly how Christ acted on this earth. He didn't insist on His rights. Even when taken advantage of, He didn't strike back. Servants here in Titus are told to be obedient to their own masters, pleasing them well in all things. This means service, never doing less than one's best. It shouldn't be something we do sullenly, with reluctance, but rather eagerly. Don't just do what you have to do, but serve realizing your real leader is God. Whatever is accomplished should be done as unto the Lord (Ephesians 6).

Notice back in verse nine, "not answering again." This means being respectful, not giving any backtalk. How different this is as compared to the average workman these days. We are called upon to be unique, special people. Never give the boss a bad time.

"Not purloining," verse 10, means not stealing, nor being guilty of petty larceny. The world's philosophy is "Just take what you want from the company; after all,

you really deserve it anyway." It is amazing how much is pilfered in the business world, with no qualms, by every strata of our culture.

I was speaking at a high school camp a few years ago. It was primarily Christian young people who were campers. The Coke machine broke down and it began to discharge bottles without even putting in money. To my amazement, those Christian young people robbed the Coke machine blind. They took every bottle and it didn't seem to bother them at all. This was simply stealing. Some parents, and perhaps Sunday school teachers, hadn't been doing their jobs properly. We aren't to be like everybody else. Don't be taking everything you can from your job.

Verse 10 affirms, "Showing all good fidelity." This means you are to be the kind of employee on whom the boss can entirely rely. Remember from the Old Testament how that Daniel was doing such a good job that the king commended him. Even his jealous and envious fellow workmen couldn't find any fault with him. He consistently did a first-class job. If you aren't working diligently, faithfully, and reliably on your job, do us a favor: don't tell them you are a Christian! Don't be a witness on your job. Don't be passing out tracts unless you are backing it up with your life. You won't be doing God a favor by being a lazy workman on that job, doing as little as you can to get by with.

The reason it is important to live this way is that "they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." Here is the way you can make what you believe look good, as it is placed on display before the world. In your life you can put the teachings of Christ on display in a manner that will enhance their beauty. Do you know the theology of your job? How you conduct yourself at your employment is more important than teaching a Sunday school class; more important than singing in the choir. What you do is performed before the unsaved world constantly watching believers. We are living in a pragmatic society. They want to see something that works. It isn't enough just to put a bumper sticker on your car affirming, "Christ is the Answer" or "Jesus Saves." Show your doctrine by the way you live. Put your theology in shoe leather. Parade it up and down the streets of your town. Remember, your behavior on the job can make God and His teachings appear beautiful or appear distasteful.

It isn't significant what people think of me, but beloved, it is important what they think of Christ. He urges, "Let your light so shine before men" (Matthew 5:3). Usually we think of letting our light shine by giving out a tract or collaring an individual to demand, "Brother, are you saved? Prepare to meet thy God!" I am not against witnessing with one's mouth but we are told it is our good works which glorify the Father (Matthew 5:13). This kind of employee will stand out from the crowd. People will come to you asking what makes you different. In this way you will have an opportunity to share Jesus Christ. After all, this is more important than getting a raise, going on strike, squabbling and losing your witness. God has designed you to be able to adorn the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Give Him the opportunity to do so through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This little book is loaded with practical insights. It really gets down to "where the rubber meets the road." Verses 11 to 15 of chapter two gives us one of the greatest doctrinal statements in the entire Bible. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority: let no man despise

thee." As A. T. Pierson states, this is really "A table of contents for the entire New Testament." These verses indicate the power and motivation to live the kind of life Christians are to exhibit before the world. The great stimulus for correct conduct is correct doctrine. The Bible never divorces deportment from theology.

Literally, the first word is that the grace of God is now come, offering salvation to everyone. The Lord in His unmerited favor has saved us, therefore, this should motivate you to act like children of God. Verse 12 instructs, "Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." The word for teaching is the same one translated in Hebrews 12 as "chastening." This means parental instruction. The grace of God not only saves us but also educates us. Wouldn't it be wonderful to take a course in the Lord's training school of grace? Christian, you may never have realized it before, but you are already enrolled in God's training school. The Lord may use other believers, circumstances, and even disappointments to achieve His purposes. These exercises aren't to embitter us, but rather to find strength in all these situations. Like pupils in any school, some students respond to the instruction more readily than others. How do you look upon the trials and adversities which come your way? Do you see them as part of the all things which are working together to accomplish God's good purpose in your life (Romans 8:28)?

The curriculum in God's training school of grace includes certain negative aspects, "teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts" (v. 12). We must repudiate all irreverence and desires for this present world system. We are to be weaned away from living for the values of this world. Satisfaction will never come in the things of this life, such as money, power and prestige. We are to live "soberly, righteously, godly." There is to be a self-mastery to be noted. The Holy Spirit is inwardly teaching us the truths of the Word of God. The more you cooperate with the Lord, the faster these beneficial traits will develop. As a result, you will be a better husband, a better wife, a better worker, and a better citizen.

God's grace does something else, too. "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ." The grace of God not only saves us and begins to train us, but it also gives us something to hope for. "Looking," and the tense of the verb indicates that we are constantly and eagerly to expect the Lord with absolute certainty. Do you live daily, anticipating His return? It isn't our place to be looking for signs or the Tribulation, or the Antichrist to arise making a covenant with Israel. Our responsibility is to be looking for Christ Himself. This will have a practical effect on the way you live. You can say with the apostle Paul, "I have reckoned that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall one day be revealed in us" (Romans 8:17). This should motivate and affect our conduct.

The return of Christ becomes an even greater stimulus when we realize what Christ has done for us (v. 14). Paul now describes God's process of salvation. We have been redeemed from all iniquity and set absolutely free. This indicates total forgiveness. Such a realization will relieve you of guilt. There isn't any reason for a Christian ever to harbor guilt feelings. We have been set apart, "to purify to Himself a peculiar people." The word "peculiar" obviously doesn't mean "Oddballs," but rather unique, distinct, and special. If this doesn't give you a sense of worth and value as a believer, nothing else will. No Christian needs to go around feeling that he has a poor self image. You are special in the mind of God. As a "peculiar" person, you are a prized object by the Lord. This is what

the Christian life is all about. We aren't to wallow in the same muck as the person of the world.

We are to be "zealous of good works." Our uniqueness isn't to be in the kind of clothes we wear nor even in the things we don't do. There are certain negative aspects, of course, but our basic thrust is in a positive vein. The word "zealous" means fanatics for positive goodness. It isn't enough to simply not do anything wrong. A cabbage doesn't do anything wrong! We must be positively good. Our uniqueness needs to be our zest for good works. Are you known as the kindest person on the block; one who is a considerate individual? When you see your neighbor in trouble are you ready to help him out? You ought to be. The grace of God provides an adequate salvation for all, instruction for all, an adequate hope for all, and an adequate life purpose for all. The grace that saves is the grace that teaches. The standard for the believer isn't Moses but Christ. Begin to adorn the doctrine. Let us begin to act like what we are. Correct doctrine will do this. The proof of whether the doctrine is holding you is whether it affects your daily conduct.

In Chapter three of Titus, Paul talks about the Christian's attitude toward society (vs. 1-7). Verse one urges us, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities, to powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." The current attitude in this sick society is to "bad mouth" public officials, engage in civil disobedience, obeying a law only if you happen to like it. The Bible teaches us an entirely different attitude with respect to government. In the first century, when Paul wrote these words, it was popular to attack the Roman government, only obeying laws when necessary, when officials were watching.

The original shows that each Christian is voluntarily to put himself in subjection to every legitimate government official. This could be said to Christians living in Viet Nam, Russia, some other communist nation, as well as to those in the United States. Such a truth wasn't popular then; and it certainly isn't popular now. Cross reference this to the more greatly expanded treatment in Romans 13. Peter also speaks on this subject (I Peter 2:13). If you think that our government is corrupt, with inadequate officials, you should study the type of government Nero had. He would make the Watergate scandal look like a Sunday school picnic.

There is only one exception. That is, if the government should tell you to do something that is directly contrary to the laws of God. At that point, do what Peter declared, "Sirs, we would obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29). Even if you don't like the laws, nor have any confidence in the personal integrity of the official, respect the office. Beyond that law is a big God who can set up one and take down another. He even uses inadequate people to accomplish His purposes in history.

Remember that the worst government is better than no government at all. There is no greater plague on humanity than absolute anarchy. We aren't only passively to obey what the government says to do, but rather really to work at the business of being good citizens. Civic service can be used as a means of letting your light shine before others, providing a means of witnessing to those in need about Jesus Christ. There are many who would never go to your church to hear the preacher. You alone may be the Lord's tool for reaching them. No government should ever have a problem with a Christian.

Paul next urges, "Speak evil of no man, be not brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men" (Titus 3:2). Are we careful about our speech? You may not like a person, nor what he is doing, but don't go around "badmouthing" others.

Speech can be vicious or it can be therapeutic (James 3:2-10). The tongue needs to be controlled. Additionally, we aren't to be "brawlers." Don't go around with a chip on your shoulder. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." This doesn't mean to sacrifice principles. To the Ephesians Paul likewise enjoins, "Be angry, and sin not." Be angry that the holy laws of God are violated, as was Christ in the temple. The problem is that we get angry with people and not the problem. Our target is all off.

Believers are to be gentle. The proper translation would be to exhibit "a sweet reasonableness." Put up with the faults of others because you love them for Christ's sake. Understand that we ourselves were once in a terrible condition, bound by Satan. This calls for a proper inward attitude. This is also closely linked with the idea of humility. We should be willing to submit because we are about others. Submission is always based upon love. As earthly citizens our supreme interest is to adorn the Gospel so as to win men to Christ. Remembering what we used to be should cause us to be a bit more understanding of what others are now (v. 3). Do you remember those days when you had bad habits? You were literally a slave to them, bitter and resentful, having no hope and without God in the world. Recalling what we were makes us more sympathetic with the weaknesses of unbelievers.

This isn't any way to live, being foolish, disobedient, serving various lusts, just living by your glands in malice and envy, hating one another. The Lord never meant for people to live that way. His grace is prepared to work a spiritual miracle in your life, bringing about some fantastic changes. This is what really is involved in becoming a Christian (II Corinthians 5:17).

Over 30 years ago, at the age of 17, I received Jesus Christ as personal Savior. He worked a spiritual miracle in my life and I haven't been the same since. I have new goals, new purposes, new motives for living, with an attendant new power to live in a manner which would be pleasing to God. Remember that Christianity isn't just turning over a new leaf, subscribing to a special system of high ethical standards. It is actually receiving a new life from the Lord. It is God working a radical spiritual miracle in your day-by-day existence. This is what He wants to do right now for you. "As many as receive Him (Jesus Christ), to them gives he the right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

In our studies we would have to conclude that Titus is a very practical book, relevant for our society today. In verses four to seven of chapter three, there appears one of the most significant statements in all the Word of God. It is heavy theology, telling what the Lord did to save sinful man. In the original language it is all one perfectly constructed Greek sentence. The source of salvation reveals, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared" (v. 4). The Lord is affectionate and tender in His love for each one of us. Although having studied theology for much of my life, I still can never comprehend why my heavenly Father would love creatures such as we. "This love appeared," means that Christ actually came to this planet with a specific mission. He went to the cross to die, after which He was buried and rose again. God initiated this great salvation which is a mark of His mercy and grace.

Verse five gives us the method, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." "He saved us" is the governing in both verses five and six. The tense of the verb indicates it is a once-for-all accomplishment. It never needs to be repeated. Paul reemphasizes the fact that God does the saving with the

phrase, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done." How plain can you get? God is saying that the whole process of saving sinners is something He does. We have no part in it whatsoever. Baptism, joining a church, turning over a new leaf, personal reformation, none of these things have a part in it at all. The Lord alone does the saving.

In contrast to human effort are the words, "according to His mercy." This again is the basis of His salvation. This shows that He withheld what we really deserved in wrath and judgment. The means of this was by the "washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." I fail to see how some people can read water baptism into the expression "washing of regeneration." This passage has nothing to do with physical baptism. The teaching isn't that the washing produces regeneration, but rather just the opposite, regeneration produces the washing. Paraphrase it from the original as "regeneration's washing." At your salvation the Lord, in the regenerating process, cleansed you. It was a spiritual bath. Regeneration produces a new life. This is an instant act. The renewing continues to develop throughout life as a growing developmental process known as maturity. Never forget that the Lord is the source of it all, "Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (v. 6).

What happens as a result of receiving the ministry of the Holy Spirit at the time we are saved? "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Here are two wonderful results of our salvation. The first is justification. That means that we have been declared "not guilty." The grammar clearly indicates that it is an accomplished fact. Think of it, "The Supreme Court of Heaven has declared me not guilty." The crushing burden of sin has been removed. Really believe that, Christian, and you won't go around letting the devil chew you up with guilt and past experiences, for "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

More than this, though, the Lord makes us "heirs according to the hope of eternal life." This doesn't mean that we hope to get eternal life for that is already positively assured. This tense is a subjective genitive, giving us something to which to look forward positively in hope and expectation. You are rich in the Savior as an heir of God. Believers in Christ Jesus should be the most confident people in all the world, standing tall and strong for the Lord amid a trembling generation. Studying this epistle, let us act like God is alive and in the business of redeeming lost men and women.

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