

The Heartbeat of 

The Remnant

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A ministry of
The Berean Voice



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“The Berean Voice” is an outreach ministry of Faith Christian Fellowship, a church located in Holmes County, Ohio. It is operated by a board of directors, which ultimately answers to the elders of the church.

As a non-profit ministry, we desire to work with the Lord, for without Him we can do nothing. We are trusting God to provide for the ongoing work of this magazine and our other outreach projects through the free-will offerings of His people. Would you join us in prayer for this work and ongoing need?

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~ The Berean Voice Board

It is our goal that the content of this magazine bring honor and glory to God. All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise notated. In the event of discovering any errors in content or detail, please count it to our oversight and kindly bring it to our attention.

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Another year is rapidly coming to a close. Leaves are changing color. By the time the next issue arrives in your mailbox this year will be history. Reflecting on the fact this year will soon be gone I ask myself, “What have I done in 2019 that will have a lasting effect in the Kingdom of God?” We are effective in this world’s system simply by paying our mortgages and rents, investing in and preparing for upcoming events in our lives, and paying our bills. But are we just as systematic with our efforts in the Kingdom of God?

This past July I visited a refugee camp in southern Bangladesh. This camp is home to over one million people from the Rohingya people group originating from neighboring Myanmar. Two years ago, they were brutally driven from their villages. Their homes were burned and bulldozed. Men, women, and children were violated. Nearly everyone in camp had family members who were either tortured, maimed, or killed. As I walked through this vast camp of thirty miles long and ten miles wide, my problems of life became smaller and smaller. The empty, expressionless faces spoke of pain and fear. Utter hopelessness. Eternal despair.

I came away from that experience feeling challenged. I wish to draw you into that challenge, to make a lasting difference in the Kingdom of Heaven right where you live. No, you and I cannot convert 1.1 million Muslims to follow Jesus Christ. But we all live in a world surrounded by pain and heartbreak. So perhaps we can each point that one soul within our circle of influence to the God of the Bible as the answer to all of life’s problems.

Biblical Answers meetings in Lebanon, PA

The cry for help for emotional, mental and spiritual struggles is ever increasing. In response to this cry, The Berean Voice held a series of meetings in Lebanon, PA this past July. The series was titled “Biblical Answers and Prevention for Struggles in the Church”. Mark Miller and Curvin Wenger shared on subjects of Mental, Emotional & Marriage Struggles, Child Training & Adoption Issues, and Sexual Abuse & Addictions. The meetings were well attended from the local area and many surrounding states and even as far as Michigan, Missouri, and even Alberta. Many individuals expressed appreciation for what was taught, especially the emphases on the Bible having all the answers to the needs in our life.

The following are excerpts from Mark Miller, elder of Faith Christian Fellowship, and Joel Hostetler, a Berean Voice board member.

- As we see the many challenges and needs that face our churches today, there are many that are looking to various sources other than the Scriptures, yet the Bible still has the answer to every struggle man faces. ~Mark Miller
- It was a delight to see the level of interest and response to the teaching that was given. May our gaze be ever turned toward God and the Truth contained in His Word. ~Mark Miller
- The weekend was refreshing, sitting under the sound of the truth proclaimed from God’s Word in many practical and daily areas of our lives. From teaching on sin and how it affects all of us, to psychotropic drug usage and its affect upon the mind and brain, in all it was worthwhile being there. ~Joel Hostetler
- My greatest highlight was to see the various churches and conservative congregations represented there, being able to listen together to these truths. My greatest desire coming away from the meetings is that each individual church represented there could take the truth taught, search the Scriptures themselves, then move on to help their own people in their own congregations, using these principles found in the Holy Scriptures. ~Joel Hostetler

Various anonymous attendees stated that they intended to take the things they learned and put them to practice in their home community.

CD recordings of these messages are available. Contact the Berean Voice to order. There are 17 CDs in this set and any donations are appreciated to cover our costs. Later, when they have been uploaded, we will have these messages available to listen to on our call-in phone line.

The Berean Voice Newsletter

The Berean Voice recently published its first newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform our readership who we are. Obviously, you are familiar with The Heartbeat of the Remnant magazine. But who is behind this magazine? Who is the Berean Voice? What do we represent? In this newsletter we wanted to introduce ourselves and to make you aware of the various aspects of the Berean Voice and all the work we are engaged in. We are doing more than publishing the

Abba Father

Barry Grant
Arcahaie, Haiti

Sometimes we can learn things from everyday situations. A few years ago, my three-year-old son and I went for a walk. We were in an unfamiliar area with lots of vegetation. I told my son to stay close by me. He was doing great. However, when a calf that had broken loose from the rope that she had been tied with, went running by, my son gave chase. “Did I not just tell him to stay close to me?” I thought. Deciding it was a good time for a lesson, I hid behind a large rock pile and waited. It didn’t take long before I heard his small voice crying for daddy. The longer he searched the more desperate he became. After just a few moments, I ran and scooped him up, hugging him, while also reprimanding him for wandering off. (Haiti is one of the easiest places for a child to be kidnapped.) Later that day as I was pondering on the morning events, I had to wonder if I would react in that same way when I discover that I have drifted away from my Heavenly Father...

It seems like we hear many messages and teachings on restoring our relationships—with our wives, our husbands, our children, and our parents. I am very thankful for these teachings. I have learned a great deal from them, but I believe it is time to hear some teaching on restoring our relationship with God. If my relationship with my wife is struggling, I’m not okay with it. If there is a lack of communication between me and my children, something must be done. Yet, do I have the same concern when I feel something has gotten in between me and my God?

The Bible tells us what happened the first and only time that Jesus and his Father were separated ... *Jesus cried with a loud voice ... My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* –Mat 27:46.

I remember clearly the time I spent courting my wife. I longed to talk to her. There was something about simply talking to her that made me happy, it also helped me get to know her. I found myself wanting to talk with her every chance that I could. I would look for opportunities to call

her when I awoke, during my lunch break, after work, and before I went to bed. The reason why is obvious—I loved her.

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment –Mar 12:30.

If we are called to love God with all our heart, would the proof of that not be a great desire to talk with Him? It seems to me that here in Haiti, the devil doesn’t necessarily want me to go steal something, or to get angry with a church member, or even stop going to church. He wants me to stop praying, because everything else will follow. Since the Bible tells us to pray in secret, some folks think it’s easy to not pray, and no one will find out. But if we stop praying, it’s not long until our connection with God starts to suffer, the flow of His power slows to a trickle, and the love of His word grows cold. Surely other people can tell when our interests are on other things and our church life doesn’t seem as important or exciting as it once was.

Our business grows because we put in the time; our relationships grow because of our effort given. Our spiritual well-being grows because of time spent on our knees. Do you ever feel yourself so wrapped up in the things of this life that it affects your prayer time? That’s the work of the devil. “But,” you might say, “The things that are occupying my time are not bad.” Yes, that’s the wise old devil.

I’ll share a personal testimony. I began the large project of building the mission house. I hired 30 Haitian men and we began to work. I soon realized it was going to be more difficult than I had expected. Everything needed to be micromanaged; everything needed to be controlled. Supplies would vanish in the night; fights would break out. A voodoo spell was cast on more than one occasion. If I turned my back they stopped working. And the list goes on.

I soon became consumed with it all. One early morning as I knelt to pray, I couldn’t keep my mind off the work. I



Remnant magazine. This first newsletter, which hopefully arrived in your mailbox already, gives you the history of the Heartbeat of the Remnant magazine with an inside glimpse of all it takes to bring an issue to publication. We plan to publish this newsletter twice a year, informing you of the different aspects of the work we are doing. Feel free to contact us if you have not received a newsletter.

The Heartbeat of the Remnant sponsorship

Another new development at the Berean Voice are monthly sponsorships for The Heartbeat of the Remnant magazine for those who would not otherwise be able to get them. The Heartbeat of the Remnant goes out to many missionaries in foreign lands, to correctional institutions here in the USA, and even onto an Indian reservation. We provide them at

no charge to these recipients but are limited in finances how much we can provide. We desire to get more of this sound Biblical teaching into more correctional institutions and into the hands of individuals who use them as an outreach ministry in their own communities.

These new monthly sponsorships allow you to join in this work. \$25 allows 10 magazines be sent to persons who might not be able to otherwise get them. \$50 funds 20 magazines and \$125 provides 50 magazines to appreciating persons. If you wish to start a monthly sponsorship contact the Berean Voice office. We want to express a heartfelt thank you to all of you who are already supporting this work. Without our contributors we could not manage this huge undertaking.

Guest editorial written by Edward Martin, chairman of the board

tried to refocus, but back it would go... Do I have enough materials for today? Will people show up? On and on my thoughts went. After a few weeks this became my normal routine. My prayer time was a time to think about my approaching day. It's not how I wanted it. I even hated it, but it seemed that I had lost control. One day I realized I needed something in Port-au-Prince, but I had no time to go get it, the workers were waiting. I then thought of the motorbike that we purchased for mountain preaching. I quickly got on it and was off. I knew I was going too fast, 110 kilometers an hour was as fast as it went. But I don't have time, I thought. Suddenly a tap-tap (taxi) that was coming towards me turned right in front of me. Many say it was done on purpose. Either way, I was now skidding down the road. I felt my flesh being torn away. All I could think about during that next minute, was my prayer time. God was speaking to me. Wake up! A bystander said I was an inch away from certain death as the bike hit the truck and my body flew past. I spent the next number of weeks recovering... thinking. Out of His love, God had sent me a message. After repenting sorrowfully, my peace was restored. And once more, I could pray!

The devil knows that if we stop praying effectively, we are powerless in the work God has put before us. We cannot be effective pastors, deacons, brothers, sisters, missionaries, fathers, or mothers, if our prayer life is hindered. That is why the devil attacks this area of our Christian life so hard. It seems today that many churches and missions are struggling. It's starting to be the norm. Could it be because our time spent in prayer is insufficient? When you think of

a mighty man of God, what do you think of? A powerful preacher? An organized leader? A brave missionary? What about a man on his knees, standing in the gap between God and his family—his people. God will use a praying man. He has a lot of work to do and is looking for a praying warrior. But it's difficult for God to use a man with too much on his mind or no interest in prayer.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest –Joh 4:35.

We have all heard powerful stories about prayer, people being healed, saloons being shut down, storms calming, and so on. I'm excited each time God works in this way, whether in my life or in the life of another Christian. However, a steady, consistent prayer life reveals the greatest miracle of all: a holy life, a pattern of victorious living.

If my son would have never found me that day, he would have had some rough days ahead of him. Likewise, if we stay disconnected from our Heavenly Father, the future doesn't look good. Many people confess the need to pray more, but is there actual change? Are we praying more? Or is it just the way it is? Late nights equal late mornings. Sleep is more important, or maybe the connection is so severed that you feel there's no use. The Bible says multiple times that God will give us what we ask for. If this is true, then praying should be exciting! But if our will does not line up with God's, then not a whole lot happens when we pray, thus we think it's no use. If our desires have changed, or we sense some drift in our Christian life, and we humble

ourselves and repent, then God will once more open His ear to our cry.

The connection between us and God can be so real. I believe that Adam and Eve had a very close relationship with God. Although the Bible doesn't exactly say it, I like to believe they walked and talked with God, before sin entered the picture. Since sin separates us from God, then repenting of our sin and obeying His word re-unites us back to God. Thus, we can walk and talk with our Creator once more! It can be that personal. But the devil wants us to think that God is far, far away and He doesn't have a lot of time for us. *The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth –Psa 145:18.*

The Bible tells us to pray always... and to pray without ceasing. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man –Luk 21:36.* God wants to be in communication with us all the time!

It's part of the Haitian culture to pray long, loud, repetitive prayers in church. Some are powerful, but unfortunately, I've found that it usually doesn't carry over to the prayer closet. Praying for the praise of men is a stench to God, while praying in secret opens the heavens.

Could the reason why so many Christians struggle with prayer be because they already have things figured out? They already know what they want out of their day, out of their life? If so, then we have a good idea why so many lives are shipwrecked spiritually. If we cannot submit to God's will, our prayers will be in vain. *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts –Jas 4:3.*

I recall a time shortly after I was converted when I was still facing several charges for things I had done before my conversion. I was told that I would serve a minimum of five years in prison. I was not okay with this. I kept asking God to fix it! I kept telling God I couldn't go to jail because, "I'm different now." The court hearings dragged on and on. Eventually, I was waiting for the final hearing—the sentencing. As I sat there in the court room, in my troubled thoughts I clearly heard the Lord speak, "Whose will do you want to be done?" I think of Jesus' words. *Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? –Joh 18:11.*

Suddenly a peace came over me, "God is in control! If

I go to prison, it is God's will! I remember giving it over to God with confidence. A long story short, I went home that day with no prison time. When our will lines up with God's will, then we will have the mind of Christ, and God promises to answer our prayers in His time and in His way. If God has a specific method of answering our prayers, what will happen? We will love to pray, and we will approach the throne boldly! More importantly, we will pray with much confidence.

Here are a few reasons why Christians stop praying.

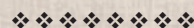
1. **No time.** –Since we are good at what we do, we are very busy. Everything needs to be done, surely prayer can wait until tomorrow. People are too busy.
2. **Sin.** –The Bible tells us that sin separates us from God. We pray, but it doesn't seem that He is listening.
3. **Discouragement.** –We feel defeated and wonder what's the use. However, falling on our faces in humility is the weapon against discouragement.
4. **Too tired.** –We fall asleep on our knees. We need to have control over our sleep. Early to bed, early to rise, gives us time to talk to God.

Some people pray as if they are wishing, hoping that someday God will give them what they're asking for. I was talking with a pastor here in Haiti. I had preached several times at his church, and knew the church was not well. It was a large church of 300 members and having a good time was more important than glorifying God. I asked him how his prayer life was. He said he prays a lot. I then asked him what

he prays for. I respected the man and was hoping for a list of the problems he's having with sin in the church, but he didn't. He chuckled and said he's praying for a new Toyota Land Cruiser. "And God will give me one, maybe not today, but someday!"

When we ask according to the will of God, we ask

for the same things God wants. I believe that God hears our cries, and when we ask in the name of Jesus, according to the will of God, the world can't contain all that God wants to do for his people! *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you... –Jas 4:8.*



The Three Cs of Interpretation

Darren Drayer
Ossian, IN

One of the worst things a Christian can do is read a Bible verse. Sound like heresy? Here's the point: when reading the Bible, Christians get into danger when they focus on just one verse and ignore the entirety of Scripture. When reading God's Word, Christians should focus on the three Cs: Context, Covenant Connection, and Consider Other Scriptures.

1. **Context of the Passage:** Always consider the verses around the verse.

The Bible very clearly says we can accomplish anything we want through Jesus. We can triumph in a beauty pageant, swim the English Channel, or crush an opponent in a boxing match. We can do all this because the Bible promises, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

Not exactly. In context, Paul is teaching the Philippians about contentment (see verse 11). He can persevere through difficult times because Jesus gives him strength. In Philippians 4:13, we learn that Christ will give us power to accomplish the work He has commanded us to do.

2. **Covenant Connection:** The first (old) covenant and the new covenant.

The Bible very clearly says that all God's people are to either participate in war or at least give their support when the government calls them. I can list dozens of godly men who lifted the sword in battle: David, Gideon, and Joshua to name a few. God directly commanded Saul to destroy his enemies. Like Samson of old, brave Christians are meant to raise their bayonets and thrust them into the bellies of their foes.

Not exactly. The commands for warfare and the valiant men and women who killed for God are all part of the first (old) covenant—the covenant that was fulfilled by Christ (Hebrews 8:13). Just as New Covenant Christians are no longer required to kill an animal in sacrifice, we also are

no longer permitted to kill an enemy in battle (Matthew 5:43-48). Old Covenant Jews were required to sanctify the Sabbath by ceasing from all labors (Exodus 20:8). New Covenant Christians are required to bless all humans by ceasing from all combat (John 8:35-36).

While the Old Testament is true history and contains good lessons, the commands of the first covenant (civil law) are not relevant for New Covenant Christians. Keep in mind, however, that many commands of the OT are reinstated in the NT (i.e. Christians are still forbidden from adultery).

3. **Consider other Scripture:** Compare Scripture with Scripture to gain clearer meaning.

The Bible is clear on this point: Christians are to reserve all condemnation for God. It is a direct violation of Scripture for a Christian to tell people they are sinning. Jesus commands, "Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). Stop pointing out other people's sins, Christians!

Not exactly. After applying the first C, it is clear that this verse is not saying it is wrong to call sin, sin. Rather, Jesus is condemning hypocrisy. Further, if we consider other Scriptures, we can see that God commands Christians to help one another by confronting each other about sin (see Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:19). Think about it... all of Paul's epistles would be violating the words of Jesus if Christians were forbidden from correcting others. Here are three famous phrases from Paul's letters: "O foolish Galatians," "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you," and "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." (Galatians 3:1, I Corinthians 5:1, and 1 Timothy 1:20).



The Balm of Gilead

Lee Rufener
Athens, WI

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? –Jer 8:20-22.

From the pen of the weeping prophet arises the renowned lamentation that has been the subject of many sermons throughout the ages. *Is there no balm in Gilead?* To those who understood the ancient geographic region, this question was an obvious idiom. Is there cheese in Wisconsin, maple syrup in Vermont, rain in Oregon, or sunshine in Florida? Of course, there is. After tossing the envied Joseph into a pit, the sons of Jacob ...*sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt* –Gen 37:25.

Gilead means “to be rough” and was a mountainous region east of the Jordan. It extended from the Sea of Galilee to the upper end of the Dead Sea, about sixty miles long and twenty miles wide. While it was ‘a good place for cattle;’ –*Num 32:1*, it also boasted fertile hillsides and forests where a vast array of wildflowers and herbs grew prolifically.

Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured –Jer 46:11. This is a discouraging scenario,

for Jeremiah is speaking of spiritual matters. Many are reaping tremendous troubles, and the Balm of Gilead is their only cure. America has been a land of unbounded religious freedom, but her citizens continue on a downward infectious spiral of sin sickness. We are free to worship, preach, and even receive tax reductions for charitable gifts. Yet, every thirty-six seconds a divorce occurs within our borders. That equals 2,400 per day, 16,800 per week, and 876,000 per year. Our senators spend three million dollars to get a job that pays \$125,000 per year, and the government is trillions of dollars in debt. As the whole economic structure decays at its roots, the moral fiber of the nation is ebbing away internally, and the virus of immorality has spread contagiously throughout.

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies –Rev 18:2-3.

America has been a land of unbounded religious freedom, but her citizens continue on a downward infectious spiral of sin sickness.

Is there any hope for healing? Under the heated duress of deplorable conditions and incessant oppression there arose a song of hope from the black slaves laboring in the cotton fields. *There is a Balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole. There is a Balm in Gilead to*

heal the sin-sick soul. Sin has plagued mankind since it first entered the Garden of Eden, and its contagious nature has left no one exempt. We can page through the catalogs of multiple businesses selling a vast array of natural, herbal remedies boasting healing relief for everything from our teeth to our toes, from arthritis to arteries, from burns to bad breath, plus guaranteed cures to alleviate everything from candida to colds. Yet, amidst the hundreds of promising products there is not one capsule, curative, or concoction that can offer any relief for the sin-sick soul.

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer –Psa 32:3-4. It is the sick that require a physician, while the dying seek their God. To silently live in denial and seek no cure is to forfeit the reward of an eternal heaven. Many have sought the Balm to no avail. They have added Jesus to their lives and are none the better for doing so. Their marriage is still in shambles, their children still disrespectful, their relationships to church brethren remain strained (if they even go to church), and their overall spiritual health seems to be gasping for breath. Though they sincerely try God, it materializes to be little more than an unsuccessful experiment, ...and the last state of that man is worse than the first –Luk 11:26. While some will blame the Balm, we would do much better to read the instructions and apply it in a correct fashion.

Perhaps those in underprivileged countries of Africa can understand this better than we. In their unsanitary living conditions, they are much more likely to contract a skin ulcer. Their bodies react to the invasion of foreign bacteria and a huge welt appears on the surface of their skin. As the ulcer penetrates deeper into their skin, the outer layer rises and forms a black ugly scab of decaying and dying flesh. The discomfort and sight of it leaves no alternative but to make their way to the nearest clinic for help.

The missionary doctor gets out the balm, but he doesn't open it. If he layers the balm on top of the blackened boil, he is wasting his time. The infected area is one quarter inch proud above the rest of the skin and the sterile knife is the first instrument needed. He deftly cuts an incision around the entire infection and lifts off the surface layer. Under the blackened scab lies a pool of discolored puss which must be scraped clean. Then come the swabs. Deeper and deeper he swipes until some pink flesh appears, but he doesn't stop there. The swabs are worked, and the infection scrubbed until blood begins to seep through the open wound. Only then will the balm be applied and rendered effective.

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer [allow] me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said

unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God –Luk 9:59-62. Many have sought help from the Great Physician to no avail. They have attempted to smear Jesus on top of their sin-infected soul. They want Jesus. They need Jesus. They state their intent to follow Jesus, but then also stipulate that He must “**allow me first**” to maintain control of their life.

Three Dollars' Worth of God

I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.
Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep,
but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk
or a snooze in the sunshine.

I want ecstasy, not transformation.
I want warmth of the womb, not a new birth.
I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack.
I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.

— Wilbur Rees

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it –Mat 13:44-46. We live in a society where we have come to expect more yet pay less. There are cheaper products at big box stores that do the same thing as the items that are name brand. But there is no replica that can remotely produce the effects of the healing Balm of Gilead. This, God will not sell so cheaply. Those who can see the value of the costly ointment will lift up both their heart and their voice with the hymn writer:

*To win this precious treasure and matchless pearl
I would give honor, wealth, and pleasure, yea, every earthly good.
I gladly would surrender the dearest thing which might,
Obscure the Sun's bright splendor and rob me of His light.*

-Zions Harp

Thus, those who will apply the healing balm unto their soul must expose their ugly sin, submit themselves to the painful surgery, and allow the accumulated layers of selfish contagion to be removed. In the deep recesses of our soul, hidden under the pious cover of a smiling religion, we often find...

...Self-Centeredness

We have learned this well. At our command, chain

restaurants push steaming lunches out through a small window and says, “have it your way.” We have come to expect immediate accurate service at our slightest dictation and expect a variety of options catered to our liking. But we have neglected to notice that this doesn’t fare too well when it comes to the kingdom of heaven. Those of us who believe that life must revolve around us must some day awake to the stark reality that this conceited attitude stands between us and the coveted balm of our Saviour. *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you ... For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s –Php 2:19-21.*

...Self-Sufficiency

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God... –1Ti 6:17. It is no virtue to be dependent on others for our basic needs, but to carry this attitude into our spiritual life is a crippling element. The self-made man who will say to his soul, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry –Luk 12:19,* is soon to find that his independent prowess cannot reach into the spiritual realm. Within the borders of the kingdom of heaven lies a great equalizer. The prince, the pauper, the preacher, and the penitent must all prostrate themselves before the Physician and those who administer the Balm.

...Self-Pity

Many are the mournful cries of the poor. Sadder still are the complaints of those who *think* they are. It is always possible to find someone with a greater disadvantage than our self, but many are unwilling to acknowledge this fact and allow their attitude to be brought into perspective. Paul had learned that in whatsoever state he was, *...therewith to be content –Php 4:11.* He knew how to handle poverty and prosperity, hunger and fullness, limitations and excess. Abundance is to be accompanied by generosity; but suffering through need should be met with contentment. Those who meet their discomfort with self-pity and complaint will have a difficult time reaping the benefits of the Balm.

...Self-Consciousness

Some doubt that self-consciousness is even to be classified as a sin. Perhaps that is how a number of the chief rulers solaced themselves, as many of them *...believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God –Joh 12:42-43.* The *... Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he*

was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue –Joh 9:22. Even the parents of the young man who was born blind could not openly rejoice in their son’s recovered sight for fear of what others might think. Self-conscious people are insecure because they long for the praise of men. This is a spiritual palsy that indiscriminately takes hostage many a timid vessel, leaving them in the chains of the fear of men, while seeking compliments.

...Self-Defense

Christ was *...brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth –Isa 53:7.* While many have been duly trained in the doctrine of nonresistance and have surrendered their sword, it takes humility of soul to leave the mouth silent in times of intense accusation. We are apt to correct any description which could cast a poor reflection on our chartered character. But this is poor character. The snake and the worm are both creatures who must live their lives among the lowly dirt. The worm has submitted to this and is thus an emblem of humility among the humus. The snake is of a different sort. When it is confronted, it rears its ugly head, sticks out its tongue, sounds forth an awful hiss, and will strike out according to its ability.

...Self-Righteousness

Even amidst our obvious character flaws, it is amazing how slowly we release our pious estimation of our self. Peter bragged of leaving all, lied about his relationship to Christ, swore in public, jumped to conclusions, and offended Jesus with his flattery. All this, while astutely adorned in his self-righteous cloak, he refused to eat with the Gentiles. *...Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean –Act 10:14.* While thanking God that we are not the grotesque sinners that other men are, we are often hopelessly infected with foot-in-mouth disease. The Balm is for the unrighteous, for *... They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance –Mar 2:17.* The balm is for those who need it, seek it, and dig deeply to apply it. And thus, Peter was one of them. Amidst the raging war within his own heart, he armed himself *...likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; –1Pe 4:1.* The swarthy fisherman (Peter) found it... applied it... lived it... and died it... upon a cross; upside-down. This he chose because he felt that he was not worthy to suffer the same death as his Lord. His testimony alone leaves us little doubt that there is a Balm in Gilead.



A Prayer For Words Fitly Spoken

O, Lord, breathe your life in each
word that I speak;
Help me in each sentence your
honour to seek.
Refrain me when words that will
do no one good
Would come to my lips; help me
speak what I should.
And when opportunity
comes on my way
To witness for you, guide, O
Lord, what I say.
O give me the courage to
speak as I ought--
To lift up your name and the
things you have taught;
That none have occasion my
speech to condemn,
That through my words Christ would be
shining to them.

~Rebecca Weber

A Broken and Contrite Heart

A Study of Psalm 51

By Harold S. Martin

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PO Box 391, Hanover PA 17331

It was springtime for King David, but he chose not to go out with his army as they continued to make new conquests. That year, the king chose to stay home (2 Samuel 11:1). Late one afternoon, as David was strolling about on the flat roof of the royal palace, he noticed a woman bathing on the outdoor patio of one of the houses close by. She was stunningly beautiful. Upon inquiry David learned that she was Bathsheba, and that her husband was far away serving in the army. David was king, and he could have whatever (and whomever) he wanted. Instead of seeking out one of his own wives, he sent for the woman, and they spent the rest of the night together.

Some time later, David received a letter with a short message. The letter said, “Your majesty: I’m expecting a child. What do I do now?” It was signed in her own handwriting: “Bathsheba.”

King David went into action immediately. He tried to cover the whole thing up! He arranged for Uriah (Bathsheba’s husband) to have a brief furlough, but Uriah was a good soldier. He would not go home and sleep with his wife while the other soldiers were roughing it out on the battlefield. So, David arranged to have Uriah killed in battle. His plan succeeded. Then David did what may have seemed like an act of kindness. He took Uriah’s wife (who was now a poor expectant widow) as his wife.

This despicable affair might have ended there. But one day, almost a year later, the prophet Nathan came to see the king. He told David about two men. One was a rich man who owned many flocks and herds. The other was a poor man who lived nearby and had nothing but one precious little lamb which he had purchased and raised. The rich man stole the poor man’s lamb and used it to make a feast for a visiting friend.

David had been a shepherd boy when he was younger, and

without doubt he had a pet lamb from time to time. When he heard the story of this injustice, with great indignation he said, “Who is this fellow? He deserves to die.” Nathan looked David in the eye, and with great courage, he said, “You are the man!” And David got the point. David recognized that he had sinned, and he was overwhelmed with guilt.

David and Bathsheba’s baby was born. But within a week the child died. David, who was once “the sweet singer of Israel,” was now a broken-hearted man.

The 51st Psalm is a cry for pardon and forgiveness. It is a plea from David’s broken heart. David says, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, [and] thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight” (Psalm 51:1-4a).

We may not have sinned in the manner in which David did, but that each of us has sinned is evident. If God would flash upon a screen a record of our lives, all of us would cringe and bow our heads in shame.

But where should a sinful person go? To whom should we turn when our hearts are fairly bleeding with regret?

The answer is clear in verse 1 of the 51st Psalm. David went to God. He poured out his heart before the Lord and begged for His mercy.

1. David’s Confession (Psalm 51:1-6)

David had sinned grievously against God. His sin was inexcusable, and he took all the blame. He spoke of “me,” “my,” and “mine” all the way through. The Psalm does not have one word of excuse.

Have mercy upon me; wash me; cleanse me. David simply and honestly said, "I'm guilty, and I need forgiveness." In this chapter, David used three distinct words for sin: transgression, iniquity, and sin. Transgression (in verses 1, 3, 13) carries the idea of revolting or rebelling. Iniquity (verses 2, 9) conveys the thought of the perversion (the depravity) of his nature. Sin (verses 2, 3, 4, 9) translates the word that means "falling short" and "missing the mark."

In committing adultery with Bathsheba, David had revolted against what he knew was God's law. He gave in to the perverse desires of the flesh, and he stumbled and fell way short of God's expected standard.

David also used three distinct terms for forgiveness: blot out, wash away, and cleanse. Blot out means to wipe away, as one wipes away tears. Wash away means to scrub, just as one scrubs dirty clothes. Cleanse means to make clean, like washing clothes and rinsing them in a river. The dirt in David's life was so ingrained that a mere light soaking would not do. He does not ask for a mere rinsing, but for a thorough and repeated scrubbing!

The memory of Uriah the Hittite kept cropping up in David's mind. He was burdened by the sense that he sinned greatly against God. He says, "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned" (Psalm 51:3-4a).

David, of course, knew that he had sinned against people as well! He knew that he had sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba. He had sinned against his friend Ahithophel, who was Bathsheba's grandfather. And he had sinned against the baby boy who was born to Bathsheba.

But while sin is against man, it is also against God! In fact, the sin against God is so enormous and so fearful, that any offenses against a human being fade into the background when compared with the offense against our holy God.

David surely understood that others had been damaged by his sin. Bathsheba's reputation was soiled. Her marriage was broken. Her husband was murdered. Her heart was grieved by the death of the child that was born. Uriah's life was brought to a bloody end because of David's sin. David sinned against his own family. It was also a sin against the nation, as David was king of Israel.

But David saw that ultimately sin is an insult and injury to God. God's love was wounded. God's grace was trampled underfoot. It is true that David sinned against his fellow human beings, but transgressions go much farther than that. Sin, in reality, strikes at the very heart of God!

David's sin still has repercussions in our day. Think about what happens even in our day as a result of David's sin. Several years ago, a cynic on the streets of Chicago was

making fun of God. He said, "You mean to tell me that David was a man after God's own heart? Doesn't your God say that He is a holy God?" And then he made some filthy statements about David and his sexual relationship with Bathsheba, and said, "What kind of God are you serving?" David's sin long ago gave opportunity for an enemy of God to blaspheme (2 Samuel 12:14).

God, through the prophet Nathan, said to David, "David, you hurt Me!" True, David also hurt Bathsheba and Uriah, and his family, and his nation. But Bathsheba is now gone; the society of ancient Israel is no more; but God and His Word are still surviving, and people still laugh at God because of David's sin! So ultimately, the worst damage is the injury done to the cause of the holy Lord God Jehovah. Every sin against man is still more a sin against God.

The statement in verses 5-6a is often misinterpreted: "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The statement does not mean that the sexual relationship within a proper marriage is sinful. The Amplified Bible says it this way: "Behold, I was brought forth in [a state of] iniquity; my mother was sinful who conceived me [and I too am sinful]." David was a son of Adam, a member of a fallen race. And like all of us, David was born with a propensity to sin. Corrupt actions flow from a corrupt nature. But instead of disciplining that nature, David allowed it to gain control over his actions.

We have inherited a sin nature. The disposition to do wrong lies deep in each human life. Who taught you to sin? Did you ever tell a lie (or act out a lie)? Where did you learn to lie? You didn't have to go to school to learn to be dishonest. Did your parents actually train you how to deceive others?

A newspaper columnist said that one of the most painful exercises in the human experience is guilt. She said that guilt can ruin your day. It turns up when you do something dishonest, or hurtful, or selfish, or just plain mean. Maybe it was the result of thoughtlessness, or an uncontrolled tongue, or maliciousness, but anyhow, you did wrong, and the sense of guilt is bothering you. The point the columnist was making is that guilt is a pollutant, and we don't need any more of it in the world.

But the fact is that no matter how often a person tells himself that he's a good person, it seems he eventually discovers that sometimes he just cannot help thinking, saying, or doing wrong things, and then afterward he feels guilty about it. We feel guilty because we are guilty of sometimes thinking, saying, or doing wrong things, and all the counseling offered by well-meaning persons cannot bring relief from the guilt. You may feel better for a while, especially if you can place the blame on someone else (which

is often what some psychiatrists try to do). But that only intensifies the guilt, because it adds dishonesty to the sin that caused the guilt feeling in the first place! Because of the original sin (human depravity), mankind is given to pride, greed, lust, hatred, impatience, laziness, procrastination, etc. All these things can crop up in our hearts, and we need to be quick to confess our wrongs.

Sin is not just a surface problem; it is a problem deep within. God desires truth “in the inward parts” (Psalm 51:6). The Lord’s penetrating gaze searches the innermost recesses of a person’s mind, and it is there that our God is looking for honesty and truthfulness.

2. David’s Cleansing (Psalm 51:7-12)

First Kings 15:5 says that during his lifetime, David did what pleased the Lord, and had not turned aside from what God had commanded him “except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.” David’s adultery with Bathsheba and his provision for Uriah’s death are black scars on his character. It would be hard to find, anywhere in the Bible, a more thorough exposure of the ravages and damages done by sin.

In earlier years, David had been able to take his harp and make the halls of the palace ring with joy and gladness—but not anymore! David experienced the effects of sin in his life. He was once the sweet singer of Israel, but now his life had become a tangled mess!

In this section David repeatedly calls for cleansing. He had a deep sense of guilt, and he knew that the same God Who created all things was the only One Who could restore him and cleanse him.

The words “purge me with hyssop” (verse 7) refer to a sponge-like plant, the leaves of which were sometimes used to apply the blood of an animal on the altar of sacrifice. In Exodus 12:22, the hyssop plant was dipped in the blood of an animal, and then applied to the lintels and doorposts of the Jewish houses on the night when the death-angel came through.

The words “joy and gladness” (verse 8) indicate that David wanted the joy of the Lord in his heart again. He knew that his heart could only experience joy and contentment once again if he was honest before God. Then he could be assured of the Lord’s forgiveness.

In verse 9 David prayed, “Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.” David prayed that God would cancel the record of his sins when he said, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (verse 10). David was asking that his heart be renewed, restored, and transformed—and he knew that God was the only source of such renewal. David wanted to do his best

never to fall into committing such a sin again!

Much depression in the lives of professing Christians today is caused by sin, often something from the past that is hidden away in the recesses of the heart. It may have been some so-called “big sin” like murder or adultery, or it may have been some seemingly small compromise, like having a short fuse with your spouse, or perhaps taking a long look at someone else’s spouse!

When we humbly confess these sins, the Holy Spirit washes the dirt from our souls. God will not cast us away, nor will He abandon us—if we are humble before Him! We need to claim the promise of 1 John 1:7, “The blood of Jesus Christ [God’s] Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Even in Old Testament times, salvation came through forgiveness based on God’s grace. Old Testament saints looked forward in faith to the Messiah’s coming. Today, we look back in faith to the work of Jesus on the cross.

3. David’s Commitment (Psalm 51:13-19)

Having experienced God’s forgiveness, the psalmist vows to do three things:

1. I will teach others (verse 13).
2. I will sing about God’s righteousness (verse 14).
3. I will praise the Lord God who forgives (verse 15).

David was now making a commitment to teach others the ways of God. It is futile to try to teach others how to walk in “the straight and narrow way” if we are not walking in that way ourselves! But when you experience the assurance of God’s forgiveness, others will notice what God has done for you, and you’ll feel compelled to tell them about the joy of sins forgiven.

Those who have been cleansed from sin, by confessing their transgressions, can then go to others and say: “I know the struggles you’re having; I’ve been there myself; I know what you’re going through.”

David declared that he would teach transgressors God’s ways and sing about His righteousness (verses 13-15). Verses 16-17 indicate that God expects sacrifices and worship. But He has an even greater delight in those who come to Him in simple obedience. What the Lord desires most of all is deep and sincere repentance—a contrite heart and a broken spirit! Many of the words of this Psalm have been repeated and rehearsed hundreds of times in the lives and testimonies of the people of God.

The 51st Psalm lays down the requirements for cleansing from sin. David’s repentance included a godly sorrow for his transgressions, confession of his sins, and a determination

not to commit those sins any more. God forgave David's sin and restored him into fellowship with the Father, thus enabling him to rejoice and tell others of the grace of God.

One young lady was sitting with a group of friends at an airport. As she watched the airplanes take off, she said, "I wish I could vanish out into space just like that airplane. I'd like to escape, and go somewhere, and start my life all over again!" She was young and attractive, and obviously a woman of financial means. Why did she want to vanish? Undoubtedly, the stain of making wrong choices in the past, and dabbling with sin, was filling her mind with a haunting desire to escape. She apparently knew nothing of the joy of restoration which God offers to those who repent and seek forgiveness.

Perhaps someone who is reading this message has lost the joy of his (or her) salvation. Perhaps you are a member of the church, but you are missing the peace of mind that only God can give. This would be a good time to pray like David did in the 51st Psalm.

1. Acknowledge your failure before God.
2. Humbly ask God's forgiveness.
3. Renew your vows to Him.

Perhaps you've never committed your life to Christ. You can experience God's forgiveness today. If you've never done it, come to Christ today. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Many years ago, in London, Caesar Milan preached the Word and spoke freely to the unsaved about their need for salvation. After dismissal, he talked with the young lady who sang very charmingly, just before the sermon. Her name was Charlotte Elliot. She was impressed anew by the truth that "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin." At home later that night, she couldn't sleep. Finally, early in the morning, the young singer sprang from her bed, took a pencil and paper, and with tears streaming down her face, Charlotte Elliot wrote the words that many of us have sung through the years:

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

I pray that you will have the courage to stand up for Jesus today!



Building Up Relationships

Irene Martin
Glenmont, OH

Friendship is a beautiful thing. Meaningful, heart-to-heart friendships influence us greatly and bring stability into our lives, especially if they are grounded in Christ. True friends encourage us when we're hurting or discouraged, and they rebuke us when we sin, yet they always care for us.

Building relationships is hard. It takes a lot of time to build meaningful friendships. What is the purpose of friendship? Why would we build friendships with people who are not the same as us in personality, in culture, in position of life, or in other ways? God has called us to love our sisters in Christ, to desire for each other to be perfected in our Christian lives—a desire that responds with encouragement, caring, and humility. How can we build such relationships?

Security in Christ

Before we can have properly meaningful relationships, we need to find our security in Christ. Someone who is not secure in Christ will be looking for security somewhere else. A person who is not secure in Jesus is insecure and insecurity damages relationships. It creates a vicious cycle. Sister A is not secure, so she says things to try to gain security in the people around her. She says things that hurt Sister B, then Sister B feels that Sister A doesn't like her, so she retreats into the background. Sister A thinks that Sister B is aloof and doesn't want to be her friend.

How do we become secure in Christ? We need to realize that people can't be our complete satisfaction. God

created us to have a relationship with Him. Unless we have that relationship, we will not be completely satisfied. Communication is one of the most important ways to have a relationship. The more time we spend talking with God through prayer and Him talking to us through His Word and His Spirit, the closer we will be to Him.

God's original plan for us was that we would glorify Him and please Him. We were made for His pleasure. When we are committed to pleasing God, we will be secure. We don't need to try to keep up with ever-changing peer pressures. We go by what God wants. In fact, peer pressure is caused in the first place when people are not secure in Christ.

Another part of finding our satisfaction in Jesus is to be secure in His love. As born-again Christians we don't need to fear that He will stop loving us if we stumble and fall. Rather it is His goodness that brings us to repentance and thus back into right relationship with Him again. (Romans 2:4) Other people's love for us will wax and wane, but Christ's love is ever steady.

Before we can be completely secure in Christ, we will need to be completely surrendered to Him. Self needs to die. Then our life must be hidden in God. Once again, the focus is on what God wants. Selfishness is the greatest cause of insecurity. We are trying to satisfy self. In a selfish relationship, our focus is on how much the other person loves us. Dying to self is the most important part of building and enjoying fulfilling relationships.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

Ways to Build Fulfilling Relationships

Again, the most important aspect of meaningful relationships is death to self—not a focus on how much others love me, but a desire to edify our friends. Indeed, the more selfless we are, the more loved and trusted we will become.

We Can't Give What We Don't Have

When we are dead to self and our focus is on being there for others, on encouraging them spiritually, we need to make sure we have something to offer them. When Christ is in us, we can be truly selfless; this is the only way we have anything to offer to our friends. Christ gives us His compassion to share with others. He gives us the healing words and the burden to pray. He gives us the ability to cry and to rejoice with our friends. He helps us to do this even when we feel a need to be encouraged ourselves. However, the only way for God to work through us to edify our friends is for us to have our security in Him. We must have that relationship and communication. We must be empty of self and full of Him.

Don't Be Easily Offended

There are many ways we can become offended.

Have you ever been with several other girls? One says something to the other that is obviously something shared just between those two. Then they laugh about it, and you have this little (or big) left out feeling. You could become offended by that.

Another way to become offended is by words. Some people simply talk too much and end up saying things that are hurtful. Others are insecure and say things to try to build up themselves and are offensive or unkind to those around them.

However, becoming offended is not a good response. When we are offended, we do things that damage friendships. We say hurtful things. We retreat and don't even try to make friends. One offended person will cause more offended people by his reactions, whether it's by withdrawing or by saying unkind words.

The more secure in Christ and selfless we are, the less likely we will be offended. Before becoming offended, consider why the person said or did what they did. Most

times people are not intentionally trying to hurt us. Check to see if it is an opportunity to show compassion to a hurting or lonely soul. Laugh with (but not at) your friends, even if you feel defensive or hurt at what they say. Always be kind, no matter what they do. Always make sure they know you care about them. And last, but certainly not least, forgive.

Be Sensitive

Maybe this seems opposite of the last point, but in many ways, sensitivity goes along with not being easily offended. Again, consider why someone might have said or done something. Notice your friends' actions.

If you notice someone withdrawing, make an extra effort to reach out to them. Some people are shy and quiet and tend to be overrun by the more talkative people. In that case, especially if you are one of the talkative people, make sure they are included. Ask them questions, and then make sure they have enough time to answer. Don't run over them with your words. Be sincerely interested in what they have to say.

Maybe you know someone who is edgy. They often say negative things about other people, or they are just negative in general. In these situations, it is good to be very sensitive, even though we might feel like being frustrated. Many times, people are like this because they are insecure, because they have had difficult circumstances, or even because they simply think they have unfortunate circumstances. There are probably more reasons, but these are crucial times that people need a caring friend. If someone is struggling with bitterness, being uncaring or frustrated toward them will only make it worse. We need to be very empty of self and very full of God to be truly caring towards these friends.

There are many scenarios in which to be sensitive. Sometimes a friend needs an encouragement, and sometimes they need a rebuke. And knowing which is the correct one can be difficult. Ask God to help you be sensitive.

Lord, give me eyes
That I may see,
Lest I, as people will,
pass by someone's Calvary
and think it just a hill.
— Author unknown

Consider Culture

In many ways this goes along with the last point. Every culture has their own ways of doing and saying things, yet

continued on page 22...

Sharing Snowflake

Anna L. Martin
Perkins, OK

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9

“**M**om, the neighbor girl is here. May I show her my kitten?” Cole asked.

Mom nodded. Cole trotted back to the yard. “Abbie! I want to show you what I found under the shed. It’s a kitten that I tamed all by myself.” Cole flopped on his stomach, pushing his head flat against the dirt to look under the shed. Snowflake didn’t run away like she did when he first found her. Happily, he tugged the kitten out to show his friend.

“Ooooh, a kitten!” Abbie breathed. She pulled the kitten from him. “What are we gonna name it?”

“I named her Snowflake,” Cole said. “I saw her peeping out from under the shed one evening, and Mom said I could tame her. Let’s put her back and do something else.”

Abbie shouldered his hand away as if she didn’t hear. “I like kittens,” she said. “I have a cat at my house too. Do you own the mama cat?”

Cole shook his head. “No, she is just a stray.”

“Do you feed her?” Abbie asked next.

“Sometimes we do,” Cole said. “Sometimes Mom lets me give her milk. Come on, let’s put her back now.” This time Abbie let him take Snowflake. Cole plopped the kitten by the shed

and it scampered back to its mama.

Cole held the kitten every day. He called her his kitten, since he had found her. He talked softly to her while he snipped out the burrs that knotted her white fur. Dad and Mom said if he took care of Snowflake, she could be his.

One day Cole noticed a bowl of cat food by the shed. He found it there the next morning and the next. Then Abbie came to visit again.

“I’m thinking about having Snowflake for my own,” she announced. “I’ve been feeding her every day.” She stood in the swing, pumping the chains to start swinging, chattering on about other things.

Cole stood still. Worry choked his throat. Could Abbie really do that? Could she truly decide to keep the kitten he had found? Why, she wouldn’t even know about Snowflake if he hadn’t shown her the kitten to begin with!

“But she’s mine,” he protested.

Abbie tossed her hair. “I don’t think she’s yours because she’s a stray. And anyway, I’ve been feeding her, so that makes her mine. Come on, let’s swing.”

Cole didn’t want to swing. He found Mom instead. “Mom, Abbie said she is taking Snowflake!”

Mom followed him back outside. Abbie acted happy to tell Mom about her plans. "I'm thinking about taking Snowflake," she repeated. "I like cats. I like kittens too and I've been feeding her, so that makes her mine."

"You can take her if you want," Mom said. Cole felt something like a pliers squeezing his insides. "Cole thought the kitten was his, but if you want Snowflake, you may have her," Mom concluded.

Cole stared at Mom. "But she's mine." He blinked as his eyes burned. "I found her, and I tamed her."

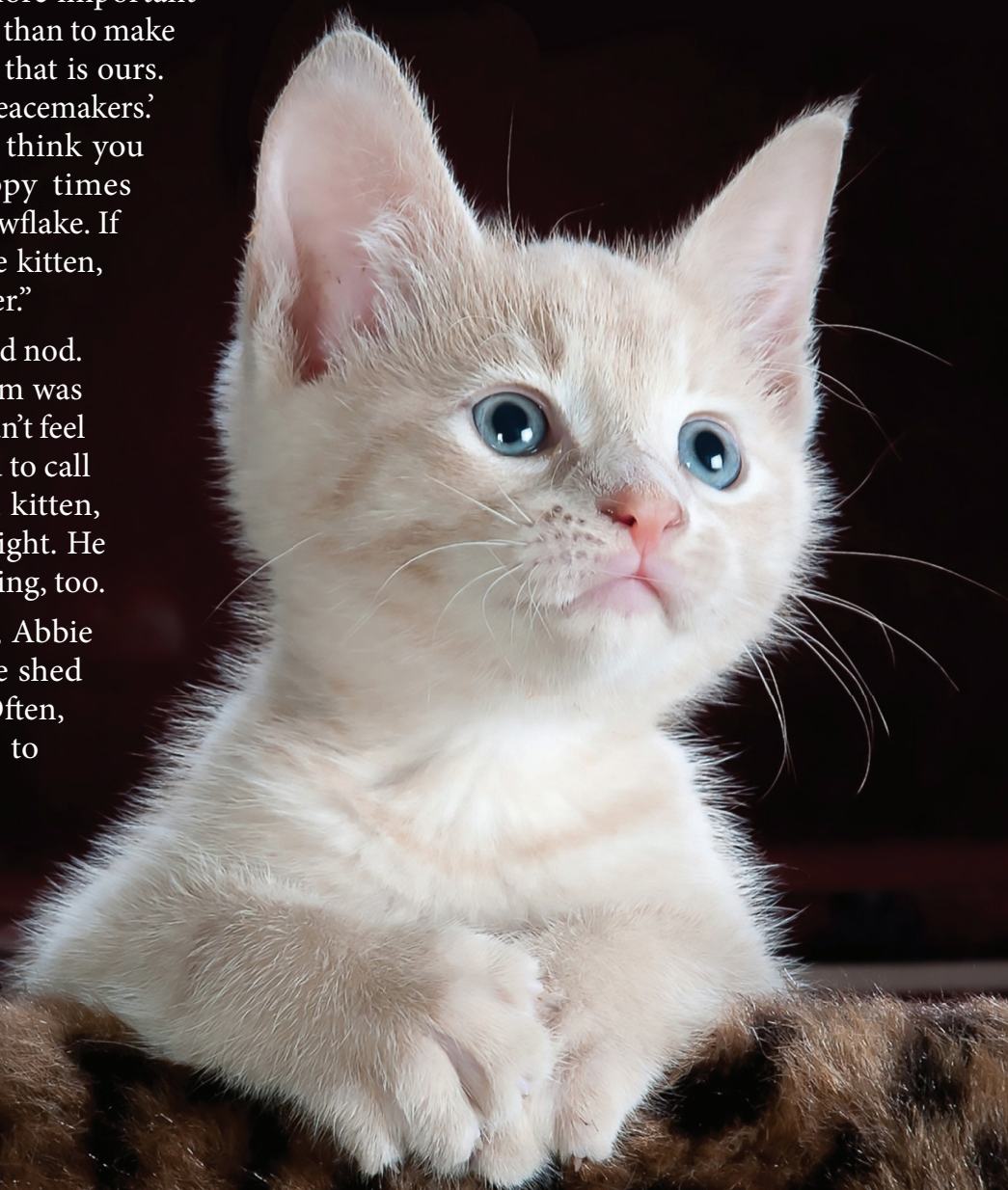
"I know, Son," Mom said. She pulled him towards the picnic table and sat down beside him.

"But Jesus tells us it is more important to be at peace with others than to make sure we keep everything that is ours. He says, 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' Blessed means happy. I think you children can have happy times together if you share Snowflake. If Abbie ends up taking the kitten, though, we need to let her."

Cole shrugged a lopsided nod. He understood what Mom was saying, even though it didn't feel very nice. He still wanted to call Snowflake his very own kitten, but he knew Mom was right. He wanted to do the right thing, too.

As more days went by, Abbie kept putting food by the shed where the kitten lived. Often, she ran across the yard to

check on the kitten, then stayed to play with Cole and his siblings. They had fun together. He realized that "sharing" Snowflake didn't change as much as he was worried it would. He felt happy inside as they carried the kitten around the yard, teaching it to play with them. Abbie was happy, too. By following Jesus' way and using kind words they had made peace.



The Poor in Spirit

Josh Wamble
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*Blessed are the poor in spirit:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven –Mat 5:3.*

Jesus says *the poor in spirit are blessed!* This is where the blessing of God begins. To be *poor in spirit* is the gateway to a blessing that leads to all the other blessings. Without this, no other blessings from God are within our reach.

Did you notice that Jesus speaks about heaven in the present tense? “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Heaven is future, isn’t it? We might have expected Him to say, “for theirs **will be** the kingdom of heaven,” but that’s not what He says. It’s all the more striking because all the other Beatitudes speak about future blessings: Those who mourn shall be comforted, the meek shall inherit the earth, and those who hunger for righteousness shall be satisfied.

When Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” He is talking about a taste of heaven now! Life in this world is a long way from heaven, so in what way can I have a genuine taste of heaven now? This week?

What comes to your mind when you think about heaven? Streets of gold? We don’t have that now. Redeemed people made perfect? We don’t have that now. The lion lying with the lamb, the nations waging war no more, and every tear wiped from our eyes? We don’t have any of that now.

What taste of heaven do the poor in spirit have now? *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,*

whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones –Isa 57:15. That is staggering! God inhabits heaven—high and lifted up, but God wants us to know that He also lives with the person who has a lowly spirit. Heaven is to live with God, and the poor in spirit get a taste of it because God comes to live with them! God dwells with the person who is poor in spirit. Heaven is in the humble, before the humble are in heaven.

We know that God can call us to things that are beyond the range of our ability. These types of circumstances in our lives may bring us to a place where we are poor in spirit. Christ doesn’t just come near to us in a church service and then leave us during the week. We have the Lord’s promise in His Word ...*I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people –2Co 6:16.*

Being Poor in Spirit Will Impact Your Life.

People who are poor in spirit give up the idea that God owes them something. As God’s creatures, we have a duty to Him, but it’s so easy, especially in our culture, to forget this and slide into the idea that God is the one who has a duty to us. We expect God to provide certain blessings, such as a certain level of income and of health that will support a chosen lifestyle, protection from the sufferings experienced by others in this world... And woe to God if He does not

meet our expectations! Do you see how pride lies at the root of this? Pride says, "I gave Him something. He owes me something bigger and better than what I got." Pride always leads to disappointment, bitterness, and resentment towards God. It kills His blessing. Remember our verse: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!

The person who is poor in spirit says, "What do I have that I did not receive? I owe God everything, yet I can give Him nothing. God owes me nothing, yet He has given me everything." People who are poor in spirit are not afraid to ask. People who are aware of what they have find it difficult to ask, but the person who is poor in spirit is never afraid to ask of God. (The poor are always begging.) He who is poor in spirit will be much in prayer. Is that you? Or do you feel that you have what it takes? People who know of their own need have an active prayer life. And when they pray, they ask! Is there anything in your experience that resembles what could be called an active prayer life?

Jesus told a story about two men who prayed. One was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector, a man who was known for his many sins. Both of them prayed, and yet there was a vast difference between their prayers. *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers...* –Luk 18:11. Look at his prayer. The striking thing about it is that this man comes to God and he never asks for a thing! Why? Because he is miles away from being poor in spirit. He feels no need to ask. He was proud of the fact that he was not a «sinner» in the eyes of the people around him. In God's eyes, he was just as much of a sinner as anyone else without Christ. The tax collector stood at a distance. He didn't even lift up his eyes to heaven but said ...*God be merciful to me a sinner* –Luk 18:13. Jesus said this man, and not the other, went home blessed, justified, forgiven, at peace with God. Why? Because he was poor in spirit.

People who are poor in spirit are in a position to receive. People who feel they have something to offer to God are always coming to Him with their hands full: "Lord, this is what I want to offer you. This is what I want to tell you that I've done for you." As long as your hands are full, you're not in a position to receive. You can't cling to the cross of Jesus when your hands are full. Only those who come to God empty-handed, aware of their own need, can cling to the cross. When you know you have nothing to offer God, then you are in a position to receive everything He offers. That's why the blessing of God rests on the poor in spirit. Heaven is theirs because their hands are open to receive it!

People who are poor in spirit boast in the cross—but *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...* –Gal 6:14. The more someone sees in himself or herself, the less they will see in Christ. The more they see

in Christ, the less they will see in themselves. The poor in spirit have the attitude of the song "How Deep The Father's Love For Us".

I will not boast in anything,
No gifts or power or wisdom.
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer.
But this I know with all my heart:
His wounds have paid my ransom.

So, what does being "poor in spirit" look like for us as youth today? One who is poor in spirit is a person who has an attitude of humility. The poor in spirit is the person who is under submission even when they do not agree. The poor in spirit is the person who is always asking God for help throughout the day

Let's look at an example. I was witnessing to someone one time and he gave a lot of arguments about the Bible and why he did not believe it. I went on to explain that the Bible is the truth and that we must live our lives by it. This man who did not believe the Bible got very upset at me because I was talking to him about the Bible. Soon another brother came and started to converse with him about the Bible and the same thing happened again—he got very upset. Eventually, he told us to get off his storefront sidewalk and never step back on his sidewalk or he would call the police. A few months later, I had another encounter with him. This time he was a lot calmer and was open to hearing the gospel a little bit. For a short time, he just stood there, calmly listening to the gospel message. He also told me that the only reason that he would listen to me is that I was calm and quiet when he was not in our earlier conversation, and that I had not thrown questions back at him when he had thrown them at me.

Does that look like being poor in spirit? In this situation, we see that the poor in spirit is humble. It is calm when the situation is boisterous. It is quiet when the people that we talk to are not quiet. It is careful to not defend itself when challenged. People who are far from God make much of themselves. People who live near to God make much of Christ. People far from God are always talking about what they're doing for Him. People near to God make much of what He's doing for them. As youth, let's practice being poor in spirit.



...continued from page 17

many of them aren't wrong. Sometimes understanding is lost between cultures, even in similar-but-not-quite-the-same cultures. We need to be sensitive to what people say. Maybe we don't understand it. Maybe there seem to be better ways. Maybe it doesn't even seem right. This is why it is important to build relationships where we share with each other. As we share, we will learn to understand each other and the reasons we do and say some things.

Don't refrain from building friendships with those from other cultures! Certainly, it is much easier to make friends with those who understand you, and much more difficult to make them when you don't connect in so many ways. However, building relationship with those from different cultures can be very meaningful. We will be able to see things from different and refreshing perspectives. We might learn how to be more understanding of others. We will certainly be able to be more understanding of each other. It will also help us to know how to pray for each other in our weak areas.

There is always one way to connect above all other ways: We are sisters in Christ. We have Christ's love that we can show to each other. We need to always strive to make this connection. It will help us in the areas we don't connect in so easily.

Pray for Each Other

Praying for our friends will do many positive things. It will cause God to work in their lives. It will cultivate in us a caring attitude toward our friends. When a friend has a weak area, pray about it instead of talking to others about it or instead of becoming frustrated about it.

We can bless our friends by praying for them! We can pray that God would give them victory over sin; that He would heal them when they hurt; that He would give them wisdom when they have hard decisions to make; that they would draw closer to Him and not to the world.

We should also pray for our relationships with our friends and with those who are not yet our friends. Maybe we don't know how to build relationships, or we need courage to say the right words, or we know we are too full of self. Ask God for wisdom, for courage, and for His love.

Find the Balance in Encouragement and Rebuke

There is a time for rebuking our friend. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend" (Proverbs 27:6). Notice it says "friend." Most of the time we should be a friend to someone before we rebuke them. The closer our relationships, the more positive the impact of rebuke is in our lives. But we must always be caring; always be kind. Make sure your friend knows that you only have her good in mind.

Conclusion

I did not write this because I feel I am good at relationships. Far from it. In fact, I hardly feel qualified to write it, but God has been showing me what a beautiful thing friendship is! And how much hurt and loneliness and misunderstanding are caused by lack of it.

Let's be daughters of God: dead to self but filled with His love and care that flows out to our sisters in Christ.



Faithful are the wounds of a friend

Proverbs 27:6



The Power of “Exousia”

A Bible Study on Spiritual Authority

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The power of *exousia*... Whatever is “*exousia*”? “I have never seen that word in my Bible.” If you are not familiar with this strange little word, allow me to introduce you to it. *Exousia* is a word that is actually very prominent in the Greek New Testament. Prominent because it is found ninety-three times in our New Testament, and, prominent because it is found in scriptures that are key verses in understanding the means by which the Gospel of Jesus Christ transforms lives.

In our King James version of the Bible, the Greek word *exousia* is most frequently translated *power* or *authority*. These two words have become trigger words in the hearts of many of our Anabaptist people, releasing a wide range of emotional responses from anger to callousness. It is tragic that what God has ordained to be the source of life and power, Satan has succeeded in transforming into a means of death and destruction.

Exousia as it is used in our New Testament refers to authority and power that is conferred upon someone by a higher and greater power. It implies not only the right to exercise leadership but also the means to effectually lead. *Exousia* refers to authority and power that is not native to the person that possesses it. A person who is exercising *exousia* is doing so under the direction and command of a higher power.

Allow me to demonstrate *exousia*. You will notice that I have not yet used one scripture to defend my introductory comments. You could choose to counter what I have said with your own counterarguments. This could escalate

into a full-blown argument and breach of relationship. This happens frequently—brethren disagree and break fellowship—families become disillusioned and move away.

Introducing *exousia*.

Allow me to support my claims with scripture and I will convince you that these concepts are not my own. They did not originate in my mind. They are not native with me. I stand upon the Word of God. The Word of God is my defense. Any counterattack must be made against the Word of God. This is the power of *exousia*.

So where is this strange word found in Scripture? Let’s look first at St John’s gospel: *But as many as received him, to them gave he power [exousia] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: –Joh 1:12*. Notice three things in this verse. First, this power is given by a higher power from outside of one’s self. Second, this power has the ability to transform us into “sons of God”. Third, all of this is dependent upon our receiving Christ as our Savior.

This verse defines *exousia* as a power that is granted to believers that has the ability to transform them into Sons of God. If you are a believer in Jesus, you are given power and authority to speak and act upon the authority of Christ. This authority is not native to us. It is contingent upon our relationship with Christ.

Here is a verse from Matthew’s gospel: *And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power [exousia] against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease –Mat 10:1*.

Notice once again that this power is granted from Christ to his disciples and it enabled them to cast out unclean spirits.

Then we have the wonderful promise given at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry. *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power [exousia] is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen –Mat 28:18-20.*

Notice how this power [exousia] is passed from God the Father, to God the Son, and on down to all of us. This power [exousia] enables us to go, to teach, and to make disciples of all nations. This is the power of [exousia]. It is the authority to proclaim truth that transforms lives. Let's look next at some practical ways that we can exercise [exousia] in our lives today.

[exousia] in our preaching

In Matthew chapters five, six, and seven we have the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon of Jesus introduced to the people concepts that they had never heard before. At the conclusion of this sermon we read: *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, [exousia] and not as the scribes –Mat 7:28-29.*

What was the difference between the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of the scribes? It was the authority with which He spoke, and the people detected the difference. Jesus is the Living Word. When He spoke, His words were with such authenticity that they could not be lightly disregarded or set aside. They had to be reckoned with.

If the Spirit of Christ is dwelling within you, you have the ability to speak with authority [exousia]. This authority is founded on the Word of God and not on your position in the church, although if you have received the laying on of hands you should be exercising [exousia].

A common fault in preaching is to read a good book, possibly by a Protestant author, attempt to paraphrase the concepts from that book, and present it to the church on Sunday morning. What is the fault with this style of preaching? The fault is the absence of authority [exousia].

When we are teaching the eternal truths of God's Word, we speak with the authority [exousia] of God himself. When we teach the commandments and doctrines of men, as the scribes & Pharisees did, we are limited to our own salesmanship ability. We may be able to impress a few people

by our charisma, or with our knowledge but there will be a woeful lack of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

[exousia] in church administration

Many church leaders find themselves exasperated by the absence of authority in their church. We are inclined to believe that position and authority go hand in hand. This is as it should be but is not always the case. Let's consider first an instance in which a man understood the power of [exousia] and was commended for his great faith.

In Matthew chapter eight we have an account of a Roman centurion who came to Jesus and begged healing for his servant. Jesus said, "I will come and heal him". The centurion responded, *...Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority [exousia], having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it –Mat 8:8-9.*

Jesus said of him, *"I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"*. What was so profound about this man's faith? This centurion understood the power of appealing to a higher authority and of submitting to the authority over him. He understood through his experience in the Roman military that Jesus had access to a power that could bring healing to his servant. Jesus commended this man for his great faith and his servant received healing.

As a church administrator, do the people that you are serving know that you are *"a man under authority"*? Do they sense the fear of God in your life? Do they see you appealing to a higher authority through fervent prayer? Is your administration grounded on the eternal principles of the Word of God or do you presume upon an authority that has not been God-given?

Saul was the first king of Israel. His reign began in humility and the result was great power and mighty victories. He experienced a great victory at Jabeshgilead. Saul had the divine anointing and he had the blessing of God on his reign. But then something happened. His first mistake was when he presumed to take upon himself authority that God had not given, by assuming the role of a priest. Rather than waiting for Samuel, he presumptuously assumed the role of a priest and offered a burnt offering to God. Notice a disregard for God's designated authority.

His final and fatal error was blatant disobedience. God sent him to *"utterly destroy the Amalekites"*. Saul disregarded God's clear command and saved Agag alive and the best

of the cattle *“for sacrifice”*. This decision placed Saul in a position where he now had a throne, and a crown, and an army, but he lost the divine anointing. We now have a man with a position and a following, but he has no power to lead, no *[exousia]*.

God told Samuel to anoint another king to replace Saul. God directed him to a young shepherd boy whose cheeks were flushed from his outdoor life among the sheep. David became the next king of Israel. No throne, no scepter and no crown. His army consisted of a band of outlaws and debtors, but King David had something that Saul did not have. David had *[exousia]*. David had divine power and authority. David had the anointing.

It is a most tenuous position to be in a place of leadership and to be left to our own devices. Effective leadership happens only when we recognize, as did the Roman centurion, that *“I am a man under authority”*. I am not the ultimate authority. All authority comes from God. Jesus said to Pilate, a Roman procurator, *...Thou couldst have no power [exousia] at all against me, except it were given thee from above... -Joh 19:11.*

***[exousia]* in our homes**

As we have already seen *[exousia]* is a power that flows from the very throne of God that enables us to lead with dignity and respect. A peaceful thriving home is a place where this authority is present and active. It must begin with a father who understands that his ability to lead his family is directly contingent upon his relationship with God.

If the father is going to be a man like King Saul, who does not fear and reverence the holiness of God, he will pass on to his family that same disregard for authority. All authority flows from God. Many fathers are frustrated that they cannot command the respect of their wives and children. Granted there can be other causes of rebellion, but a struggling father must first examine his own attitude toward authority because rebellion is often learned behavior.

A father who honors the Word of God, who makes it the foundation for his life, derives a stability that allows him to stand firm and true, regardless of the opposition that he may encounter. This solidarity gives security to his wife and brings a rest to the entire household. This is the blessing and the strength of *[exousia]*.

***[exousia]* in our marriages**

One of the most notable and consistent practices among our Anabaptist people is our sister's head covering. This practice

is so prevalent among us that when a group chooses to drop the custom, we consider them to be no longer Anabaptist. It is sort of the litmus test of our Anabaptist heritage.

Why is this so important to us? What is the significance of the sister's head covering? This ordinance is taught in I Corinthians 11 where the Apostle Paul is attempting to correct some errors among the Corinthian church. He begins his corrective teaching by explaining the order through which *[exousia]* flows from God to man. *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. -1Co 11:3.*

Close examination of this scripture reveals that Christ as the Son of Man received His authority from His head, His father, God. Man receives his authority from Christ and what Paul wanted to convey to the Corinthians was that the woman shares in this flow of authority as she honors her head, man. Notice that all are under authority and all have access to the same authority. It is a flow of spiritual power that is made available to those who acknowledge God's order of headship.

What does this have to do with *[exousia]*? Let's examine verse 10: *For this cause ought the woman to have power [exousia] on her head because of the angels.* Paul, in his attempt to restore order to the chaos within the Corinthian church explained how the power of God can be made available to everyone. As each person recognizes his/her place in this order of headship there is a free flowing of grace right from the very throne of God.

The veiled head of our sisters is a powerful witness to the presence of *[exousia]* in our midst. No, merely placing a veil on the head does not produce a supernatural result. However; veiling the head in obedience to Christ, with a spirit of meekness and humility, does produce supernatural results. This is the power of *[exousia]*.

[exousia] is power that is given from a higher power, from outside of oneself, that is greater than one's own. It is not native to the person that possesses it. It is not to be used for one's own glory or to one's own end. It is to be exercised for the glory of the giver (God) and to advance His cause.

It is the glory and power of the church. Where it is present, God is exalted, and the church thrives. When it is absent, a fatal malaise develops that depletes the church of her glory and strength. May we be among those faithful men and women who are willing channels of His grace.





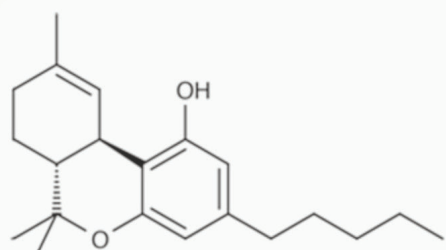
CBD— I llegal No More

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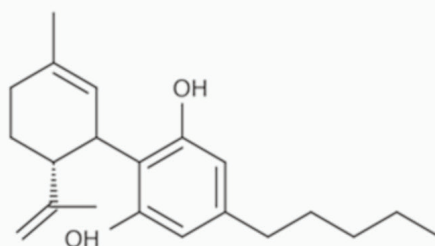
A grandmotherly figure pleadingly looked into the doctor's eyes and stated, "All I want to know is this: Is it legal?" Questions like this, regarding substances such as CBD oil, have become more common in recent times due to the head-spinning pace of changes in the law. Glossy brochures from natural food and supplement stores are beginning to flood our mailboxes with all sorts of health benefit claims. How do we sort out what to do? First a little background.

What Is It?

CBD (Cannabidiol) is one of over 60 *cannabinoid* compounds (that is, chemicals that are generally unique to Cannabis plants). This is the compound that claims multiple health benefits. It is found in the two most common Cannabis plants: Hemp and Marijuana.ⁱ It (CBD) is not known for its mind-altering qualities—that would be primarily another *cannabinoid* compound, THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol). As you can see in the following diagram, at a molecular level, CBD and THC are structurally very similar:



Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)



Cannabidiol (CBD)

Hemp (high in CBD, low in THC) has been known in the past as an industrial plant—grown widely in the Midwest—mainly used for making rope, especially during the war effort in the 1940s. In modern times, though, hemp rope has been made obsolete by synthetic materials, which are far superior in strength and durability.ⁱⁱ Thus, the cultivation of the hemp plant fell out of favor. Fields were planted with alternate crops, but farmers discovered that volunteer plants quickly went wild—it was very hardy, hard to get rid of, and could damage or jam equipment.ⁱⁱⁱ This is how it got its name, "weed." By the time the 1960s rolled around, the name had stuck. However, the drug of that era, Marijuana, was a somewhat different variety (high in THC, low in CBD).

There are two main species of Cannabis. Hemp only comes from Cannabis *sativa*, a taller plant with thinner leaves. Marijuana comes from Cannabis *indica*, a shorter plant with wider leaves... but marijuana can also come from Cannabis *sativa*, as well as a myriad of hybrids. So even to

the trained eye, unless the plant is obviously Cannabis *indica*, **there is no way to tell the difference visually!** Law enforcement officials do not yet even have a roadside test to tell the difference. In Idaho last year, in one stop, state police mistakenly confiscated

6,701 pounds of hemp, thinking it was marijuana. The cultivators of that hemp are suing the police, the county, and an attorney.^{iv}

The government defines Hemp as containing less than 0.3% THC; anything more is automatically designated as marijuana. However, even usual Hemp plant varieties can have more than 0.3% THC, so growers sometimes monitor (and harvest) the plant before it passes this threshold.^v In other words, *the exact same plant can legally start out as Hemp, and finish as Marijuana* (albeit a very weak variety).

The marijuana of the 1960s contained less than 2% THC. Due to intensive selective growing practices, by the mid-1990s the average percent increased to 4%. By 2014, the average was 12%.^{vi} Today there are varieties that can reach 35%!^{vii} These incredibly high levels of THC may well be responsible for a relatively new emergence of previously unseen marijuana-linked psychosis and schizophrenia cases.

IS IT LEGAL?

Before the drug culture took off in the 1960s, authorities began to recognize the potential for abuse. Because of this, in 1952, the Boggs Act was passed, which stipulated that first-time marijuana-related offenders would be imprisoned with a minimum sentence of 2-10 years and a fine of up to \$20,000.^{viii} However, by the mid-1990s, many members of the generation that had been steeped in the drug culture came to an age of political influence. So, starting in 1996, medical marijuana laws started to appear on the state level, claiming to meet an unmet medical need such as medicine for severe nausea, for severe weight loss, and for wasting-away conditions such as AIDS and cancer.^{ix}

In reality, synthetic THC in the form of Marinol (dronabinol) had been FDA approved for nausea since the 1970s and Cesamet (nabilone) for nausea and wasting conditions since the 1980s. The difference is that these highly purified medicines were (and still are) controlled drugs (and thus illegal to possess)—inaccessible for casual use. So, the social and political push was on for greater access to THC in its rawest form—marijuana. (The highly purified and CBD-based Epidiolex, also FDA approved for certain seizures, is now available as a prescribed medicine.)

Since that time, in a little over 20 years, cultural morals have shifted dramatically, and as of June 2019, 14 states now allow **recreational** marijuana (given the misnomer “adult marijuana”), 19 additional states allow **medical** marijuana, and 13 more allow CBD products.^x Of the remaining four states, three have pilot programs, or are in the process of legalizing CBD products or medical marijuana.^{xi xii} The last

state, Idaho, has a ballot initiative planned for 2020.^{xiii} So in almost every state, cannabis products, in one form or another, are legal...

...*However*, the Federal government still regards marijuana, and its products, as illegal drugs (if the THC is more than 0.3%).^{xiv} Yet, in 2009, the president promised he would not use federal resources to enforce federal marijuana control laws. In 2013, the office of the attorney general established this as policy (the Cole Memorandum). However, in 2018, with a change in leadership in Washington, the Department of Justice rescinded this policy, once more reserving the right to prosecute anyone in violation of federal law. This is where it stands today: legal in one form or another in the vast majority of the states, federally legal if the THC is less than 0.3%, and federally illegal but generally unenforced if it complies with state law (but no promise to stay that way).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

While being legal is an important consideration, there are other VERY important questions to ask. First and foremost—is it Biblical? The Apostle Paul makes this observation:

“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.”
(I Cor 10:23)

So, we need to ask:

1. Is it expedient? (If so, think twice!)
2. Is it edifying? (If so, then consider it.)

And we also need to ask:

3. Does it work?
4. What are the complications?

1. Is it Expedient?

The Apostle Paul is saying that even if things are legal, it doesn't mean that they are expedient. If they are not expedient, watch out! Webster's dictionary describes expedient this way: *governed by self-interest, something done to achieve a quick solution*. Some other definitions: *convenient or practical although possibly immoral*.

It should be noted that marijuana use in 1969, the year of Woodstock and the explosion of the drug culture (50 years ago this summer) stood at a rate of 4% of the population. In 2017 it was 45% (an 1,125% increase) almost half the population!^{xv} In 2013, an estimated 22.7 million Americans (8.6% of the population) needed treatment for drug or alcohol dependence.^{xvi} Look at God's solution to this:

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; –Eph 5: 18-20.

Clearly, being stoned on drugs follows the same dark, mind-altering spirit as being “drunk on wine.” They will both lead to debauchery. They also lead to dependency; being dependent on anyone or anything besides our Lord is idolatry.

In Montana, medical marijuana was introduced in 2004. It was allowed for a host of easily and clearly diagnosed disease conditions, such as cancer, AIDS, and seizure disorders. It also allowed use for “debilitating severe chronic pain,” which is very subjective since people have a vast difference in pain tolerance (stoic people could have a great deal of pain and not show it, and others only a little pain and show it a lot). Therefore, it could also be easily feigned. Lawmakers were alarmed by the “explosive” growth of users, two thirds of which qualified for the program by citing pain as their primary reason for needing marijuana. It was shown that one fourth of these users were aged 21-30—not the typical age for “debilitating severe chronic pain.”^{xvii} The law has remained essentially unchanged, as the country sets its eyes on the universal legalization of medical marijuana. For some advocates, this was the plan all along—using medical marijuana as a steppingstone to the legalization of “recreational” marijuana.

My state of Ohio had passed a medical marijuana law in 2018. It allowed for CBD oil to be purchased at state-regulated marijuana dispensaries only. (Though it was commonly known to be sold in health food stores ‘under the radar’ as well.) The closest marijuana dispensary to us was the “Ohio Cannabis Company,” 30 minutes away. Since it was only legal to sell through licensed dispensaries, there was great political pressure to allow it to be sold elsewhere, and to expand the market. Just this summer, with great exuberance, this legislative effort was passed unanimously in the Senate (31-0) and nearly so in the House (89-3), and then signed by our conservative governor.^{xviii} It is now more widely accessible. In my hometown of Millersburg, here in Holmes county, I recently saw a roadside advertisement for CBD oil in front of a store that sells tobacco-related products.

So, does medical marijuana have its uses clinically? Yes, **but** there is no evidence that it adds anything to already approved FDA medicines. Does CBD have a clinical use?

Yes, **but** to what extent? It is possibly no more beneficial than what is already available that is FDA approved.

So back to Paul’s admonition—Is it expedient?

1. Is it a quick solution? –It is as quick as going to the nearest natural health food store.
2. Is it convenient, though possibly immoral? –Ohioans: Before the law changed, you would have had to have bought the CBD oil at dispensaries like The Ohio Cannabis Company, Mad River Remedies, and Clubhouse Dispensary—possibly in the less reputable parts of town. Would that not make a difference? Would you have done without, or would you have gotten it anyway, even if it meant standing in line with *some* people who were intent on gaming the system, getting Marijuana to get high? (Would those medical alternatives not look a little more appealing?) Or are you OK with supporting a *business* that not only allows such abuse, but also advocates for such abuse—and more? Does it not matter that the small amounts of THC in CBD oil may well be enough to turn a drug test positive?
3. Is it governed by self-interest? –Are you OK with supporting an *industry* that not only allows such abuse, but also advocates for such abuse—and more? *Especially when alternatives are available?*

If the answers to the above are “Yes,” then purchasing medical marijuana or CBD products is indeed expedient—so watch out!

Is it always wrong? No! But I would recommend being accountable to your health care provider, seeking advice (Are there alternatives?) and accountability (How much and how often should this be used if there are no alternatives?).

2. Is It Edifying?

“Edifying” is defined by Webster as “instructive or informative in a way that improves the mind or character.”^{xix} Does it provide moral or intellectual instruction?

Up to this point, I have not made a great distinction between medical marijuana (THC usually about 12-20%, but legally anything with a THC > 0.3%) and CBD products (THC < 0.3%) for a couple of different reasons.

First, both THC and CBD have valid medical uses. Just because THC is mind-altering, does not make it invalid. In my practice as a physician, I frequently use mind-altering narcotics for the control of the extreme pain associated with extreme conditions—a legitimate use. *Give strong drink unto*

him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts –Pro 31:6.

Second, just because medical marijuana and unpurified CBD contain different proportions of THC and CBD doesn't make the one more morally right than the other. (Bear in mind that the marijuana of the 1960s contained only 1-2% THC—not far from CBD oil, which can contain nearly 0.3%) So morally, their moral use may be closer, and on the same moral plane, than many may realize.

Not convinced? Let me ask you this: “If marijuana was totally legal for any condition, (as it may well be in the near future), would you use it?” Why, or why not? If you have some reluctance answering this last question, yet are still OK with other cannabis products like CBD oil, consider the following:

I advise against our youth purchasing AR-15 rifles for hunting and shooting. Any hunter can tell you that an AR-15 is not significantly better or worse than most other hunting rifles. It can be adapted to calibers and cartridges that may be better or worse than typical hunting rifles. So why do I advise against Christians owning an AR-15? *It's not because of performance!* It's because the AR-15 is a rifle with a past. It is a rifle with an attitude. AR-15s (commonly called “assault rifles”) don't need words to convey the idea that they are ready for war—it is readily apparent by their



appearance. Only by affixing a bayonet would it be more obvious. There are more appropriate rifles for Christian boys to use in hunting.

In like manner, cannabis products (THC and CBD) *may well* have legitimate medical uses, but we should still exercise caution. *It's not because of performance!* Rather, these are drugs with a past. They are drugs with an attitude. They are drugs with a culture—the culture of rebellion and lasciviousness. They do not need to speak to convey a message of moral relativism: “Use me and buy into the idea that illicit substances have a legitimate use. Don't find fault with other people who are using illicit substances to self-medicate.” Once cannabis is entrenched in our society as legitimate, LSD, Ecstasy and every other fleshly stimulant are sure to follow! Only by administering this “medicine” in a pipe would it be more obvious. As Christians, because we live by the Spirit, and not the flesh, this is not for us! “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” (Gal 5:24)

Once more let's ask if it is edifying. Does its use improve mind, morals, and character?

3. Does It Work?

One would think that this would have been at the top of the article, not near the bottom. The reason is that, as noted above, efficacy in this case, may not be the primary concern.

The truth of the matter is that very little is known about CBD.

Some claims are likely valid: beneficial treatment for seizures, insomnia, inflammatory pain (arthritis), and neuropathic pain (diabetic neuropathy). Yet there is much we do not know: What is the appropriate dose—exactly how much do you take? (Nonprescription supplement dosages are not standardized.) Is there a toxic level? What are the long-term effects for dementia, schizophrenia, mental illnesses, and other similar problems? How does it affect other medicines that people may be taking (like blood thinners)? How does it affect geriatric patients?

Some claims are not as valid (at this point) such as treating cancer, Alzheimer's, and so forth. In fact, the FDA is putting the brakes on any unproven claims.^{xx}

4. Complications

We spoke about some of the medical aspects of CBD above. It is too early to identify significant patterns, as the research has simply not been done. But let us close with

some final thoughts on potential *spiritual* complications. To help in this, let's look at the full context of I Cor 10:23, ("All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.") by looking at the text surrounding it.

*But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he? **All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.** Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth -1 Cor 10:20-24.*

So, looking at this verse now in a wider context, Paul is not lackadaisically making a casual suggestion. In all we do,

we need to choose a side: Do we partake at the Lord's table or partake at the devil's? Do we rely on His strength or rely on ours? Do we make decisions based on a transformed and non-conformed mind, finding edification in God's Word on ALL things (Rom 12:2), or do we do what is expedient, risking the provocation and jealousy of the Lord?

In choosing the straight and narrow path, we seek the spiritual wealth of our fellow man over our own, personal, 'best' interests. We need to make a decision regarding the self-medication of products derived from illicit substances. The decisions we make today, and the message it sends to our youth today, will affect generations in the future. May the Lord give us wisdom!



Endnotes

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The Bible— God’s Word or A Crystal Ball

Matt Drayer
Wolcott, IN

How should we educate our children? Should I take that job? Should I ask for that sister’s hand in marriage? Should we move to Haiti? Should we buy that house? The list of questions that we face in life seems to be never ending.

What do you do when you face the need to make a decision?

If you were a pagan living in the Roman Empire during the time of Christ, the answer would be easy. You would talk to your local soothsayer who would find the “answer” on his crystal ball. He would give you a yes or no answer—similar to the “Magic 8 Ball” (a fortune-telling toy developed in the 1950s) that was popular when I was in middle school—then you would pay him and be on your way.

I have found that many well-meaning Christians make decisions in like manner to those pagan Romans. Except instead of talking to a soothsayer, they “talk” to their Bible. They open it, and the first words they see are their “answer.”

Could God ever work that way? I don’t know. Perhaps... but in most circumstances I believe it is bogus. In fact, I feel we should totally avoid this method. Here is a list of reasons why.

1. It is lazy. If we want direction regarding big (and little) issues, we need to pray, seek God, fast, read the Bible, talk with others, and take time. We live in a fast-food society. We want answers right now! But that is not how God works.
2. This method is not biblical. In the Scriptures, God talked to people through prophets, His Word, an audible voice, through Jesus and the Apostles, and through the Holy Spirit. You never find somebody opening the Bible and letting their finger land on a verse, thereby using the Bible as a genie to receive an instant answer.

3. This method tends to encourage superstitious thinking and responses.
4. Lastly, I’m afraid people use this method to get what they want. Many times, a person will “interpret” the meaning of the words their finger lands on, thus “making” it give support to the answer they were hoping for. If you have your mind made up, you will open the Bible and find a verse (or verses) you want to get God’s “support.” This is dangerous! Many Christians make a decision this way and claim it is God’s will, when in fact it is not God’s will at all.

However, I do know of some Christians who (before they were converted) were thinking about repenting, then opened the Bible and read something that led them to repent. I don’t want to downplay that. God may use this method to speak to a seeking soul (but keep in mind, if somebody wants to repent and they open the Bible, they will most likely find a verse that says something about repentance).

I’ll close with an illustration. My grandfather passed away almost 30 years ago. Let’s pretend he wrote me a letter sometime prior to his death. I would cherish that letter. I would read it a lot, possibly even memorize it. Now, what if I am facing a decision and I want to know what Grandpa would want me to do? I would consider Grandpa’s life and ponder what his council would be. Then I would read Grandpa’s letter to see if it provides any insight. However, I would never open his letter and let my eyes fall on several of the words, thinking, “This is Grandpa’s specific answer to this specific decision that I am facing.” That is outrageous.

Brothers and sisters, I am so thankful that we have the Bible in our language! It is God’s Word to us. Read it. Memorize it. And draw close to God, but don’t get confused and become superstitious with the Bible. It is a book. Not a crystal ball.



Joy in the Crevices

Sheryl Zeiset
Tanzania, East Africa

A few years ago, I was wallowing in emotional and physical burn out, trying to adjust to life outside of the African village we had called home for eight years. Depression and fear were a regular part of my life. As I slowly crawled out of the hole I was in (a hole I never realized I had fallen into until it was too late for an easy remedy), I began to notice beauty.

In those intense years of ministry and language-learning in the village, spending time on beauty seemed like a waste of time. And, honestly, we lived in a village with very little beauty to offer, the only brightness being the vibrantly colored clothing the women wore. The mud houses, the flat landscape, and dust everywhere, was daily life for most months of the year. Though I'm a lover of peace, quiet, and beautiful things, I made very little space in my life for any of it, even the things I could have done in that environment.

We now live in an easier place; the Southern Highlands of Tanzania. Here there is fresh air and sunshine the whole year long, flowers of all kinds, and a lovely house with smooth floors and freshly painted walls. And it's now that I realize how important beauty is to the soul and how important it is to actually notice the beautiful things in my life and create beauty at every possible moment.

Being a mother and homemaker, no matter where in the world God has placed us, is a beautiful thing in itself if we really see it for what it is. It's easy to complain about the daily mundane things that make up my life, the constant dust, or the fact that I'm cooped up in our compound week after week. But I have been surprised with joy. Here are a few things I love to do to keep life fresh and inspiring...

...Writing

I especially like to write about the goodness and faithfulness of God. True joy comes from Him, not my circumstances. I've believed that for years, but it's just recently that I've actually experienced this reality. My focus is so easily homed in on the things that I wish would

be different, thinking that without the uncertainty and difficulties, I'd be happy. I now realize that difficulties have very little to do with the amount of joy found in my heart. Instead, we can allow difficulties to teach us what true joy is and where it comes from.

...Keeping a reasonably clean, pleasant house.

I try to get rid of the extras and replace the dirty, the dingy, and the ugly with something that is beautiful and lovely. Get rid of the limp, ugly curtain in the schoolroom and replace it with a fresh yellow one (yes, even if it does take a few dollars to do so, I remind my penny-pinching soul).

...Clearing off all horizontal surfaces

One of my goals is to clean off all flat surfaces in my house and leave only pleasant, tasteful things. I function so much better if my house is a restful, orderly place. Even though with five children, restful and orderly are relative terms, I'm learning that the rush and mess and noise of a family are beautiful too. It makes the clean floor all the more amazing and thankworthy because it's a rare experience.

...Doing something fun with my children

I like to plan something fun to do with my children, such as a fun science project, or an outing. Our favorite is outings to the flower gardens, which are grown here in town along the roadside as a showcase to give other people ideas of how to grow and care for flowers. Tucked into corners here and there I find all the common flowers I was used to seeing in the states. It's delightful and even more fun when some of the children share my love for growing things.

...Serving food tastefully

Even rice and beans can be served in pretty bowls instead of the messy pots they were cooked in. Raid your local market and you will be surprised with what you can find in glassware and other beautiful dishes that brighten your table.

...Speaking cheerfully

Speak cheerfully—to the laundry lady, the house helper, or the neighbor. I can't spend a lot of time in ministry with people other than my children, but there's always people coming around that I can touch with a smile, kindness, or any help they are needing. It's easy to be peeved over the fact that the produce vendor can't remember to NOT come in the morning while I'm teaching school, and her voice at the door interrupts us again. And what do math facts, bread dough, and dirty floors really have to do with joy? How does the noise of life and cantankerous personalities blend with the eternal? It's all mixed up in my heart; often with the dusty realities on top and threatening to spill over, but if I give in to peevish attitudes that is a true joy killer.

...Spending time appreciating the beauty of nature

This rests my mind and draws my heart to God. Though I've never lived in the Garden of Eden or places of equal beauty, there's always something to notice, something as small as a patch of green grass struggling to survive the dry season, (which is a season of trial for me here in this country). It's cold (45 degrees or colder in the morning). The green growth and refreshing rains are over. Everything green is dying or has long been dead. Even the house roofs have lost their color as the dust covers every possible surface and threatens to suffocate the inspiration out of humans as well. Even the mountain in view from my kitchen window has lost its beautiful patchwork of gardens and fields. It stands bare and sober, waiting with bated breath for rain—just like my heart. But I've delighted in one little patch of earth in our back yard that I keep watered. There are peace lilies, roses, hibiscus and other bright flowers blooming, and succulents growing in delightful little pots. I lug heavy buckets of water to that spot and sometimes take all five of my children on the city buses to go visit yet another flower garden in search of more flowers. It's not a waste of time for me, as that little spot in my back yard during this dry season refreshes my heart over and over again!

...Practicing gratefulness

With a very busy husband I don't have a lot of time with him and he doesn't have a lot of time for carefree time with the children. However, I'm making it a habit to notice the small things that do happen, like looking out my kitchen window and seeing him sitting on a mat with the girls, just enjoying them. I stand and watch, thanking God for that moment. It could have gone unnoticed, especially if my heart was full of peevish ungratefulness. Noticing the tiny flashes of joy throughout my day eventually makes my life seem full of joy, though in reality my life has plenty of trials and challenges.

Life here in town is easier in so many ways, but we've been bombarded with many challenges working with the government which has consumed Tim's time and energy. Even though we haven't lived in the village for over four years, we were doing a lot of support work for our fellow missionaries there and making trips back to where we still felt was our home. But all of us have been banned from that village and have had to work hard to even obtain the necessary documents needed to simply stay in the country.

Recently our compound in the village was taken over by the local army, just weeks after two Tanzanian missionary families moved in. When Tim traveled back to communicate and to hand over the keys out of respect for the ones who were forcing us to do this, he was insulted with hours of irrational anger and mistreatment, along with a lot of demands. Of course, our hearts were broken about seeing our house used for army training rather than for those precious new missionary families who were leaving their homes in town in order to take on the work there.

My husband is exhausted, both physically and emotionally, yet this morning he left for another trip back to the village to “heap on coals of fire” by giving the angry army officer a solar panel and a transformer, on top of the other things he demanded. It's our reasonable service. And yes, my heart had tears in it as I stood at the window and watched him go. I know that he's only subjecting himself to more mistreatment and that hurts my heart. But I also know that it's only through these things that God teaches me joy. As I surrender things dear to my heart I'm emptied of my own desires. There's nothing to hang on to anymore and nothing to fight for. So, there's plenty of room for God to fill my heart with what he wants in there—Joy.

Yes, life hasn't brought a lot of serendipity my way. There have been a lot of tears, but that's not my focus anymore, as I purposefully bring beauty into every possible crevice of my life and delight in the surprise of joy. My quest is to allow my home and this tiny space on this earth to be a place where God's kingdom comes. It can't be all about happy things, peace and serendipity, because that isn't given to me. It's got to be all about something really good going on in my heart and how that affects everything that my hands touch. My heart can be declaring the works of the Lord as I see him using trials in my life to build my faith and the faith of others looking on. In that way His kingdom comes into this small place, in this little crevice of a life, in this space, empty of inspiration, except for His amazing grace which turns trial into joy.



Joe and Liz Tindall, along with three of their daughters, have been a part of Faith Christian Fellowship for the last eight years. Brother Joe has been a faithful brother in the church and has served as a member of the board for The Berean Voice since its beginning in 2015. Being 81 years of age, he is one of those with a hoary head whom God says in Leviticus 19:32 and Proverbs 16:31 we should look up to with respect. His wisdom, and his carefulness of thought and word, bring a stability to our church and to our board for which the other brothers are quite grateful.

Joe grew up in Havertown, PA, near Philadelphia; his wife Liz grew up in Ocean City, NJ. They both grew up in a non-church setting, and on very rare occasions each of them would attend church or Sunday school with some of their friends. Both of their homes went through the experience of divorce and remarriage, which brought with it the normal struggles for children growing up in that environment.

Joe was born in 1938 and was an only child. Liz was two years younger and one of two children. In 1940, when Joe was only two years old, his father left home to join the armed forces of the United States during the second World War. Five long years later in 1945, once the war was over, his father returned. However, the joy of reunited loved ones soon turned to heartache when Joe's father asked his mother for a divorce. He had found another woman in France who he would rather love. This was quite hard on Joe, since to his young mind the separation and rejection was not only directed at his mom but at himself as well.

Time went on... Joe and Liz met and decided to get married. It has now been nearly 60 years since Joe and his wife, Liz (Elizabeth) entered a Lutheran church to be joined in marriage. This was the first time in years that either one had gone to an actual church service. It was also the last time for many more years after the wedding day. Interestingly enough, even though they never went back to that church, about twenty years later the church sent them a letter, warning them that if they did not commune or contribute financially, they would be removed from the active member roll.

About 16 years into their marriage, Joe and Liz were living among neighbors who were part of a conservative Anabaptist community. Some were Beachy Amish, and some were Conservative Fellowship. Today, Joe's testimony is that these neighbors were not pushy nor overbearing in their evangelizing efforts. Rather, he and Liz were drawn to their simple way of life and how they lived what they believed. What really grabbed Joe's attention was how the families functioned together in peaceful, loving ways. In particular, Joe recognized that the man of the home provided loving leadership to his family. Somehow, deep in his heart Joe knew that this was key, but he was not willing to take the necessary steps to personally

change in order to have the same homelife as their neighbors. To him, the personal cost of change was too great even though he was drawn to the outcome.

Along the way, several of the men took personal interest in Joe. They asked him questions and in loving ways shared with him about their Lord. Finally, the day came that one of these men invited Joe and Liz to attend their upcoming revival meetings. Uncertain what all was involved, Joe and Liz decided to attend and see for themselves. The message preached that first night was on the Christian home. To Joe's surprise, the minister was reading from the Bible and teaching the necessary ways for a godly home to function. His surprise was first, that the Bible actually said those things, and second, that what was being taught were the very things that he and Liz had been observing in the homes of their neighbors.

Thus, the Lord continued his drawing on Joe's heart. It wasn't long before Joe and Liz both responded to God's personal call in each of their hearts and gave their hearts and lives to him. So it was that Joe was 38 years of age and Liz was 36 when they were converted by God's Spirit on the same night.

Joe was committed to serving the Lord for the rest of his life. The church he was a part of saw this, and, as a result, he was ordained to the ministry three years later. He served as a minister in several different churches in the United States for 26 years. Then they felt called to go to the mission field, and in the year 2000 they moved to the country of Bolivia where they served as missionaries for six years before returning to the United States. They lived in southern Ohio for a while before they moved to Holmes County, Ohio near the town of Millersburg. This is where they have lived now for the last eight years.

Over their lifetime as a married couple, God has blessed them with children—two biological and nine adopted. Three of the adopted daughters are still living at home and are a great help to their elderly parents. Today Joe and Liz still lead active lives in their home, church, and community.



Continuing Endurance

(Luke 18)

Jaleesa D. Henderson

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving... -Colossians 4:2

The judge with whom the widow pled
Would have ignored,
But she implored
Him to avenge her. So he said
That he would heed
And fill her need.
He didn't have a fear for God,
But intellect
Without respect
For men. He loathed her frequent prod
And anxious cries;
Her tear-filled eyes.

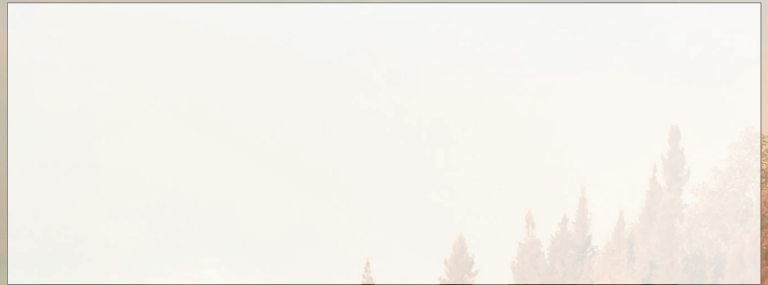
We Christians ought to cry in prayer
Aloud to God
With feet unshod
On holy ground that lays off care:
"Thy will be done"—
Our own we shun;
Unceasingly we ought to pray
With thanks or pleas
On bended knees;
Throughout our labours every day;
At home, abroad—
We talk with God.

A human judges fellow-men—
Our God, His saints,
Although He waits
Upon His timing—how and when.
God's people must
Submit and trust:
He sees the view we find obscure
And knoweth best,
So let us rest.
God's ways are high; His methods sure...
With one accord,
Speak to our Lord.

The Heartbeat of
The Remnant

c/o The Berean Voice
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Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever
thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even
from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Psalm 90:2