


Torch

Fall 9-1-1994

Torch, Fall 1994

Cedarville College

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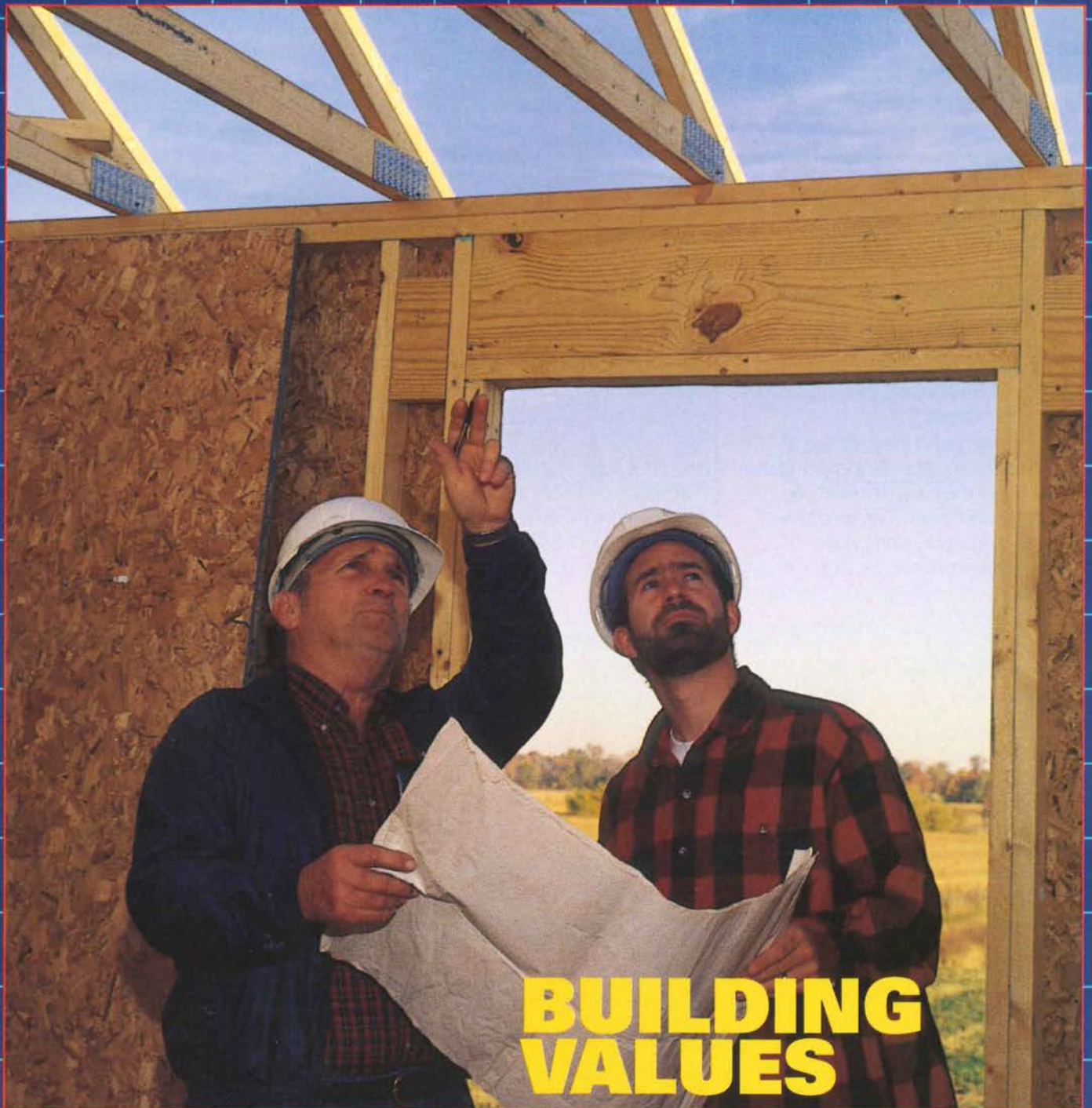
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CEDARVILLE
TORCH



**BUILDING
VALUES**



on line

With

Paul Dixon

President
Cedarville College

Building Values Today—For Tomorrow

As I stood before 2,378 students this September 19, we began our school year with chapel 100 years to the day the first Cedarville College President, Dr. David McKinney, opened classes with these words:

Cedarville College believes the culture of the mind without the nurture and growth of spiritual life is a mistake. Education without morality is a menace to the state. Accordingly the Bible is the textbook of the college.

Cedarville College has always sought to build values into the lives of its students. We realize values don't start at college, they start in the home. But as William Bennett wrote in his book, *The De-Valuing of America*, "Parents do not expect colleges to be neutral between morality and decadence." As a Christian college, we stand firmly for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ—the values that are taught in the written Word and shown in the living Word.

Yet the landscape of this country is littered with the spiritually empty shells of colleges that were, at one time, powerful influences for

Christian truth and character. But they have lost their values. The founding of American higher education, both private colleges and state universities, is a story of Christian mission. But as described by George Marsden in his new book, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*, the values of "liberalism" and "tolerance" led the higher educational establishment away from any religious presence.

Marsden's research and other reading that I have done have convinced me that the decline of Christian values at these institutions was usually linked to the declining emphasis on chapel. In many cases, when a university outgrew its chapel, the administration chose not to build for the future, but to change the meaning of chapel. Chapel attendance was no longer required for students and faculty. No one made an effort to bring in quality speakers. Chapel lost its centrality on campus.

At Cedarville, one of the main ways we teach values is through daily chapel. The articles in this issue of *Cedarville TORCH* are taken from three recent chapel

sermons which specifically addressed value topics. We hope these messages are as helpful to you as they were to our college family. In chapel, students also hear personal testimonies from Christians in various walks of life, share in times of prayer and praise, and benefit from the wisdom of our own faculty. The values that permeate "family time" in chapel are reinforced in the classroom, in the dormitories, and in the faithful living of the administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, and fellow students.

As we make preparations to build a new chapel for Cedarville College, along with new music and Christian ministries facilities, we are planning to spend millions of dollars to ensure that biblical values continue to be taught on our campus. I often say, "Chapel is the heartbeat of any Christian college," and we need to keep ours beating strong for God. Our theme for this year is "Building Values Today for Tomorrow." With a value-based education built around daily chapel, Cedarville College is influencing students who will serve God all their lives. And with a new chapel facility, Cedarville will be able to continue that mission tomorrow—and until our Lord returns.

Worth It All

Jesus once told a story about a man who was willing to sell everything he had. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45 NIV).

Christ was telling parables to help his disciples understand His ministry. He was proclaiming that He is more than an earthly king. He rules over the kingdom of heaven, and the people who hear and believe Him can be a part of that kingdom.


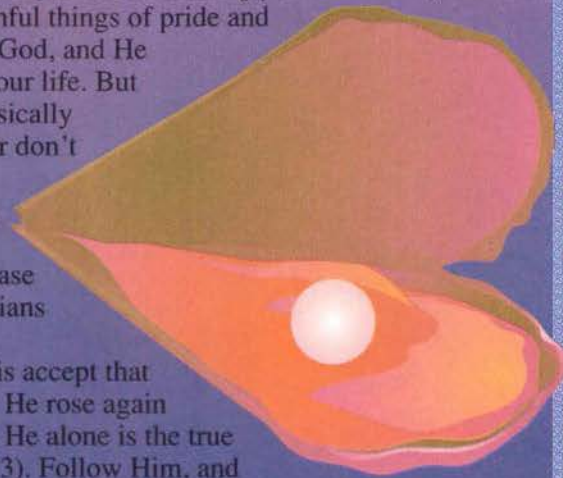
Jesus did not come to earth to become wealthy, or to find pleasure, or to attain power. As the Son of God, He had everything He ever wanted in heaven. But He was not idle. He was seeking to do the Father's will. He knew that the Father sought above all to bring people to Himself—to save them from their sin and ignorance and welcome them into heaven eternally. So Jesus, like the merchant, gave up everything in order to purchase that which had great value. He gave His life on the cross of Calvary so that people could live with God.

The apostle John wrote, "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). When you come face to face with Christ's love for you, are you motivated to love Him in return? No matter what else you have—or don't have—in life, do you see that just to know Him is worth everything?

Maybe you think there is something you would have to give up to become a Christian. Maybe it's something you love dearly. Well, there are some sinful things of pride and pleasure that displease God, and He doesn't want them in your life. But coming to God isn't basically about what you bring or don't bring to Him. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, paid everything that was necessary to purchase you for God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

What you need to do is accept that Jesus died for you, that He rose again from the dead, and that He alone is the true Savior (Romans 10:9-13). Follow Him, and He will rule in your heart. Believe in Him, and you too can be part of the kingdom of heaven.

For more information, contact:
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513-766-2211



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"...the things that thou hast
heard from me among many
witnesses, the same commit thou
to faithful men, who shall be able
to teach others also."

2 Timothy 2:2

CAMPUS NEWS

Record Enrollments Continue, New Dorms Underway



Sets of siblings at Cedarville include (left to right) Lisa and Angela Hunsberger from Jackson, Michigan, and Amy and Jill Barnes from Southampton, Pennsylvania. Angela and Amy, senior nursing majors, are roommates in Willetts Hall. Lisa, a freshman nursing major, and Jill, a freshman undecided major, are roommates in Printy Hall.

The 2,378 students who started classes September 22 number 100 more than those who enrolled in the fall term 1993. Most of the growth came from retention. The College received nearly 2,000 applications for fall quarter, while targeting 600 as the number for the freshman class. The class of 591 new freshmen shows strong academic credentials: 15 percent were valedictorians or salutatorians of their high school classes; 26 percent were in the top 10 percent of their high school classes; 8 are national merit and national achievement finalists or semi-finalists; 58 are President's Scholars, scoring in the top two percent in the nation on the ACT or SAT tests; and the average ACT is 24. Enrollment has doubled since 1978.

In response to the growing student population, the trustees have approved the construction of two 125-bed dormitories, one for men, and one for women. The buildings, named for the first two presidents of Cedarville College, Dr. David McKinney and Dr. Wilbert McChesney, are scheduled to be ready for the 1995-96 school year and will be located across from Willetts Residence Hall.

Dixons, Greens, Stephens Honored At Homecoming



Dr. and Mrs. Harold Green

During Homecoming, Dr. Paul Dixon and Mrs. Pat Dixon were presented 1994 Honorary Alumnus of the Year awards. The Dixons have been involved with the College since 1971, when Mrs. Dixon joined the faculty of the Department of English. Dr. Dixon, formerly a full-time evangelist, became president of Cedarville College in 1978.

Dr. Harold Green, vice president for Christian ministries, and his wife, Margaret, received Distinguished Service Awards from the Alumni Association for their years of exemplary service to the College. Mrs. Green has served as secretary for the Christian ministries activities since the couple came to Cedarville in 1970. The Greens have announced their retirement from the Christian Ministries Division at the end of the 1994-95 school year.

Michael Stephens, president and CEO of Greene Memorial Hospital in Xenia, Ohio, was named 1994 Alumnus of the Year. Stephens graduated in 1980 with a degree in business administration.

College Hosts Networking Conference



Cedarville College and The Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges (OFIC) recently co-sponsored "Campus Networking," a seminar for college and university decision makers. Cedarville personnel on the program shared information on the implementation of CedarNet, the campuswide computer network, with about 70 participants representing 19 colleges. Dr. Paul Dixon, president, and Dr. Duane Wood, academic vice president, spoke on strategic planning. Dr. David Rotman, director of computer services, explained CedarNet. Dr. Wes Baker, professor of communication arts, shared how Cedarville prepared faculty to use network technology. Jeff Brock, annual fund officer, Lynn Brock, director of library services, and Dr. Rotman discussed technical/management issues with the conference attendees.

Special Fall Chapel Services



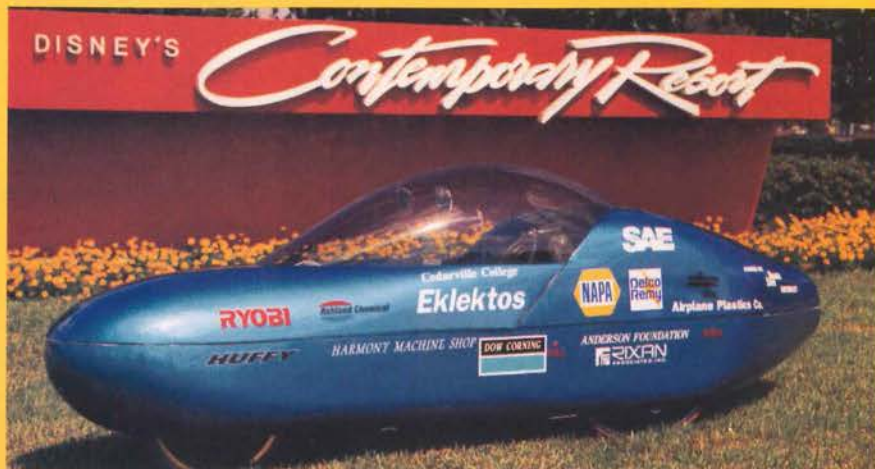
Dr. Paul Dixon interviews Louise and Karsten Solheim during a fall chapel service. The Solheims visited campus on their way home from the Solheim Cup golf tournament which their company sponsors.

The Cedarville College daily chapel service provides opportunities for students to grow spiritually through hearing the Word of God preached. Students also hear testimonies and experience other presentations that challenge their Christian walk.

The fall chapel schedule included several special presentations. On Career Day, Gordon Heffern, retired board chairman and CEO of Society Corporation, addressed the chapel audience. The Day of Prayer included a message from Reese Kaufman, president of Child Evangelism Fellowship.

A drama team from the Bethesda Baptist Church in Brownsburg, Indiana presented "The Life of D. L. Moody." Karsten and Louise Solheim, president and executive vice president of Karsten Manufacturing, gave testimony of God's leading in their family-operated business. The Solheims produce PING golf equipment.

Ashland Chemical Displays Cedarville Car At Conference



From October 19 to 22, the Cedarville College supermileage vehicle was on display at Composites '94, an international conference on composite materials held in Orlando, Florida. The vehicle was a part of the display of Ashland Chemical Company, Columbus, Ohio. Ashland Chemical is one of several area businesses that provides parts, labor, or technical support for Cedarville engineering students as they work on the supermileage vehicle. Students form good business relationships with those in the professional engineering realm, creating opportunities for personal development as well as future internships or full-time jobs.

Itineraries



Dr. Paul Dixon
President

Cleveland, Ohio

Good Shepherd Baptist Church,
December 4, a.m. only

Covington, Kentucky

Calvary Baptist Church, January 15

Kalamazoo, Michigan

Richland Bible Church,
January 22, a.m. only

Indianapolis, Indiana

Heather Hills Baptist Church,
February 19, a.m. only

Troy, Ohio

Grace Baptist Church, March 26

Byesville, Ohio

Calvary Christian School, March 31

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Calvary Church, April 2, a.m. only

Muskegon, Michigan

Calvary Baptist Church,
April 21-22; 23, a.m. only

Hudson, Florida

Word of Life Pastors Conference,
April 24-27

Wheelersburg, Ohio

Men's Retreat, Scioto Hills Camp,
April 28-29

Fairborn, Ohio

Faircreek Church, April 30



Dr. James T. Jeremiah
Chancellor

Dr. Jeremiah is accepting speaking engagements in California for December and in Florida for January and February. His daily program, "Senior Advantage," is aired on the CDR Radio Network and other stations around the country. Transcripts are available. Write to Dr. Jeremiah at P.O. Box 601, Cedarville, OH 45314.

Guard Your Heart



by Dr. Warren Wiersbe



Condensed from a sermon delivered September 21, 1994, in the James T. Jeremiah Chapel at Cedarville College.

As you came into chapel this morning, suppose we caught you off guard and said, "Excuse us, we're taking a little survey. What is the most important task you have on campus this year?" We wouldn't ask just students. We'd ask the whole college family—students, faculty, administration, everyone.

Somebody might respond, "Well, my most important task is to get better grades." That's good. It would please your teachers and probably amaze your parents. Somebody else might say, "I've got to get my bills paid." Somebody else will say, "Well, I need to make some friends." Somebody else will say, "I'm looking for a mate." I can't think of a better place to do it.

But that is not your most important task.

Your most important and my most important task is to obey Proverbs 4:23: "Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." The heart of every problem is the problem in the heart. And the heart of every success is the success in the heart. Missionary Henry Martyn wrote in his journal, "Let me be taught that the first great business on earth is the sanctification of my own soul." He must have been reading Proverbs 4, because if I do not have character in my heart, God can't use me. I don't care if I'm going to be a doctor, a lawyer, school teacher, missionary, preacher, or musician.

Robert Murray McCheyne, a great man of God who, a century ago, brought great blessing to Scotland, wrote to a missionary friend,

"Remember, it is not great talent that God blesses, but great likeness to Jesus." As we keep our hearts and develop holiness within to the glory of God, He can bless us.

Proverbs 28:13 states, "He who covers his sins shall not prosper, but whoever confesses them and forsakes them will find mercy." You can live on one of three levels. The lowest level is where you *cover* your sin. Or you can move to the second level and you can *confess* your sin. Or you can move to the highest level and *conquer* your sin. The Bible is a marvelous book. The more you study it, the more you're going to know how marvelous it is. The Holy Spirit looked back into Proverbs one day and said, "Now this Proverbs 4:23, I should write something about that." So, He told the apostle John, "John,

pick up your pen. I want you to write a little exposition about Proverbs 28:13. I want you to write about covering sin, about confessing sin, and about conquering sin." You find it in 1 John 1:5-10.

Verse five states, "This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all." That is a description of integrity. Integrity means wholeness. God has integrity and God wants me to have integrity. He wants my heart within and my conduct without to be one. Alas, that's a problem sometimes.

"If we say..." That's the way verse six begins; but so does verse eight, "If we say..." and so does verse 10, "If we say..." How do you cover your sin? By *saying*. "If we say," says verse six, "that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." Now in verse six, we're lying to other people and the name for this is *hypocrisy*. We can lie to each other. Somebody says, "How's it going?" "Terrific!" "How are you and the Lord getting along?" "Great!" But I'm not. I haven't read my Bible for weeks. I don't really pray. So, if I want to cover my sins, I do it with words and lie to you. That's hypocrisy.

Now, if I keep that up, it gets worse. Notice verse eight. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." Now I'm not lying to you, I'm lying to *myself*. That's not hypocrisy, that's *duplicity*. You see, integrity means I am one person. Duplicity means I am two people. Sometimes these two people inside me don't even know each other. When I descend from hypocrisy into duplicity, I'm really in trouble. It's bad enough if I lie to you, but if I start lying to myself and saying, "Well, I can get away with this. This sin is all right," then I'm really in trouble.

The third step is even worse. Verse 10: "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar." Now I'm lying to God! You see, it's possible to go through this erosion of character and still carry on religious habits. I can pray and say, "Oh Lord, bless this day." I'm not really concerned about that. "God, help me today to be a good witness." I have no intention

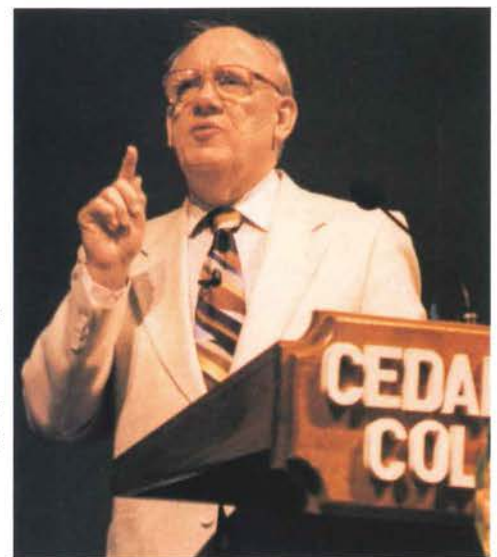
God has integrity and God wants me to have integrity. He wants my heart within and my conduct without to be one.

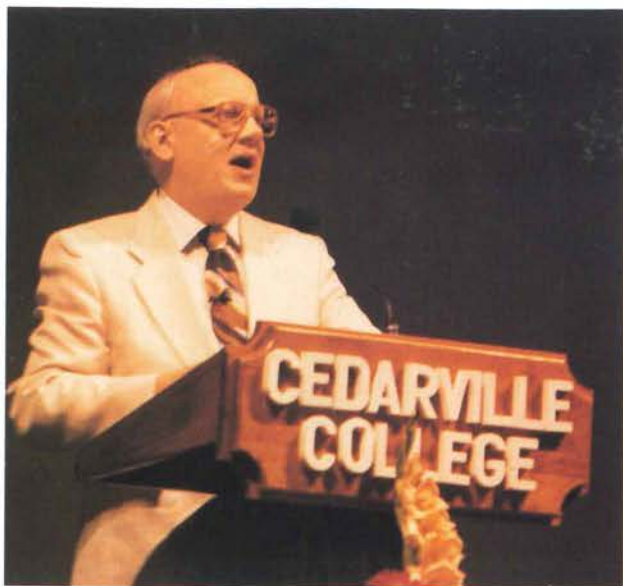
of witnessing. The word for this is *apostasy*. I have sinned against God, I'm covering it up. I make Him a liar and His Word is not in me. That means I can read my Bible and get out of it anything I want. I recall counseling with a man who had sinned against his family. Every verse I pointed out to him, he would say to me, "Ah, but that's *your* interpretation." Really, no interpretation was needed. It was pretty clear.

So, here we have the erosion of character. It begins with lying to you—hypocrisy. It descends to lying to myself—duplicity. That opens the door to lying to God and making the Bible say whatever I want it to say. Verse six says that, if I lie to you, I don't practice the truth. In verse eight, if I lie to myself, the truth is not in me. I can hear the Bible preached, I can hear the Bible read. It doesn't touch me. In verse 10, if I lie to God, I make Him a liar. Then the truth becomes a lie. You see, the devil can use the Bible to tempt you.

He did it to Jesus. It's possible for the enemy of your soul to twist Scripture in your mind so that you believe a lie. Have you ever studied the three men in the Bible who began well but they ended up in the dark? All three of them committed suicide. The first was King Saul.

Samuel, the prophet, sent King Saul on a mission to slay the Amalekites. Saul came back and said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the will of the Lord." Just then Samuel heard animals lowing. Samuel said, "What's that I hear?" "Well," said Saul, "the people saved the best of the flock to offer to God." If God says something is to be slain, you can't say it's the best. Saul lied to Samuel and he lost his kingdom.





The third man to end up in the dark was Judas. John wrote, “[Judas] went out. And it was night” (John 13:30 NIV). Now, we knew it was night; they always had the passover at night. But John is not writing about the time of day, John is writing about spiritual things. For Judas, it is *still* night and it always will be night. Judas lied to God. He spent three years lying to Jesus. Judas wasn’t saved.

Eventually Saul disguised himself, went to a witch, and was told he would die the next day. The next day, he fell on his sword in the midst of the battle.

The second person who ended up in the darkness was Samson. Samson means “sunny.” Samson was especially anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit of God and did great exploits. Then Samson started getting involved with the lust of the flesh. So Samson fought battles in the daytime and made love at night. He kept saying to himself, “It doesn’t make any difference how I live. I win these battles so that shows that I am getting away with my sins.” He was disobeying God, and he was lying to himself. The final lie came when he was shorn of his power. It was the most expensive haircut anybody ever had. The Scripture says, “He did not know that the Lord had left him” (Judges 16:20 NIV). He was lying to himself. Samson ended up bound and blind, pushing a mill stone. Whether Samson should be classified as a suicide or as a martyr is debatable. Yes, he killed 3,000 of the enemy, but he ended in darkness and defeat as far as spiritual things were concerned, except for one thing. He did call out to God. His power did come back. I think he did confess his sin. But what a sad way to go.

Judas pretended to be concerned about the poor. Judas pretended to be an obedient apostle. Not one of the other 11 apostles knew that Judas was a liar. Until the very end, the Lord Jesus did everything He could to win Judas. And Judas went out and it was night and he committed suicide.

When I was in seminary, I was told, “There are three great sins you have to watch out for in the ministry. You have to watch out for pride, lust, and money.” Well, Saul fell because of pride, Samson fell because of lust, Judas fell because of money. Saul listened to the world and did what the world did. The world says, “Save the best for yourself!” Samson listened to the flesh and did what the flesh wanted him to do. Judas gave himself to the devil. This matter of keeping our

Confessing sin means to say the same thing about my sin that God says about it. I don’t come with alibis or excuses.

hearts with all diligence is serious business.

Verse nine says, “If we confess...” That means being honest; that means coming into the light. Everyone who does evil hates the light. Confessing sin means to say the same thing about my sin that God says about it. I don’t come with alibis or excuses. So I come to God and say, “I lost my



temper," not "Well, if you had this kind of instructor, you would have done the same thing." I have to be honest. No more lying to God. No more lying to myself. No more lying to you.

Now sometimes this is a very painful process. There have been times I've had to stay before the Lord and just let him ream out my soul. David prayed, "Cleanse me from secret faults" (Psalm 19:12). He didn't mean faults my friend doesn't know I have. He didn't mean the sins my wife doesn't know I commit. What he meant was sins I don't even know about. I recall making a left hand turn in Chicago, and within half a block, a policeman pulled me over. I said, "Officer, what did I do?" He said, "That's an illegal left turn." I said, "I didn't know that." He said, "That doesn't make any difference." It didn't.

That's why I have to read my Bible every day. I'll be reading along and God will zap me. I'll say, "Lord, I didn't know about that. I'm sorry." That's why chapter two tells us in verse one, "My little children, these things I write to you so that you may not sin." Nine times in 1 John He says "Little children..." There are certain lessons every little child has to learn. One of them is how to keep clean. Verse one states, "If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I can come to my advocate and confess my sin and He forgives.

I don't want to stop there. With some people, it's confess the sin, get cleansed, then go back and sin again. I have got to *judge* that sin. I've got to come to the place where I *hate* that sin I'm having to confess.

Several years ago, our doctor discovered I was marginally diabetic and I had to take off a lot of weight. He said to me, "Let me give you a word of advice. If you want to lose weight, here's a diet: learn to hate the things that hate you." I was brought up in a Swedish home and the Swedes are great for making pastries. I also had to learn not to like candy. I used to go to O'Hare Airport to fly off someplace and I'd stop at a candy shop. Now, when I walk past a candy shop, I get a little nauseous.

God gives me another "if" in verse seven. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." Walking in the light means I can see the dirt when it's coming. Walking in the light means I can instantly talk to my Father and take care of it. God's Word is light. As I read the light of the Word of God, I'm walking in the light. The church of Jesus Christ is light. We need accountability to each other. So, as I walk in the light of fellowship with God's people, fellowship in God's Word, fellowship with God's person, then the work that Jesus did on the cross enables me to conquer sin. It isn't just that He died for me—that's true, thank God—but I died with Him! It isn't just that He raised me from the dead, but He took off the grave clothes.

Our most important task is the building and guarding of Christian character. Then God can use us to win the lost and to help the saved. Then, God can use the surgeon's hands, the musician's fingers, the mechanic's skill. Whatever God calls us to do, God wants us to have at the heart of our lives, a heart that is holy. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Don't cover sin. It'll destroy you. Confess sin. That will cleanse you. Walk in the light to conquer sin. The heart of God will rejoice. The walk in the light is a joyful task, not a burdensome task. It's a joyful task to become more like the Lord Jesus, conformed to the image of His Son.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe is currently involved with a writing, teaching, and conference ministry. He pastored several churches, including The Moody Church in Chicago, Illinois, and served as the general director of Back to the Bible. The author of nearly 100 books on biblical themes, Dr. Wiersbe most recently published an autobiography, *Be Myself*. As speaker for Cedarville's Fall Bible Conference, Dr. Wiersbe addressed the college theme for the 1994-95 school year, "Building Values Today for Tomorrow." He received an honorary doctorate from Cedarville in 1987. At that time, he delivered the Charter Day address which inaugurated Cedarville's Centennial Celebration.

The Cedarville College Spiritual Heritage Tour Of England And Scotland

July 14-29, 1995

Enjoy! The hustle and excitement of London. The beauty and serenity of the countryside. The stately buildings and rich history.

Experience! Spiritual highlights associated with our Christian heritage—the homes and churches of such giants of the faith as John Knox, John Bunyan, and the Wesleys; visit Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle in London and sing "Amazing Grace" in the hometown of its author, John Newton.

Appreciate! First class or deluxe hotels; hearty English cuisine; available academic or C.E.U. credit.

Dr. James McGoldrick, professor of history at Cedarville College and an authority on British church history, will add his insights in a lively and informative manner.

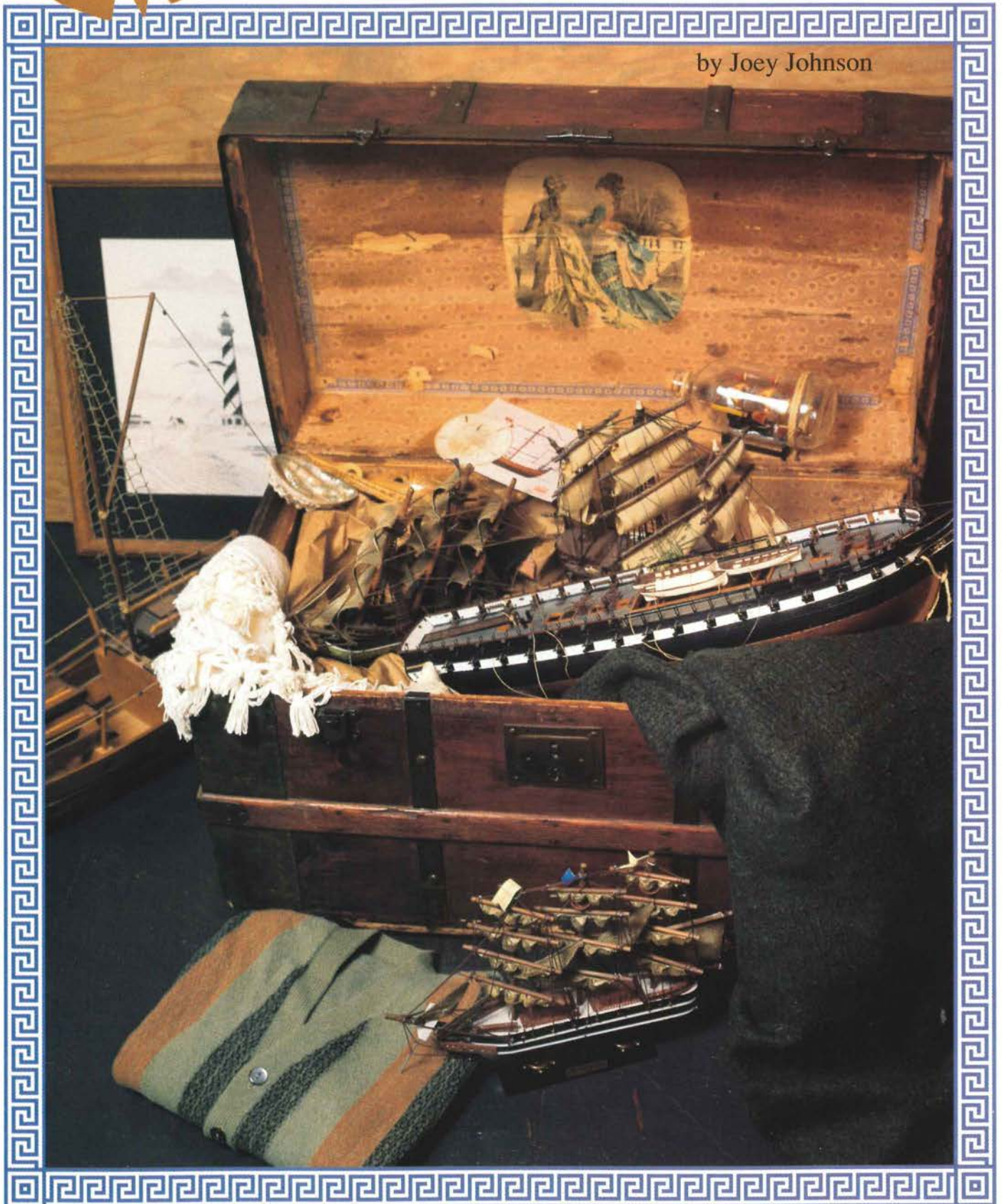
Dr. Martin Clark, vice president for development at Cedarville, will serve as your tour host.

Plan now to join this quality, value-filled tour.

Call the Development Office,
513-766-7810
for more information.

Out Of The Mothballs

by Joey Johnson



The United States has 768 ships which comprise what is known as the “Mothball Navy.” These vessels are anchored in various harbors around the country and receive regular maintenance. Their exteriors are repainted periodically. Their holds are continually bombarded by electrical impulses to retard the process of rust and corrosion. The humidity in the inner compartments is kept at a proper level. While these ships can be made ready for combat on very short notice, they just sit there doing absolutely nothing.

Many of God’s children could be described as “Mothball Christians.” They sit harbored in the local church, or in their homes, or in Bible School, but they are doing absolutely nothing. They are not using their spiritual gifts, they are not growing, they look good on the outside, they use all the familiar Christian jargon, but inwardly, they are empty.

Actually, it is not a lot different today than it was in Jesus’ day. In Matthew 23, Jesus denounced the Pharisees, saying that outwardly they were whitewashed and beautiful, but inwardly, they were full of dead men’s bones.

Why do so many Christians just keep working to look good on the outside? How we can move beyond mere conformity in our Christian lives to vibrant, Christ-like life? I think a missing element in our preaching, teaching, and counseling in modern Christianity is biblical value development.

Values are the standards and principles upon which we base our choices and our actions. How important is their impact? They control everything that we do. Value programming begins at birth. Values are influenced by our parents, then by our heroes, and then by our peers. When we’re around 20 years old, our values become less receptive to change except when significant emotional events and crises occur.

But God wants to work from the inside out and produce in us a new set of values based on His Word.

All eternal value transformation begins at salvation. When we accept Jesus Christ, we are given a new nature. We are transformed! We receive the capacity to love and understand spiritual things, and are given the wherewithal to begin the process of changing our values from personal, cultural, as-we-were-brought-up-values to godly, biblical, spirit-controlled values. But, how do we do that? What is involved in the process? The process is explained in God’s Word.

Romans 12:1-2 (NAS) states: “I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

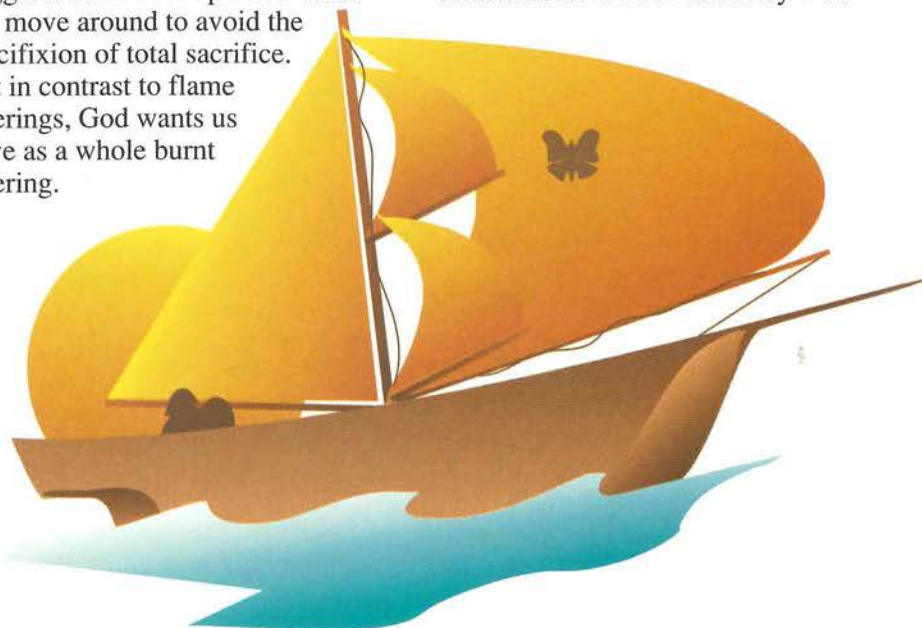
Paul gives this exhortation based on the mercies of God. He reviewed those mercies in chapters one through 11 of his letter to the Romans. On the basis of those mercies, Paul exhorts us to present our bodies as a sacrifice to God.

What Paul means by body is our life, all of it—our spirit, our soul, and our body—presented as a living sacrifice unto God. Now the problem with being a live sacrifice is that we wiggle around a lot upon the altar! We move around to avoid the crucifixion of total sacrifice. But in contrast to flame offerings, God wants us alive as a whole burnt offering.

Our living sacrifice is to be holy—set apart. This certainly does not mean being sinless, but it does mean that we will sin less. Then he says, it ought to be acceptable to God. The word acceptable, *eurestos* in the Greek, means pleasing, an offering burned and totally consumed, the aroma wafting up before the nostrils of God. I think that is a picture of total commitment to Jesus Christ.

The expectation of the exhortation is that this is our reasonable service, our spiritual service, as opposed to the Old Testament economy which dealt with outward kinds of service, with bulls and lambs and goats and rams. We’re not involved with that external anymore. We’re dealing with that spiritual kind of worship in which we use our minds and our spirits and all that is within us to center upon Christ.

In verse two, Paul gives us two principles. First, we’re to stop being conformed to the world. Put off. De-habituate. That is, break old habits. We stop patterning our lives after the world’s values, which is inconsistent with the inner being as a regenerated child of God. When we accepted Jesus Christ, we received a new nature. That new nature is supposed to be living through us. Yet many of us are still a lot like the world. God wants us to stop following our old value system, shaped by the world. The word “world” includes all those former programming forces, like TV. A lot of Christians have been raised by TV!



We're to stop allowing ourselves to be outwardly conformed to the world's values.

Second, we're to start being transformed. Put on. Rehabilitate. That is, make new habits every time the situation or the need arises. We're to change our outward actions to be consistent with our regenerated inner being, rather than allow that expression to come from our totally depraved nature.

That is exactly what Jesus told the Pharisees. He said, "...first, clean the inside of the cup and the dish so that the outside of it may become clean also" (Matthew 23:26 NAS). I think we spend a lot of time on the outside without caring for the inside. How much time do we spend getting to look like we look? Obviously, some of us don't spend a lot of time. But most of us spend a great deal of time. We do whatever we can to make that outward look the best we can. What if we spent that kind of time on the inward man and not just on the outward man? Jesus said, "...the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart..." (Matthew 15:18 NAS). Real change comes from the inside out, not from the outside in.

Paul says that we have a power inside us already that we received when we trusted in Jesus Christ. But we need to learn to appropriate that power and to put it into action. Every time that we are faced with a situation which is potentially sinful, we need to respond according to our new inward nature. So, the next time somebody wants to gossip about a friend, we don't have to join in, because we can work from the inside out—not conformed to the world, but changed because of Jesus on the inside. That way, we can act like who we really are, His children.

We can carry out these two principles only by renewing our minds. We renew our minds by simply putting in the Word of God. This renewing, *anacanosis* in the Greek, is our gradual conforming more and more to a new spiritual realm. It begins at spiritual rebirth; it is carried on, Paul says, by the work of the Holy Spirit. I would like to suggest that while God can use

the intellect, it is primarily the spirit that He wants to use. He wants to manifest things to us from a spiritual perspective through the Word of God, renewing our spirits and minds so that they are receiving spiritual input and not worldly input.

Many of us are adept or "good at" sinning because we have practiced it all our lives. But we are not as good at being Christians, because we have not habitually, definitely, intentionally given our lives over to the Holy Spirit until it is "second nature" to do so. Then He will crucify the flesh.

I hear people at church saying, "You know, I just want to be myself." That frightens me. God never tells us to be ourselves. When people say, "I just want to be myself," I see lying going on. I see cursing going on. I see hatred coming out! God tells us to crucify self and let Jesus live through us. Then our crucified self will become the channel and the medium by which God will manifest Himself. The apostle Paul said, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2 NAS).

Now, we cannot do any of this without making a total commitment to Jesus Christ and then feeding on the Word of God. Let me put it this way. The Word of God is the raw material that the Holy Spirit will use to mold us into a spiritual life. 2 Timothy 3:16 (NAS) states, "All scripture is inspired by God [God breathed]...profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man [or woman] of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." It is the scripture we use to begin to change our worldly point of view.

The next process is devaluation. We've got to devalue everything we hold dear. We've got to say, "Look, this car is important, this computer is important, these friends are important, but they're not as important as God is to me. How I look is important, but not as important as Christ being in control of my life." And He works that

process through suffering. As we suffer, we have to devalue all those things that we trust in because we find out that none of them is stable. There is only One who said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5 NAS). There is only One who can keep that promise—Jesus Christ.

What is the effect of all of this? The effect, Paul says, is that we will know what the will of God is. He gives three adjectives describing the will of God: it's good, it's pleasing, it's perfect. We are either doing God's will or we're doing our own thing. He is saying *now* we can know His will, *now* we can begin to experience it. We can get it into our lives in power every day.

In closing, I submit the Joey Johnson expanded translation of Romans 12:1,2: "I beg you brothers, sisters, based on the mercies of God, give your body as a living, burnt sacrifice which is acceptable to God. It is your service of intelligent worship. Stop living according to the norms and the value programming of the world, but be changed by the renewing of your mind to God's values through the input of the Word of God, yielding to the Holy Spirit that you may be able to repeatedly discover the good, acceptable, perfect will of God."

Totally committing our lives to Jesus in this way develops a personal, biblical value system which leads to victorious, overcoming, abundant, Christian life.

By doing that, we will not be just old vessels docked somewhere, but we will become ocean-going war vessels for Jesus Christ. In Him, we can win victory that will ultimately glorify Him in His kingdom.



Joey Johnson is founder and pastor of The House of the Lord Church in Akron, Ohio. He also is a popular conference speaker in the areas of Bible, the family, church growth, church management, revivals, business management, and personal development. Pastor Johnson presented a paper on values at Atlanta '88, the first International Congress on Christian Counseling. He is married and the father of two children.



The Truth Matters

by Alistair Begg



Condensed from a sermon delivered May 20, 1994, in the James T. Jeremiah Chapel at Cedarville College.

Implicit in each of the Ten Commandments is the understanding that behind the Decalogue exists a personal Creator God who is the source of truth. He is the One who speaks, and we do well to listen.

The ninth commandment, “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor” (Exodus 20:16 NIV), is a call to truthfulness. It forbids lying that is designed to put down one’s neighbor and, simultaneously, to exalt oneself. Positively, it calls for speaking truth about our neighbor in such a way as to produce good in his life. The call to truthfulness is as vital in our day as it was in the day it was given.

We live in a climate where the idea of absolute truth is rejected. Immanuel Kant, more than any other philosopher of modern time, introduced the notion that there is no absolute truth; that truth is, in fact, relative; that truth is only what we believe it to be; that truth possesses no existence in and of itself. Truth is only what we subjectively conceive in our own minds. The way this plays out in our culture is statements such as, “Well, that may be true for you, but it isn’t true for me.”

The Bible rebuts that way of thinking at every point because the Bible begins with God who is a truth-telling, promise-keeping God who cannot lie; God who in Himself embodies truth; God who in His incarnate form said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life...” (John 14:6). God who on account of His great holiness can not tolerate sin and, in the list of the seven things God is said to hate in Proverbs 6, says He hates lies and He hates deception.

What the Bible says is absolute, contemporary culture says is relative. The magazine, *Child*, essentially has to do with child psychology. Its April 1992 edition had an article entitled, “The Truth About Lying,” which expresses the “old view” and the “new view” of lying. The article states that the old view of lying, like other issues of morality, was seen only in black and white. Children were taught that all

lying was bad, deserving of strict punishment. They were frequently reminded that lying would make one’s nose grow as long as Pinocchio’s, which of course is itself a lie. The article goes on to describe the new view: “Today, some lying is considered normal. In fact, a child’s first few lies are seen as an important step in the development of self.” What foolishness! Totally counter to the Bible.

HOW DO WE LIE?

We can lie with the wink of the eyes, by silence, with a nod of the head. The most common way we lie is by means of the tongue. The tongue is a vital part of human existence; God deemed it so. Without tongues, our world is reduced to unintelligible shrugs and grunts. But the Bible says the tongue is vicious. It “defiles the whole body...is full of deadly poison” (James 3:6,8 NAS). A perfect man is the man who has perfect control over this vital, yet potentially vicious little slab of membrane.

The problem is that people by nature belong to their father, the devil. He has a language all his own—lying (John 8:44). Everything coming from his mouth is a deception. If he ever speaks truth, it is to manipulate us, to create lies and chaos and distortion. The world held in the grip of the evil one buys into lies like crazy.

What about the manner in which we tell lies? First of all, there is perjury—people going into court, taking an oath, and then failing to tell the truth or deliberately misrepresenting the truth. Any trial lawyer will tell you that perjury is far more prevalent than our culture is prepared to admit. Indeed, one of the reasons that it is so difficult to try cases effectively is because of an endemic problem with lying and no absolute standard of righteousness, especially when those in the jury have been brought up to believe that “what is true for you may not be true for me.”

Another way in which we break the ninth commandment is by rumor—saying things that just aren’t true;

little gossipy statements about other people. It may be only allegation. It can be a pack of lies. But in the culture in which we live, where truth is relative and not absolute, where rumor abounds and sells millions of magazines, we would be hard pressed to rebut the things said. Have we passed on any rumors this week, something we had no way of knowing whether it was true or false, but we liked the feel of it? Have we passed on something someone dropped like an incendiary device into casual conversation in the office or school—something that may damage the life of some individual for a long, long time?

Deception is another way we lie. Paul says of those who are godless, “Deceit is on their lips” (Romans 3:13). They deceive by their very nature. Some of us deceived our parents, and some of us were very good at it. When we didn’t want them to know something, we told them something they did want to know in the hope that they would not pursue other information we wanted to keep from them. We are tempted to do the same in business.

How about flattery? Someone has said, “Flattery is saying things to a person’s face that we would never say behind his back.” We say to someone, “I hold you in the highest esteem” and then defame him to others. That’s flattery. That’s lying.



What about exaggeration?

“How cold was it?”

“It was minus 55 degrees. It was so cold people were having their teeth extracted without any anesthetic.”

“How bad was it?”

“You read about the second world war? That was nothing compared to this.”

“How far is it?”

“Oh, you drive for 15 hours and you wouldn’t even be halfway there.”

In actuality, it wasn’t that cold, it wasn’t that bad, and it wasn’t that far.

What about not correcting untrue statements when they are made? We’re on a joint selling mission. Our selling partner makes a promise that is impossible to keep. Shall we correct him or let it go, because after all, we say to ourselves, we could come out of this pretty well. So we let it go. We get the business. But we lied.

What about carelessness? Especially with our children. Samuel Johnson put this very well. “Accompany your children constantly because if a thing happened at one window and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another window, do not let it pass. Instantly check them. You do not know where deviations from the truth will end....” Good advice. Later, the untrained youth has an accident with the car. The officer asks him whether he had his head out of the window or inside the window, whether he had his seat belt on or no seat belt on. If he has built up a 16-year legacy of being careless about issues of scrupulous truthfulness, he may simply answer whichever way helps him. You and I will have contributed to it because we weren’t smart enough to realize that careless talk is an evidence of telling lies.

WHY DO WE LIE?

What is the motivation for telling lies? In the Garden of Eden, the evil one lied because of malice and pride. He wanted to be something that he wasn’t, and he was malevolent towards those whom he could influence. Satan tells lies because he hates God, he hates people who are godly, and he wants to extend his anti-God revolt. When you and I tell lies, we are often driven by the same thing. When we lie in order to impress other people, it is because of pride. When we lie in order to do somebody down, it is because of



hatred. When we lie to protect our own interests, it is because of selfishness.

The book, *The Day America Told the Truth*, states on page 45 that 91 percent of us lie regularly. The majority of us find it hard to get through a week without lying. One in five can’t make it through a single day. We are talking about conscious, premeditated lies. Of the people interviewed, 92 percent said the main reason for their lying was to save face, and 98 percent said the reason they told lies was so as not to offend people. Now we don’t want to be offensive to people, but there are times when telling the truth will hurt and will offend. The issue of truthfulness has got to direct us, not whether a person is offended or grieved.

What about lying because of fear of consequences? I tell you this story because I recently thought seriously about trying to escape a daunting situation. It started when I got a pizza that cost me \$56. The pizza was \$10. The speeding ticket was \$46. Then one afternoon about a week later, I was driving home and traffic was snarled. I thought, “I’m not waiting in that mess,” so I did a right hand turn through the Pizza Hut lot, around Dunkin’ Donuts, and zipped out onto Highway 91. I looked in my mirror, saw the flashing lights, and was pulled over. I knew the routine. The officer put on his hat, got out of his car, and came over to mine. I rolled the window down and tried to look contrite. He started his speech about not cutting through private property. I blurted, “In Scotland, we all do that. In fact, in Scotland that’s commended! Any run-of-the-mill individual can wait day in and day out in a big queue, but only the initiative takers can cut around a corner and zip home for their dinner. Furthermore, I’m in deep trouble because it’s only a matter of days since one of you guys got me with a pizza.” He said, “Give me your license.” I gave him my license and he went back to his car. You know that horrible feeling when you look in the rearview mirror to see if he’s writing or not writing. I said to

myself, “There’s plenty of ways out of this. I could have been going for a pizza. I could have been going for donuts. So when he comes back, I’ll tell him, ‘I was going to get a pizza and I changed my mind.’” Now this is called lying driven by fear. I knew if they ticketed me twice in eight days, I was going to need limousine service or somebody who would pick me up in the church bus. He came back and said, “You know, you were not exactly meandering through. You were flying through! So, it’s obvious you weren’t stopping for pizza.” I said to myself, “I’m glad I didn’t use that line.” I said, “Yeah, I was flying through.” Then he said, “Take care, Mr. Begg,” and gave me my license.

We will never seek to tell the truth until we come to know the truth. We’ll never live the truth until we embrace the truth. What is truth? That is what Pilate asked when Jesus stood before him. The reason that many of us are shackled by our lies is because we have never come to the One who is truth, who holds out to us the cleansing, the forgiveness, and the renewal that we need. Once again, the ninth commandment shows us we have a problem that we cannot, in and of ourselves, cure. It turns us to Christ who is all truth and all life and all forgiveness. Jesus is able and willing to take our lies and change them to truths, our deadness and turn it to life, our darkness and turn it to light. “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32 NAS).

Alistair Begg is senior pastor of Parkside Church in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, he was studying business and economics when God called him to the pastoral ministry. He pastored churches in Edinburgh and Glasgow before accepting the call from Parkside in 1983. Alistair and his wife, Susan, have three children.

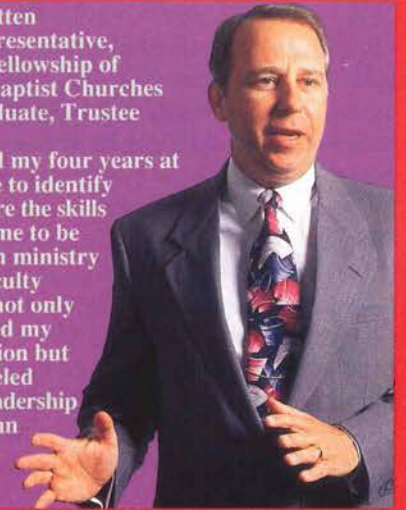


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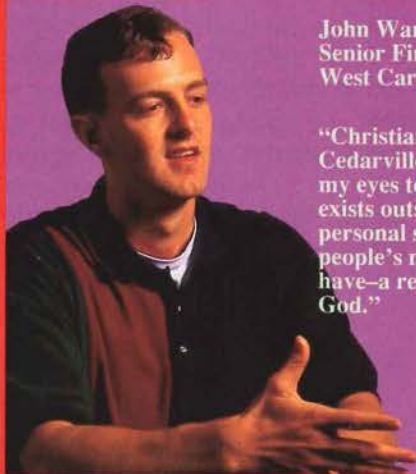
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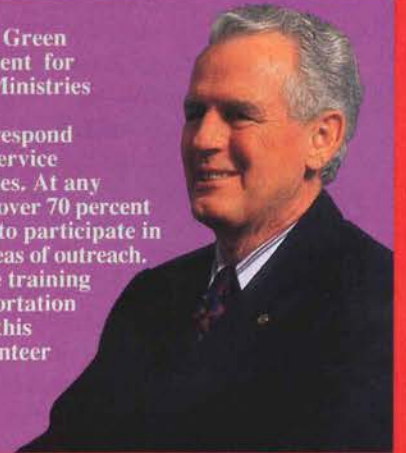


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