

The Heartbeat of 
The Remnant

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The Berean Voice 



TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	The Power of God	
8	Fear and Faith	
12	Enjoying Life	—For young Sisters
14	This Thing Called Love	
18	Be Obedient	—For the Children
20	Small Things	—For the Sisters
22	Things We Can't Afford	—Poem
23	The Dew of Youth	—For the Youth
27	Sometimes	—Poem
28	Rest	
34	Today	—Poem

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~ *The Berean Voice Board*

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Greetings of Christian love to each one. Another year has passed us by, and another is spread out before us to navigate. What is our perspective? Do we have hope and joy bubbling up in our hearts or does the future seem full of gloom and doom? Do we see God's sovereign hand at work in the situations and circumstances around us or does the world seem out of control from our vantage point?

As I interact with folks from around the country there seems to be a common issue that many folks are struggling with—weariness. Weary of mandates. Weary of shutdowns. Weary of all the bickering and fighting that has surrounded the Covid issue. Weary of...

It appears that many people just “Don't want to think about it”. Why? I'm really not sure what all the reasons are, but I am sure that each person has one. Let's remember that God wants us to *...be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves –Matthew 10:16.*

Here, in the United States of America, Christians have had over 60 years (since World War 2) of relative peace and tranquility. For the most part, we have been left alone to raise our families and worship the God of our fathers according to our conscience. We have enjoyed the separation of Church and State that was implemented at the beginning of our country's existence. We have been able to work with our hands and earn a living. Many of us have lived off the fat of the land.

Maybe we were living in an artificial bubble. Maybe we have been lulled into a false sense of security. What about our counterparts in countries around the world, what is their reality of living as true Christians in their world? Sure, we have been able to use our wealth and freedom of movement to do much good for the rest of the world who have endured much hardship due to following Christ. But at what cost? What have our children learned?

Sometimes, we hear about first generation Christians being “on fire” for their Lord. Sometimes so much so that second and third generation Christians think that first generation Christians are perhaps a little too zealous in their efforts of evangelizing those around them.

What about the next generation? They are learning from someone—about God, themselves, and life. What are they learning? And who are they learning from? We must take stock to ensure that our children are learning life's lessons

in a way that they will be prepared to face the reality of things to come.

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many –Matthew 24:3-5.

Remember that this is Jesus Himself speaking to His followers regarding the end of the world. His very first concern is that we would NOT be deceived. He says that deception will be the major issue surrounding the end of time. He says that many will come claiming to be Christ [or His direct spokesperson] in an attempt to gain a listening ear, all in an effort to deceive the hearer and gain a following.

If not before now, we most certainly must be teaching our children certain specific things through word and action. That we are to be strangers and pilgrims as we journey through this life. That if we are friends of this world then God will be our enemy. And that Jesus' Kingdom is not of this world, therefore, His children must learn to live as ambassadors in a foreign land. Our children need to know that ALL who live godly in Christ Jesus WILL suffer persecution.

Many of the doctrines that have been taught in our churches and para-church functions have severely crippled the next generation of the church. We have been taught that we can have the “power of His resurrection” without needing to be a partaker of the “fellowship of His sufferings”. A suffering Christ with suffering followers has been thrown out in favor of following a Jesus who will not let anything bad happen to you. While there is much emphasis on a Jesus who suffered and died for you, there is very little to NO teaching on the need to “take up your cross daily” and follow Him.

Mental Health and Emotional Stability

Some years ago, I came across the story of a soldier, who,

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Jesus who will not
let anything bad
happen to you.

...continued on page 32

The Power of God

by Barry Grant
Titanyen, Haiti

After living in Haiti for several months, I finally had the opportunity to go visit the local witch doctor. As I walked up his long drive, I passed many statues and satanic symbols. It was eerie for sure. As I approached the voodoo temple that was connected to his house, I saw him standing there watching me approach. My heart began to race; I knew he was a powerful man. Then he began to laugh. The closer I got, the louder he laughed. I was a bit puzzled until I realized that many people from the village were following me up the lane. They were very interested in what was about to transpire. I approached the man, not knowing what would happen next.

“Are you a pastor?” he asked.

“Yes, I am,” was my reply. Again, he began to laugh loudly.

“You pastors are all the same,” he proclaimed. “You want everyone to come to your churches, but your churches have no power! When one of your people gets sick, they come to me. No power, you Christians!”

A heavy burden overtook me, and I explained to him how I agreed with him, but that the real church of Jesus Christ would always have power. The Bible actually says that the very gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

This was the beginning of a very interesting relationship, but I will never forget those words—most certainly from the devil himself—“You Christians have no power!”

I have since traveled to hundreds of churches and need to agree with that voodoo priest. The Christian churches are lacking power. But why? We know that God is power. We have many things figured out, we look good and sound good, but do we still have the power of God in our churches?

In the Old Testament we have many examples of power and the lack of power. We can also learn how we receive power, and why we lose it.

In Joshua, chapter 6, we have the familiar account of the

children of Israel and the city of Jericho. God tells Joshua and all the men of war to compass the city, and walk around it once every day, for six days. Then on the seventh day they were to march around the city not just once, but seven times. After they had completed the seven trips around the city, the priests were to blow their trumpets.

We know what happened when Joshua obeyed each command—those thick, impenetrable walls came tumbling down. God also gave Joshua a strict command about what the men should and should not do. They were to keep themselves from everything that God had pronounced was accursed; all the silver, gold, and vessels were to be consecrated into the treasury of the Lord; no man was to take any of the spoil.

However, Achan saw some nice things that he desired. He slipped them into his armor, then later hid them under his tent, and no one saw a thing.

After this great victory, Joshua sent spies to the next city, Ai, to discover how well the city was fortified. The men returned and told Joshua not to send all the men to Ai, for there were only a few defenders protecting the city.

However, the men of Ai smote the children of Israel and chased them away. Moreover, Joshua rent his clothes and cried out to God. Then God replied that there was sin in the camp of Israel.

In the Old Testament, the children of Israel are normally representative of the church of Jesus Christ today. Can we not glean much from this account? When there was no sin in the camp (or in the church) God’s people had complete victory; they lost not one. They did many wonderful things, they destroyed all their enemies around them, and they lived in COMPLETE victory. However, as soon as sin entered into their midst, even a small sin done by one man, they lost their power. They no longer had victory over their enemies.

What follows is a graphic description of how the children

of Israel dealt with the sin that had entered the camp. It was totally destroyed.

And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor ... And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire... –Joshua 7:24-26.

In this account it is clear why God's people had lost their power—they had sin in the camp. It is also clear what it took for them to regain that power which they had lost—get rid of the sin.

In chapter 8 we read of the power being restored to Israel instantly after the sin was dealt with. Again, they lived in victory!

Another passage in the Old Testament that speaks of this topic is in Leviticus chapters 13 and 14. Leprosy was a strange disease. If one were to get leprosy, it was easily spread. Thus, there needed to be some strict guidelines regarding how to deal with the disease. The priest was to examine very closely to see if the person in question indeed had leprosy or not. If the priest was unsure, he would shut the person up in a room for seven days then examine him again. If it was determined that the person had leprosy, then they were sent outside of the city.

As Paul addresses the church in Corinth, he tells them that he has heard there is sin in the church. He seems surprised that the church is taking it so casually, ...*Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened... –1 Corinthians 5:6-7.* Later he tells the church ...*Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person –1 Corinthians 5:13.*

Let's say that you heard the news that leprosy was again a problem in your village. This flesh-destroying disease had made a comeback and many from your village were now infected. Then you're sitting in church on Sunday morning, when the doors open, and a man enters with skin and flesh hanging from his extremities. He is badly infected, **but he does not seem to know it.** What would you do? What if he wanted to come sit by you? What if he wanted to talk to your children? I think we all know what we would do; we would not allow him into our midst. We love our people, our families too much for that.

What about sin? Do we allow sin to come and join us? Do we take it seriously? What is worse, being infected with a flesh-destroying disease, or being infected by a soul-destroying sin? Remember, the wages of sin is

death—spiritual death; eternal death. If we would treat sin in the same way as we would the disease (and we should) then our churches would once again have Holy Spirit power.

The Bible says ...*ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth –Acts 1:8.*

We have already seen how sin separates us from the power of God, and we have also seen how God wants to give us power. He wants us to have victory over the enemy—the devil, the world, and flesh. However, something seems to be happening in our churches—we are allowing sin to enter. It is common to hear a preacher say, “No one is perfect.” Or, “We all sin.” Oh, that we would realize the damage these statements can make. Jesus came to save us from ALL sin; ALL unrighteousness. If we are left to continue in our sin, what has Jesus done for us?

I hear about churches drifting into the world. They gradually let go of convictions and allow some new fashion and pomp of the world to enter. Something that I hear little of is churches falling apart because of gross sin, such as fornication or drunkenness. The enemy of our souls, desires for us to become lukewarm. He wants the church to lose its power, to start living like everyone else. Here in Haiti, there are churches everywhere. On Sunday mornings starting at five o'clock in the morning, I start hearing the churches singing and worshipping. However, where are all those people on Monday morning? They are mixing right back into the world from whence they have come.

I was recently talking to a very wealthy Haitian man who owned resorts and properties all over Haiti. I asked him if he was a Christian. (I wanted to start a conversation.) I could tell that he wanted to say yes; instead, he became frustrated and said no. I asked him why not. He said exactly what I thought he would say. “I have desired to become a Christian, I've gone to all the churches around here, but I don't feel they have anything to offer me. I have money; I have physical blessings; but that seems to be all that they are seeking for.”

If our churches today would refuse to settle for anything less than the infilling, empowering, and leading of the Holy Spirit, a full dose of heavenly power, then we would be able to offer something that would appeal to the lost around us. I believe this is exactly what the world is looking for; they are seeking for something better, something supernatural. What if we would settle for nothing less? What if we would stay on our knees until the power of God came back? What if we would again weep for our souls, and the souls of others?

I was working closely with a vicious gang leader who

lived in the neighboring village. He was hard, but God had led him to me. For seven long months we met and communicated, I wanted him to catch a glimpse of the power of God; I wanted God to save him. He would often get drunk and threaten to kill me; I would continue to point him to the Savior. He and his gang came over one day to stop a work project, saying that they now owned the land. They brandished their guns and threatened all that were there. I explained to him that God owned the land. He said, "That is fine; tell God to come down here, and I'll cut off His head." I was troubled by this remark and asked him if he understood the power of the God he just threatened. One afternoon I drove to his house, and we sat outside and talked. God led me to preach a bold message to him that day. "You need to give up this gang life. God wants to save you, and change your heart!" He seemed very sober as I

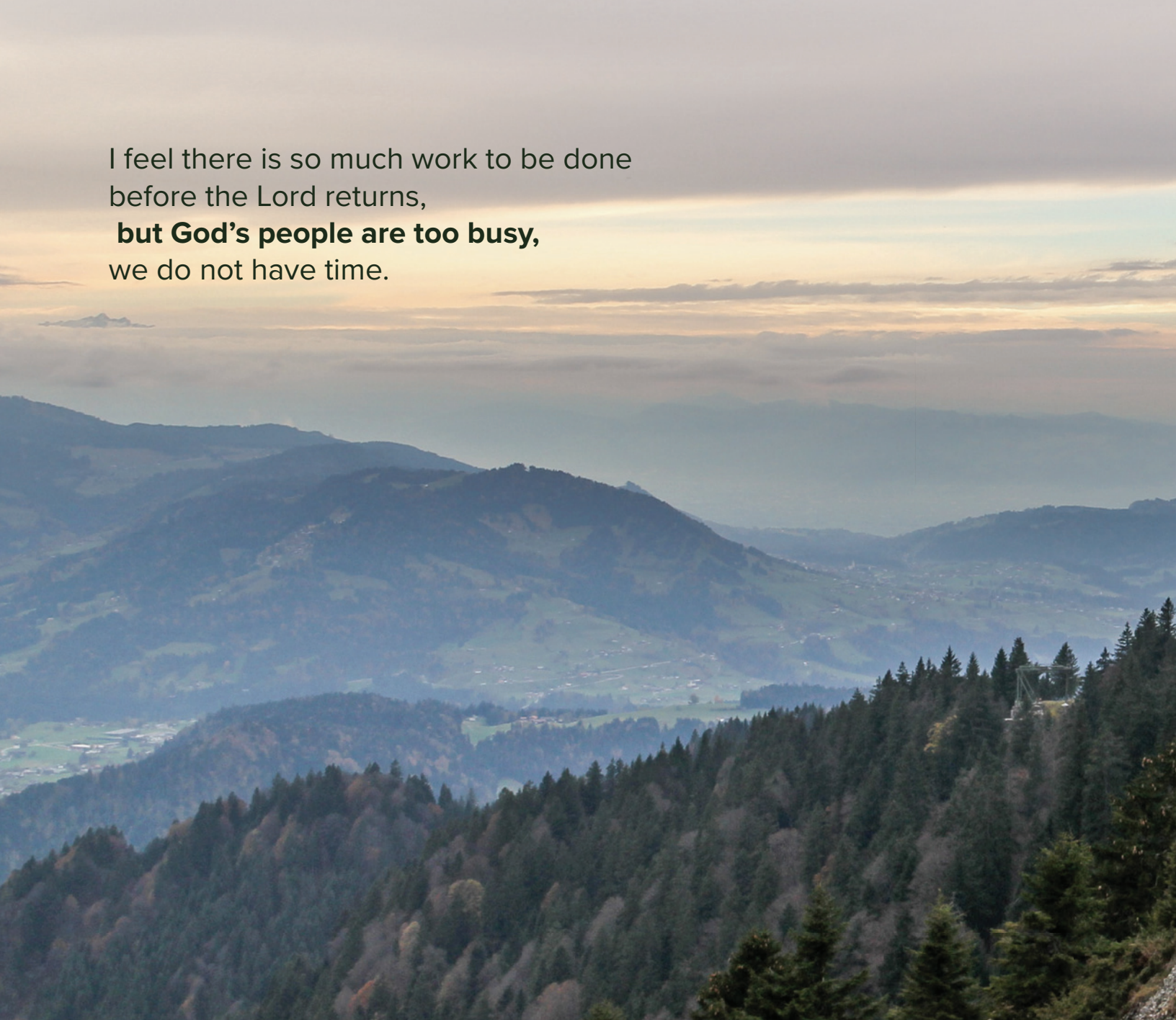
continued, "You never know when someone will come here and kill you! You can't control that, but my friend you can control where you go after you are dead!" I then reminded him of the terrible thing he had said days before.

While we were still talking, two men from a neighboring gang approached on motorbikes. They were heavily armed; they had come at that very moment to kill him, but they saw me talking to him and waited for me to leave. "You have a wife and children, are you not tired of this life? God has something so much better for you!" I was pleading, pleading for his soul. It was his very last opportunity, death waited at the door. As I left I told him that I would be back.

After the shooting I rushed back, but it was over... all over.

When we live in the power of the resurrection, the power of the Almighty God, it is then that He works! I feel there

I feel there is so much work to be done
before the Lord returns,
but God's people are too busy,
we do not have time.



is so much work to be done before the Lord returns, but God's people are too busy, we do not have time.

Do we fear talking about the power of God and the Holy Ghost simply because the Pentecostal movement has twisted what the Bible teaches? God help us.

When we call out to God for salvation, we are doing so because we know we need to be saved; converted. We also know that we cannot save ourselves, so we ask God to help us. Then when God helps us, we are able to do things that we could not do before! Angry people are angry no more. People that could not control their lust now have control. Selfish people begin to put others first. Shy people begin to preach with boldness. Greedy people begin to give to others. God does a work that counselors and doctors cannot do, He changes the very core of a person, and then all things

become new. We now live for something far better than what this world has to give; we rise above by the power of God and show this sin-sick world there is a better way!

All through the Bible, God's people did supernatural things; they did not settle for just a nice life. They sought something bigger, something better. There is power in the blood of Jesus, but it took the cross to make that a possibility. It also takes a cross for us to find that power. And he said to them all, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it* –Luke 9:23-24. Yes, it seems foolish to those that perish, but to those that believe, it is the Power of God.



Fear and Faith

by Adam Lehigh

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Consider this question: How does fear affect your life? How does fear affect your thinking and your emotions? How does it affect your choices?

As I write this article (March 2020), the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 seems to be the top headline from every news agency, and the most popular topic of thought and conversation. The responses I see typically fall into one of three categories:

Denial: Not unlike the builders of the Tower of Babel who thought they could control their own fate, these folks believe that combined social, political, and medical action (things within our collective control) will be able to stop the disease.

Fear: Many people see the fallacy of denial, but no solutions. Committed to self-preservation (and preservation of their loved ones in most cases) and faced with the reality that this goal may be impossible; they are gripped with fear.

Faith: Joining the saints of all ages, some embrace the reality that God is in control of the entire cosmos, and the providence regulating each of our lives. By believing in the goodness of God, they rest in confidence that His providence for them is shaped by His love and will work together for good.

The threat presented by COVID-19 is really not new. Humanity has faced suffering and death ever since eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3). Many threats can be mitigated or avoided, but death cannot. Trying to avoid death (or the loss of loved ones, possessions, or comfort) will certainly fail in the end. Much of our generation, particularly in the West, has lived in such ease and prosperity that the allurements of earthly happiness and security seems tantalizing. But countless witnesses from the past and present testify to the inescapable reality of suffering and death.

History demonstrates the truth of the biblical worldview, and the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of His victory and resurrection, suffering and death do not

thwart our highest desire for happiness and security; on the contrary, they enable it! This change of thinking, from fear to faith, is the subject of this article. Note that I am speaking here of being afraid, not of the reverential fear which we all owe to God. We will describe the characteristics of this fear in a moment.

We will consider the account in 1 Samuel 13:1-14:34 as a historical case study of the nature of fear and faith, and how we can move from fear to faith. I encourage you to read this passage as a background to our lesson.

1. Characteristics of Fear

The beginning and ending of 1 Samuel 13 give us context for the situation. Saul was the first king of Israel and had not yet reigned very long. No doubt he was still working to establish leadership and organization. The Philistines were an ever-present military threat. They also controlled the iron-working industry, vital to agriculture and national defense. Into this volatile setting stepped Saul's son, Jonathan.

Jonathan took the thousand soldiers assigned to his command and successfully attacked the Philistine garrison in Geba (about 5 miles from Jerusalem). This bold act enraged the Philistines, and they assembled a massive army in preparation for attack. Saul's standing army was outnumbered ten to one by their chariots alone, besides their horsemen and an untold multitude of foot soldiers.

The overwhelming odds, lack of proven leadership, and lack of technology and resources created an optimal environment for devastating fear. What happened next shows us what fear is like.

a) Fear Has Power

There are two kinds of power that can control people. One is the power of physical force. This is the sort of power wielded by prison officers over inmates, and sometimes by parents over children. It controls the physical actions of another person against their own will.

The other kind of power is the power of influence and suggestion. This is a different sort altogether than the first. The controlling person or spirit may never take any physical action; but the people being controlled choose to submit because they believe the messages they hear. In a sense, the power of influence is actually much stronger than physical force because of its far-reaching effects on the mind, will, and emotions. The power of fear is in this realm.

Chapter 13 relates how Saul and his people responded to their circumstances with fear. Many people literally ran away and hid (v. 6). Those who remained are described as “trembling” (v. 7).

b) Fear Is Contagious

Fear has an obvious group effect. Some call it the “spirit of fear.” Whether it is transmitted by demonic spirits or simply the attitudes people communicate, one thing is clear: fear is contagious. Nothing makes a situation more scary than being with a bunch of scared people. We may recognize this as low morale, or outright panic. Saul’s army evidenced both extremes. He literally lost 80% of his army and was left with only 600 soldiers (v. 15).

Fearful people interpret events from the perspective of fear, which multiplies its effects. The Philistines sent “spoilers” (raiders or destroyers) out in three companies (vv. 17-18). These raiding parties were nothing new; they had been harassing the Israelites ever since they had moved into the Promised Land. But within the environment of fear, they became effective perpetrators of terror.

c) Fear Produces Foolishness

Apparently, the prophet Samuel had appointed a certain day to come to Saul in Gilgal, and offer sacrifices and worship to God. Saul waited until the appointed time, and when the time had passed, he took matters into his own hands. He knew he was headed for disaster without God’s help. So he decided to ask for it in the only way he had; he offered the sacrifices himself. I suppose he honestly felt he had no choice, as his own account implies (v. 12). He knew it wasn’t his place, but what else could he do?

The problem with Saul’s choice was that, ironically, he was seeking the favor of God through an avenue that God had not granted to him. Saul did not do this ignorantly. His problem was not a lack of knowledge, but a wrong way of thinking.

I don’t know what Saul feared most, but I’d imagine losing his kingdom and his own honor were close to the top of the list. This is what makes his actions so ironic and tragic. Samuel’s rebuke (vv. 13-14) clearly exposed Saul’s faulty thinking, and the results it would have. What Saul had done in an effort to save his kingdom would result in the loss of his kingdom.

Samuel rightly described Saul’s choice as foolish. It was completely illogical, really. But it was just like the choices we will find ourselves making when our thinking is dominated by fear. Fear produces foolishness in the mind before it comes out in action. Because of fear, Saul sacrificed the very thing he was afraid of losing. Beware! Never let fear cause you to sacrifice or compromise something more valuable than what you’re afraid of losing!

2. Conquering Fear with Faith

As we turn to chapter 14 of 1 Samuel, we find two individuals in Israel’s army who were not controlled by fear. Recall the two kinds of power over people. Physical force often cannot be resisted; but it cannot control the mind, will, and emotions. But the power of influence, although in one sense much stronger, can be resisted! The example of Jonathan demonstrates how it can be conquered.

Second Timothy 1:7 says: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” These three characteristics of the Spirit of God are the antidote to fear. We will examine them in reverse order: sound mind (right thinking), love (right affection or desire), and power (right action).

a) What Do You Think?

First Samuel 14:6 captures Jonathan’s thinking. I notice three ways in which Jonathan thought differently than those around him.

The priorities: Although not explicitly stated, retaining his position and avoiding danger obviously were not Jonathan’s highest priorities. He had his highest affections on something else entirely. This is important. We’ll discuss it more in a moment, as we ask, “What do you want?”

The problem: Jonathan recognized who the enemy was. It wasn’t his foolish father, or the trembling Israelite soldiers, or the cowards who had already deserted to the Philistines (v. 21). He referred to the enemy as “these uncircumcised.” I am not endorsing any derogatory or disrespectful terms as we characterize our enemies. Rather, like Jonathan, we must think of our enemies not based on their relation to us but based on their relation to God. “Uncircumcised” people were those outside the community of faith; they had rejected the covenant of God. As New Testament believers, we must also recognize that our ultimate enemy is not flesh and blood (human), but the rulers of spiritual darkness and wickedness in both earthly and heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). Our enemies are not our brothers and sisters in Christ (however foolish, fearful, or cowardly they may be); our enemies are the spirits of the great deceiver, Satan. Like Jonathan, we know that our real enemies are unworthy and ultimately unable to win, since they have set themselves against the greatest Power in existence.

The possibilities: Jonathan understood that God's salvation is not limited by the number of people who stand with Him, because it is God who does the saving! This contrasts sharply with the mindset of Saul, who evidently felt that he was responsible to get God's favor by the ritual sacrifice in order to gain military victory. A great (and common) lie of fear is that everything depends on you. You've got to make this work, or you'll suffer and die. Jonathan knew better; and what liberating knowledge this is. God is the Savior! We cannot buy, earn, or win His favor or our victory. God has given it through Christ. Jonathan did not succumb to the illogical and ridiculous thinking that God was unable to win if His army was too small. Jonathan simply wanted to be a part of whatever God was going to do.

A proper perspective of these three areas—priorities, problems, and possibilities—is essential for good thinking. Logic is only sound if its premises are true. We must know truth, and think rationally based on that, in order to think well.

We do not need to know all truth in order to think well. Exact knowledge of the outcome is not required. Note Jonathan's words: "It may be..." Jonathan still didn't know what would happen. You don't need to either! Faith isn't about knowing everything. Faith is knowing that what you do know is true.

Conquering fear requires right thinking, which requires faith. This kind of faith has nothing in common with what we commonly call a hope or a wish, something we want to be true. Faith is not something we conjure up by trying hard. It comes from discovering the revealed truth of God, and a deep persuasion that this revelation is in fact true. This kind of faith, thinking based on truth, produces the "sound mind" spoken of in 2 Timothy 1:7.

b) What Do You Want?

We learn from the accounts given in 1 Samuel that Jonathan was a man of honor and love. His dealings with David show this clearly (1 Samuel 18:1-4; 1 Samuel 20; 1 Samuel 23:16-18). Jonathan was living for a purpose far bigger than his own life. He did not turn against his father, although surely, he would have had the power and opportunity to do so. He did not begrudge the kingship of Israel passing to David. He was a valiant warrior, unafraid to risk his life in battle.

This kind of unwavering passion and zeal is supported by right thinking, but it also requires something else: love. Jonathan evidenced an exceptional love for God and for His kingdom. Jonathan wanted to be a part of God's victory more than he wanted life itself.

To many readers this may seem extraordinary, even extreme. But why? If your highest goal is to demonstrate God's glory and spend eternity with Him, why fear death? Dying won't block your goal; it will actually hasten its fulfillment! My dear friend, "If ye then be risen with Christ,

seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth...where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Colossians 3:1-2, Matthew 6:19b-21) This applies in both a present and future sense: your heart (meaning your affections, desires, and thoughts) is already on whatever you treasure; and wherever that treasure is, that's where your heart (soul) will someday literally be—in the presence of eternal life, or death and corruption.

Jesus made it clear that we can expect suffering, not only in the normal course of life in a fallen world, but as victims of intentional abuse; see Matthew 10:16-42. He also made it clear that faith and patient perseverance in the truth are simply the basic expectation, the normal course of action for anyone who would follow Him. (See also Luke 9:22-24.) Why would anyone want to follow Him with these expectations? Because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, without Whom no one can come to God (John 14:6). More than that, He is the One Who has loved us! (See Romans 2:4; 1 John 4:10,19; 1 John 3:1-3.)

It is love that makes reasonable, radical faith worthwhile. This is the love spoken of in 2 Timothy 1:7, communicated to us through the Holy Spirit, which we live out after death to self, leading to life through faith in Christ (Galatians 2:20). Faith in the reality of God makes sense because God is real. But more than that, God's infinite love makes that faith really worth it, regardless of what I may lose in pursuit of it. In turn, it is faith that makes my expression of the love of God to others possible.

c) What Will You Do?

Jonathan's right thinking and love for God led him to action. It was not the sort of compulsion that feels like a trap or some sort of manipulation (as Saul evidently felt when offering the sacrifice). It was a choice of his own free will, offered to God and with a request to be directed further by God. He asked for a sign based on the reaction of the Philistines when they saw him (vv. 8-10), and God honored his request.

Jonathan also took confidence in a trusted friend, his armorbearer. The two men obviously trusted each other with their lives. They knew how to work together, each focusing on his own task and exercising complete confidence in the other to do theirs. God does not provide a friend for us in every situation of life. Our response of faith does not depend on having a friend to share it with. But God very often does provide a friend to anyone who will show himself friendly through Christlike love.

Once Jonathan had made his decision, taken mutual confidence in his armorbearer, and received the requested sign, he did not waver. He did not second-guess the situation. He wasn't deterred by having to clamber up the rocks on all fours (v. 13). He acted with decisive confidence.

It's one thing to have power in the sense of potential (like a battery or electrical panel with nothing attached). It's something else to exercise that power in action. This is the final step of victory over fear: acting in faith. It completes the triad of 2 Timothy 1:7—the Spirit “of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

3. Consequences of Faith

Just as fear is contagious, courage is also contagious. With Jonathan's leadership, his armorbearer bravely stood with him and fought for the people of God. God Himself directly responded by sending an earthquake (v. 15). The attitudes of both armies completely changed. The Philistines were gripped with fear and confusion, to the extent that they began to run away and even destroy each other in their panic (v. 16). Saul, after a brief, confused hesitation (vv. 17-19), led his army into the battle (v. 20). Even the Israelites who had fled to hiding or deserted to the enemy joined

Saul's men (vv. 21-22). Finally, we read that “the Lord saved Israel that day” (v. 23).

This was not the end of the story; just keep reading in 1 Samuel 14! But we've seen enough to know how faith conquers fear. God expects and honors courage. Like fear, faith has power; it changes our thinking; and it is contagious. Faith requires clear thinking, unselfish love, and courageous action. It also requires great humility; note how Jonathan did not object to his wavering father and even the cowardly deserters joining him in the final victory. Jesus Himself is just the same: He invites us, however fearful we have been in the past, to join Him in the final victory. If you've not yet become part of His spiritual army, today is the day of salvation. This is the good news we call the gospel: Jesus is King, and He will be victorious!

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“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of **POWER**, and of **LOVE**, and of a **SOUND MIND**.”

Enjoying Life

by Irene Martin
Glenmont, OH

Do you want to have a good life? What is there that you believe you need to experience or accomplish so you can truly enjoy life? Many people's main goal in life is to seek pleasure and to have fun. Much time and money are spent to achieve this. But do we accomplish it? In our natural mind we think that the circumstances need to be just right to please us. But we all know that circumstances are never ideal all the time. So, we can't depend on those for our happiness. We need something bigger than that. Or Someone.

Obviously, we know that God alone is never changing and always faithful. Another thing about God is that He is sovereign. In other words, He's in charge. But we like our independence; we like things to happen in a way that feels good to us. When life doesn't happen that way, we are brought to a decision. Will we accept all of God—both His unchangeableness and His sovereignty—or will we fight to have our own way in our pursuit of a good life?

The root of joy is with God Himself. This is because He created us for Himself. He created us to bring pleasure to Himself, but we think we need to bring pleasure to ourselves. It started in the garden of Eden when the serpent convinced Eve that pleasing herself was more important than pleasing God. Since then, humans have been at war, both within their own hearts and without, with other folks. All in the effort of trying to find pleasure for themselves, yet not finding it because they were created to please God.

The solution for this war is found in James 4. It's simple: submit to God. Humble yourselves before Him. This is not too much for Him to ask of us, because He is sovereign. He created us, so He has the say in how we live. If we will truly find enjoyment in life, it will be by putting our own life and desires

on the cross and becoming one with God and His original purpose for us. Rather than it being restrictive, this opens up a world of opportunities and possibilities. It doesn't mean we have to do things because God wants us to. Becoming one with God means that what He wants us to do is also what we want to do.

Worship and Gratitude

When we are one with God, our whole perspective changes. Instead of pining over all the things that aren't ideal, we begin to see the many things that are true blessings. We can have a heart of worship and gratitude for all the good things that we do experience. We are able to see how unworthy we really are. We didn't deserve anything good, but God has still given us so many things to enjoy!

Living in the Present

As young ladies, we have a tendency to dream, to live in a future that is idealistic and pleasant. We sometimes struggle to live in the present imperfect reality and find joy in it. But when God's will becomes our will then true joy happens, because we are fulfilling His purpose for us.

We can learn to experience joy in any circumstance, even in mundane life. We're afraid of living a boring life. We want it to be exciting. But He wants us to please Him, and when we do, we experience joy no matter the circumstances. However, we are also then available for Him to use in service to His Kingdom, and He may call us to opportunities that are exciting. But we won't be effective in the exciting missions unless we have learned to be submitted to His will in everyday life.

Relationships

When we are finding joy and contentment in where God has us in the present, we are able to focus on



developing solid, upbuilding relationships with those who are in our lives right now. God has created us as social people, and good relationships will bring true enjoyment to us. God is also able to use us in reaching out to other people. When we are one with Him, our focus is no longer on ourselves but on others. The life of God can flow through us and both show others the way to Him and give us joy and fulfillment in doing it.

Emotions

Another tendency we have is to let our emotions control us. And they will run wild if we are looking to our circumstances to give us pleasure. We will end up on a roller coaster of

feelings dictated by whatever is happening at the moment. And then we escape to the dream world, which only distorts our view of reality even more. But God is steadfast, and when we are one with Him, He imparts to us stability and rest. And we are able to experience ever present joy—even in ever changing circumstances.

Let us continue to become ever more one with Him. And He will give us heavenly sunlight all of our journey, unchanged by circumstances on earth and realized in full when we see Him face to face. *...in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore*
—Psalm 16:11.



This Thing Called Love

The greatest thing in the world

by Daryl Kropf
Wickenburg, AZ

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity –1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

Several years ago, my nephew was quite busy for a number of months building a house for himself and his soon-to-be bride. I'd like to compare that to the building of a marriage. As you know when you build a house you need to have a blueprint to follow. So it is when we build a marriage; we need to follow the blueprint of God's Word. We all know that the first step in building a house is to lay a good foundation. So it is with marriage. For all of you who are married, I trust you have been, and will continue building your marriage on the foundation of Jesus Christ. There are many elements to a strong house that we could compare to a strong marriage but today I want to think about what it is that gives power to your house or power to a marriage—that thing is called love.

I want to look at nine elements of love:

1. Patience

Love suffereth long. Love is ready to do the work of love whenever the need arises. It is never in a hurry, instead it wears the ornaments of a meek and a quiet spirit. It will wait for the perfect opportunity and will, in the best way, quietly instruct, or exemplify, the purposes of God before your family, before your church, and before your spouse. Sometimes you are going to have to do it for a long time... alone. It will not falter in times of difficulty. A patient person is a predictable person. Love is patiently persistent; it does not abide in the temporal but in the realm of the eternal. Love understands this; therefore, love waits. It can take a long time for a human to surrender to the Lordship of Christ. That time will be shortened in perspective when a man of faith exemplifies a life of obedience and sacrifice in patience. Patience is the normal attitude of love.

Love is patiently persistent; it does not abide in the temporal but in the realm of the eternal.

2. Kindness

Kindness is love in action! The greatest thing a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to his Father's other children. This is not hard to do, and the world needs it. To every married man reading this article, I ask that you consider this—if you would lead your wife on the journey of love, you cannot do it successfully if you try to do it without the element of kindness. Kindness makes living out the purposes of God attractive to those looking on! It will go a long way in helping your wife to draw near to God because she sees the profound effects of that nearness on her husband's life.

How kind has God been to you in bringing salvation to you? Buying woodworking tools and automotive equipment for your wife's birthday will not promote a healthy marriage. As her husband, you must seek to enrich her life, not yours. Kindness is a normal attitude of love.

3. Generosity

Love envieth not! The opposite of envy is "generosity". The opposite of generosity is greed, bitterness, covetousness, and spite. Husbands, you might be able to identify with me when I say that in every labor there will be other people who are engaging in the same toil as you are and probably doing it better. What complicates things is when that better person is your wife. Here the temptation is to develop a mood of ill-will and covetousness. How often do we do little things to throw a wrench in the works out of a spirit of envy, for no other reason than to destroy her good works so that she doesn't outshine us?

There is only one character trait that a Christian should envy. That is to possess a rich and generous soul which envieth not. How many people have become discouraged from wholly following Christ because I withheld from them the needed tools for success out of jealous envy? Our family owns a cabinet shop. Carrying cabinets puts people in a vulnerable position. If envy rules, subtle things like carrying a cabinet awkwardly can hinder the work. Pinching someone's fingers in a tight doorway is a perfect way to reduce my foe down to his size and the work successfully is hindered, and I can still maintain my innocence. How many marriages and churches operate with these kinds of sins, week after week? Husbands don't be angry with your wife when she ends up being smarter than you are in a certain matter. In this she has not committed an error or a fault. My friends, what resources has God withheld from you that keeps you from being victorious in that great plan of redemption? Has He not been generous? Generosity is a normal attitude of love.

4. Humility

Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. After you have been patient, kind, and generous and love has done its beautiful work in the world, go back into the shadows and say nothing about it. Human nature has a tendency to exalt itself which only succeeds in stopping love in its tracks because self-exultation is so contrary to love's divine nature. The scripture commands us to, *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.* –Proverbs 27:2. How many times have I spoiled an opportunity to further the work of God in another person's life because I got in between God's love and their heart, and they were offended?

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall –Proverbs 16:18.

A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit –Proverbs 29:23.

Pride will destroy the work of God and it will destroy any effort to love my brother or sister. Humility is a normal attitude of love, and it assists love greatly in its eternal purposes.

5. Courtesy

Love doth not behave itself unseemly. This is love in relation to etiquette. The NIV says it better. "Love is not rude! Courtesy is love in the little things." I want all of us to think of a particular word. It is the word "gentleman." The word 'gentleman' is a compound word, and it literally means "gentle man". By definition, it simply defines a man who does things gently. A man who does not possess this quality can do nothing less than to be ungentle, unsympathetic, and rude. He cannot help it.

Married brothers... You will not guide your spouse into experiencing the love of God if your heart is devoid of courtesy for your wife. Courtesy is the grace that shows a special tenderness and respect for a fellow human being. I have knowledge of a sad marriage which started badly. The groom's brash boast was that his in-laws may as well get to know him sooner than later. He started out very early on, expressing himself rudely at the supper table. It is no wonder that after the honeymoon was over his wife found him to be a man she didn't want to live with and for good reason. The marriage didn't continue "happily ever after" because there was a complete lack of courtesy. Courtesy is a normal attitude of love.

6. Unselfishness

Love seeketh not her own. Or we could say it this way—love will not attempt to snatch that which belongs to me, even by right. There will come a day when a man or a woman, in the name of biblical love, must exercise a higher calling of giving up his own personal rights in order to advance the kingdom of God. Love strikes us deeply in the area of unselfishness. It is a very difficult thing after we have purchased our rights, won them, dreamed about them, desired them, and sacrificed for them, to need to give them up. And yet love will relinquish it all so that the purposes of God might be pre-eminent. Only for the great and noble purposes of divine love can we justify the waste of having given up that which we naturally perceive belongs to us by right. No sacrifice is too hard for love to make. True love will enjoy what is given but its very nature cannot take that which is not voluntarily offered. Love is the path to life and

freedom. There is no happiness in getting but only in giving. Many marriages exist with the attitude that happiness comes in having or in getting, but that is not God's way. There would be few divorces if a husband worked as hard **to keep his wife** as he did **to get her** in the first place. **Unselfishness** is a normal attitude of love.

7. Good Temper

Love is not easily provoked. There are many decent, hardworking moral people in this world who are fatally flawed by being touchy and ill tempered—they have a short fuse. Few things unchristianize a good man than an evil temper. This sinful character flaw devastates the home, saps the vitality of men and women he rubs shoulders with, and it corrupts the beauty and innocence of his children. This misery-producing power stands alone. It is made up of jealousy, anger, pride, cruelty, self-righteousness, touchiness, doggedness, sullenness... These all make up the character of a loveless soul. Someone once said; There is no place in heaven for a man like this; for to enter into heaven a man must take himself along. My friends, the home is like hell on earth when an individual of this caliber is at the helm. A grouch is a man who sizes himself up and is sore about it.

Temper is significant. A man is no bigger than the thing that makes him angry. It is not so much about what a temper is, but what it reveals about what is inside a person. It reveals a lack of generosity, courtesy, and unselfishness. A lack of patience, and a lack of kindness, are instantaneously symbolized in one flash of temper. It is not enough to deal with the surface symptom of temper. We must go to the source and allow the Lord Jesus Christ to change us from the deepest depth of our nature, and the anger in our souls will die by itself. How many children want nothing to do with Christianity because of an evil temper in the heart of a father or a mother?! We really have no time to lose. It is with patient persistence that a wife, a husband, or a pastor must love this moral despot. For he too must be conquered by the redemptive love of Jesus Christ. This is the purpose of love. To be tempered by the power of God is a normal attitude of love.

8. Quality or ability to “think no evil”

The people who inspire me are the people who believe in me and encourage me. It is also true that in an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust, people shrivel up and die. In the absence of trust and goodwill, love cannot exist, let alone thrive. Nothing makes a marriage rust like distrust. It is a delightful and a wonderful thing to find people in this loveless world who assume the best about another person until it is proven otherwise. How often I have found in

life that I was wrong about the motives of another person! The quickest way to destroy love in marriage is to assume something negative about the motives of your spouse when only the Lord knows the heart. Divine love wants the object of its focus to succeed and not to fall on its face and fail.

Is it possible that if we would succeed in elevating others to new heights, we would find that our own success is enhanced by our vision or belief of what that person could become? Is it possible that good, old-fashioned respect for the object of our love is the first step to restoring the self-respect a man has lost? If we treat our spouses dishonorably and with disrespect, there is a good chance they will become or remain the person we detest. Someone once said “Sisters, a happy wife sometimes has the best husband, but more often she makes the best out of the husband she has.” You see, man was made in the image of God and the greatest thing you can do for a person is to use the power of love to aid in the restoration of what has been lost. The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Thinking no evil is a normal attitude of love.

9. Sincerity

Brothers and sisters, we get it so backwards. A man who knows the love of Christ chooses the high road to make wrongs right. It is his highest delight to see the purposes of God practically worked out in another person's life, not the other way around. How often we delight to see our enemy fall. Destructive criticism and an over-focus on the faults or sins of others weakens their ability to overcome. Overplaying and capitalizing on the faults of others hinders our marriages and churches from being filled with overcoming people. Couples, whatever it is that you believe about your spouse is probably what he or she will become.

Those who truly love others are filled with delight and rejoicing when they examine a situation and find out things were better than they had feared.

Love and trust go hand in hand. Because my soul is secure in the hands of an unchanging God, I can safely reach out in sincerity to those who have entered into the realm of influence. Rejoicing in righteousness and thinking NO EVIL is a normal and final attitude of love.

The Greatness of Love (the Greatest Thing in the World)

a.) It bears all things

Brothers, can you bear all things for the sake of redemptive love and its eternal purposes? When you are tempted to quit loving, remember what Jesus bore for you. The ability to bear all things is a normal attitude of love. Can you take an insult without returning one? Even the devil has the wisdom to patiently endure if it gives him a greater future advantage.

b.) It hopeth all things

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us –Romans 5:5.

Sisters, if your husband falls short of the glory you married him with, can you wait patiently for the Lord to work in his life? When your husband surprises you by being a different person than you thought you married, practice seeing him for what he could be instead of what he isn't and then encourage him in hope rather than discourage him with hopelessness.

c.) It endureth all things.

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory –2 Timothy 2:10.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever –1 Chronicles 16:34.

Brothers and sisters, how long is your endurance? When you get tired of enduring, remember how long God endures with you. Most matrimonial troubles come when two people choose to not endure because they are in love with themselves instead of their spouse.

d.) It never faileth because God is the source of it.

Prophecies fail.

Tongues fail.

Knowledge vanishes away.

True biblical love never gives up. It never fails; therefore, it can never be defeated.

Love cannot be achieved through the eloquence of words. It cannot be seized by willpower. It cannot be learned through education, and it cannot be purchased through human sacrifice. It is not for sale, nor can it be traded like a commodity for it is spiritual in nature. ***Love can only be received from the Great Eternal Giver, to those worthy to possess such power and glory in their hearts.***

The sincerity of my personal quest to pursue and to comprehend from the heart, the love of Christ, will determine the quantity and the quality of love for others. It was Paul's sincere cry to the Philippians "...that I might know him".

Husbands and wives, when you first met each other, your love was very immature. You saw it as through a glass darkly or as a poor reflection in the mirror. You spoke about the future of your love like immature children who had no experience with it. You began knowing about it and you prophesied about it. Now that you are married, you

know a lot more about LOVE than you did, but there is so much more still to learn. My friends, may the looking glass become clearer for you with maturity and may you understand love in its perfection in the days to come. *But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day –Proverbs 4:18.*

Husbands and wives, the best thing you can do for each other is to pursue a daily relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember that any success in life requires practice. Practice loving each other. Be patient, be kind, be generous, be humble, be unselfish. In all sincerity encourage each other to surrender your hearts to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and your marriage will be above and beyond everything you have ever imagined.

A young man once prayed... "Lord, send me a wife that loves you for I know that if she loves you, she will also love me." He was a wise man.

Great love comes at a great cost. It cost the Lord Jesus Christ His life. Only after you have given your hearts to the Lord in complete trust, will you be able to give your hearts to each other. You have already gained everything; therefore, you have nothing to lose by giving your all in an earthly relationship. That is the cost of love, and it is worth it. Love is life and life is love. It is better not to live than to not love. If love is present in your home, you will find energetic purpose for living and all will be well. Place your hope and faith in the God of Love and you will find... ***the Greatest Thing in the World.***

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God –1 John 4:7.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith –1 John 5:4.

May God bless every bride and groom.

Be patient, be kind, be generous, be humble, be unselfish. In all sincerity encourage each other to surrender your hearts to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and your marriage will be above and beyond everything you have ever imagined.

Be Obedient

by Steven Lapp
Pine Grove, PA

The grinding sound of truck tires driving in the gravel lane filled the air as I sat in the house reading an encyclopedia. Leaping to my feet, I peered out the window.

Mom had just returned from the produce auction in Lewisburg with some peaches.

Slamming the door behind me, I raced across the thick green grass and leaped onto the bed of our truck.

On the back of the pickup sat four boxes of peaches. Grinning triumphantly, I reached into a box searching until I found a ripe one. Just before I bit into it, Mom said, "Steven, don't eat any peaches; it will ruin your supper." Sadly, I tossed the peach back into the box and then slowly walked away.

Several hours later, Dad called from the veal barn. "Steven, go pick the radishes for our Friday market produce stand."

After picking, washing, and banding the radishes, I carried them into the old cooler which was inside the red bank barn. The cooler door squeaked as I yanked it open. There along the cooler walls sat the four boxes of the tantalizing peaches. I stared at the

peaches, my mouth watering. I quickly set the radishes down. Oh, how good they looked. Surely a little peach wouldn't ruin a starving ten-year-old's supper. Mom wouldn't know if I only took one peach.

Deep in my heart, a battle between right and wrong started to develop. I knew that sneaking was wrong, but those peaches looked way too good.

After devouring the peach, I scanned the dark interior of the barn for a good hiding place to put the peach stone. I looked across the onions, laying on drying racks, to the open hay bale. The only problem was that if I put the stone under the hay someone could find it. Then I spied the holes in the barn siding boards on the west side of the barn. If I pushed the stone through one of those holes it would land beside the road. Then, if someone saw it, they would think that it came from a passing vehicle.

I jammed the stone through the hole, peering out as it fell beside the road. At that split second, I felt a searing pain on my forehead. Frantically, I sprang back. There above the hole hung a yellow jacket nest. Then I saw the culprit as it hovered over me trying to sting me



again. I sprinted out the barn door, slamming the door into the yellow jacket's face.

That evening my forehead swelled like a balloon, making it difficult to look out of my eyes.

A few hours later, everyone else went to bed. I laid on the couch so that Mom could occasionally check up on me during the night. But I just couldn't fall asleep. My face was inflamed and itchy, but all that I could think about was the guilt and remorse of what I had done.

After several agonizing hours, I gathered the courage to slide off the couch and tiptoed over to my parent's bedroom. Awakening my parents, I told them the whole story... how I ate the peach, then tried to hide the stone, and how I had gotten stung.

My parents forgave me, deciding that this was one lesson that I wouldn't soon forget. Walking back to the couch with a light heart, I laid down, and quickly fell into a peaceful sleep.



Small Things

by Sheryl Zeiset
Lebanon, PA

Have you ever tried to change the world? I have. As a teenager I dreamed of the daring exploits I was going to do for God. As I set the table in my parent's house, I waited for the day when I would be able to do greater things—things like setting up house in Africa, speaking strange languages, and leading people to Jesus. The thought of living in a mud hut and dodging venomous snakes seemed thrilling.

And then, part of my dreams came true! I left all I had ever known and had an adrenaline-fueled landing in an African country. I tried to change the small world I was in—that God-forsaken village full of drunkenness, broken marriages, fights, and neglected children. Daily I felt the angst of being so busy with “insignificant,” earthly tasks and wondered how to make a difference. Then suddenly, our labors were abruptly ended by burn-out and a host of government suspicions. None of this was in my dreams.

I still ask the same question, “God, how can I make a difference?” The neighbor calls at the door. The laundry lady needs her pay. Lunch needs to be on the table in 15 minutes. Our fifth grader needs help with multiplying fractions. The sky fills up with dark clouds and the clothesline is full of laundry. I wipe the baby's nose for the umpteenth time as she sits on top of the table disrupting her brother's books and papers. I bake bread, make yogurt, and churn butter, and cook 21 meals a week. I fold mountains of laundry and the next week I do it all over again. I sweep the floor that has accumulated an astonishing amount of dirt in only two hours. In many ways, life is more mundane than it ever was before.

I had no ability to change the world as a starry-eyed teen and neither do I have the ability now. God isn't asking that of me. He only asks me to walk with Him and obey His voice. Slowly I am learning that the spiritual and physical are inseparable—even Jesus taught the gospel of the kingdom while resting, sleeping, and eating. Scrubbing a floor and

slicing bread can be acts of worship to my Creator if I will deem them so. It is He who designed that my spiritual walk and the propagation thereof happens as my hands touch the earthly. This is how my spirit is refined. It's the only way I can express my faith as a living faith. It's the only way I can touch the hearts of my children and live out a practical gospel for them to imitate. It's how my faith proves itself to be real to the unbeliever, as they see me struggle through the same things they do, along with my resulting responses.

Slowly I am learning that serving God isn't about determination or changing the world. It's about allowing God's spirit to inhabit me, guide me, and speak to me. I am learning that God is more interested in the person I am becoming instead of everything I want to do for Him. Perhaps I am after all just a smoking flax instead of the one who will change the world. I think Paul could relate to that feeling when he wrote, *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence –1 Corinthians 1:27-29.*

Elisabeth Elliot said, “Sometimes the light rises excruciatingly slowly. The Kingdom of God is like leaven and seed, things which work silently, secretly, slowly, but there is in them an incalculable transforming power. Even in the plain soil, even in the dull dough, lies the possibility of transformation.”¹

To have my heart set on accomplishments and success is a selfish way to live. When that village and those people were taken from us in a whirl of government issues and misunderstandings, I felt like God couldn't possibly use this for anyone's good. He still needed us there, right? The fact is, He didn't need us there anymore. We were not indispensable. Perhaps God allowed it all in order

to learn that His acceptance of me is not based on my accomplishments.

For who hath despised the day of small things... – Zechariah 4:10.

Who am I to judge if a certain work is small or not? Am I restless with my duties, believing God would be more pleased with my perception of ‘great’ duties, seemingly always out of reach? Am I forgetting that serving Christ is not about me and my sense of fulfillment, it is about God and the work He wants to do through me?! Amy Carmichael said, “It is not the place where we are, or the work that we do or cannot do that matters, it is something else. It is the fire within that burns and shines, whatever be our circumstances.”²

The fire that burns and shines within is our secret. That fire can burn while we scrub floors, cook endless meals, and home-school our children. It will touch the laundry lady, the house helper, the struggling girl at church and the neighbors. Sometimes it will happen sub-consciously, sometimes it happens if we decide to reach out instead of taking a nap or something else enjoyable, but always it takes forgetting ourselves, loving others, and noticing the small opportunities.

But beware... we cannot confuse our resignation to the smallness in our lives, with lethargy. Too many Christians do not expect God to use them, so they settle into a lethargic spiritual position. We should expect God to work in amazing ways. God might use us to accomplish those things, but it often happens in ways we least think of or expect.

The widow of Zarephath agreed to give her last handful of flour and the last remaining drops of oil to a stranger. She could have opposed the prophet and demanded he leave immediately, as after all, she was responsible for her son and that little bit of flour was all she had to give him. But no, she chose to give it all. God blessed her willing obedience by miraculously replenishing her flour and oil as long as she needed it.³

God kept culling Gideon’s army until he eventually fought and won the battle with just a few hundred men. Normally, Gideon was accustomed to armies of thousands. and now God was asking him to fight a momentous battle with only a few hundred. In the end, this human impossibility became an opportunity for God to show his power.⁴

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus chose only twelve men to disciple, instead of the crowds. In the end, His small band of men deserted Him. He was mocked and killed. To everyone looking on, the remains of Jesus’ work seemed to have died with Him, yet the cosmic plan of redemption was being put into effect—those simple fishermen turned the world upside down with the gospel.⁵

We see from these examples that God is not looking for the biggest, the strongest, or the best. He doesn’t only use people with specialized skills or impressive gifts. Our strength and resources are often like the few hundred soldiers in Gideon’s army—simply not enough for the need. But when we give what we have with a willing heart, God multiplies our small efforts into a showcase of His grace—a showcase meant for Him, often not visible to others. The simple act of setting a table is an act of faith, of giving, of service, no matter where we are. God has chosen these weak things to be significant in His kingdom.

The secret to a successful life is Jesus in us, not our preconceived ideas of success. With Him working in and through us, His power will burn in our homes and neighborhoods. When He is the reason that we are living, we can trust Him with the outcome. Listening to the voice of Jesus, we can make a difference—one person, one encounter, one small thing at a time.

1. Elisabeth Elliot, *The Savage My Kinsman* (revised edition Servant Publications 1981) epilogue pg 147
2. Amy Carmichael, *Edges of His Ways*, pg 218
3. 1 Kings 17: 11-16
4. Judges 7
5. Luke 6:13-16, John 19



Things We Can't Afford

We can't afford to win the gain that means another's Loss;

We can't afford to miss the crown by stumbling at the cross.

We can't afford the heedless jest that robs us of a friend;

We can't afford the laugh that finds in bitter tears an end.

We can't afford the feast today that brings tomorrow's fast;

We can't afford the race that comes to tragedy at last.

We can't afford to play with fire, or tempt a serpent's bite;

We can't afford to think that sin brings any true delight.

We can't afford with serious heed to treat the cynic's sneer;

We can't afford to wise men's words to turn a careless ear.

We can't afford for hate to give like hatred in return;

We can't afford to feed a flame and make it fiercer burn.

We can't afford to lose the soul for this world's fleeting breath;

We can't afford to barter life in mad exchange for death.

But blind to good are we apart from THEE, all-seeing Lord;

Oh, grant us light that we may know the things we can't afford!

-Author Unknown

The Dew of Youth

by Lee Rufener
Athens, WI

Thou hast the dew of thy youth. Psalm 110:3

There are many aspects of youth which are not virtuous. Many youth of our day experience an early season of callused carelessness and casualty. Often decisions that are made in youthful years set the foundation for the rest of their lives. It was the younger prodigal brother that asked for an early draw on his inheritance then went and wasted it on riotous living. It was a young Dinah who wandered from her father's house and ... *went out to see the daughters of the land* –Genesis 34:1. There, she was exposed to the heathen young men of the land and occasioned a bloody massacre, leaving Jacob as a stench in the land. Many foolish young people have sown to the wind and reaped the havoc thereof. Those that are void of solid principles and parental authority are at high risk for spiritual shipwreck.

There are particular lusts that inflict youth more so than the aged, and the young are exhorted to flee them. (–see 2 Timothy 2:22) Solomon looked through his window casement, *And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding* –Proverbs 7:6-7. The young man was in heartfelt pursuit of that which appeared lovely... *[Un]Till a dart [struck] through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life* –Proverbs 7:23. We could examine the vices from the youthful lives of Rehoboam, Amnon, Nadab and Abihu, and countless others. We also find no lack of modern, folly-filled examples about us fulfilled by frivolous youth.

But youth are not meant to be despised. *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity* –1 Timothy 4:12. In fact, God generally chooses the youth as the instruments of His propagation. Joseph, of sterling character, was sent by God into Egypt at the age of 17 to preserve life (–see Genesis 45:5). Miriam, at the age of twelve, stood post over the future deliverer of the entire Jewish nation and secured her own mother, Jochebed, to be

the nurse of the baby Moses. David, as a youth, was sent to encourage his brethren in the army. He was despised by his brothers: *...I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart...* –1 Samuel 17:28. He was rejected by Saul: *...Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth...* –1 Samuel 17:33. He was scorned by Goliath: *...Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves...* –1 Samuel 17:43. But their contempt was all for naught when he was chosen by God to be king over all Israel.

These noble youthful ambitions were followed by Josiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Mary, and the disciples of the Lord, all who chose to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. But these were not naive specimens seeking to secure their place in life, they were graphic examples of youth who were seeking to imitate the image of their Lord.

We need not gaze long into the character of Christ before we find...

...Thou hast the dew of thy youth

Psalm 110 is perhaps the most referred-to scripture in the Old Testament. This rhetorical portrait of the Messiah reveals a vivid virtue for us to behold. Christ, as the Ancient of days, was described in the Revelation having *His head and His hairs ... white like wool, as white as snow...* –Revelation 1:14, yet, here He is depicted as eternally young, as He sits at the right hand of God (–see Psalm 110:1). No weariness of age can enter there, for Christ is the Morning Star. It is perpetual morning around the throne of God. Those saints who are following hard after His likeness will also reflect this virtue, for the light of Jesus is the light of youth.

The psalmist, describing the Messiah, draws from the natural beauty of the morning dew (–see Psalm 110:3). The thought of dew calls us back from the heavens and unveils before us a portrait of this earth on which we dwell. In heaven there is no night, no change of heat and cold, no need of the sun to light up the day and consequently... no

dew. The nature of dew belongs to the terrestrial, where everyone who will but stoop to observe it will behold a uniformed regiment of grass sparkling as if embedded with a myriad of diamonds. After a long night of darkness, the dewdrops, like tears, stand in the eyes of the flowers as they weep for joy at the advent of the first morning sunbeam. Those who walk through the lowly vegetation will have their feet washed by a thousand caressing hands of God's design. Christ is not depicted as the dew of the morning but as the dew of youth, and the imagery is stretched further.

Youth is the season of abounding energy. Some cannot sit still. They are generally interpersonal creatures who love social activity. This is neither a virtue nor a vice. Rather, it is nominal nature. There is a progressive strain in advancing years that tames and tempers the soul. As life progresses, there is a clearer vision and a steadier thought, and we rise to better things. But when the mid-life summit has been

crossed and the feet are traveling downward on the slope, that tumultuous rush of bodily energy that plowed through anything becomes enshrined with memories of the past. It is the closest comfort many can find to the bygone days of their strength.

But Christ has not called us to foster a fondness for the past nor a wistful longing for the "DO" of our youth. So many today sadly lament that their 'get-up-and-go' has got up and went. These have no vision for higher things and are more energized by a can of Mountain Dew than the Dew of Youth. They are more inspired by a trip down memory lane and reminiscing events of the past than of the hope that lies before them.

Age is no hindrance to securing the dew of youth. The Ancient of Days still rides forth among the golden candlesticks. While John beheld *His hairs ... white like wool, as white as snow...* –Revelation 1:14, yet Solomon declares



...his locks are bushy, and black as a raven –Song of Solomon 5:11. While age may steal our strength and hearing, ...the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: –Isaiah 59:1. He has secured the dew of youth and invites us to partake. The problem is not found in our deteriorating body but in a spiritually declining mind. The bane of old age predominately sets in when the mind follows the body.

It is not that life grows poorer as it advances or ceases to be noble when the charm of youth has faded. If we were placed here only to experience joy, the dying out of youthful romance would be terrible. God had a much greater end in view for His children than to just be vibrant 'doers'. We are sent here to learn. Our allotted years upon earth are all meant to be a schooling, and it is not in the bright romance of youth that we learn the best and most abiding lessons. It

is in the dogged doing of our duty, the quiet acceptance of our limitations, the patient carrying of our daily burden, and in the stretching out of a helping hand to our brother. These afford us the true opportunities for Christian culture and are the roots of ethical nobility. Christ labored *...not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life...* –John 6:27, and He finished His earthly task in 33 years. But the dew of youth did not dissipate as He sat down at the right hand of His Father.

Thus, we conclude that this youthfulness will not be secured by strength, but by...

...Hope

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. –Hebrews 10:12-13.



How shall we picture this Christ now? Reclining in an easy chair, all worn out from His experience with the stubborn people of this earth? Is He busy putting together a scrap book of precious memories? This is too often the position of the aged and so their mind dies with their bodies.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope –Romans 5:3-4. At times, we wonder if this scripture can be true. Anyone with any age on their bones can testify to a poor experience and the subsequent feelings of hopelessness following. As people, we have all faced disappointing experiences with a spouse, a child, or a church relationship after which a nagging cloud of despair settles in. Outside of Christ, a sour experience always tends to pessimism. It was so in the world when Jesus came. It is still so today.

But the dew of youth is incurably hopeful. There is an effervescent expectation that is naturally and magnificently borne in youth and retained in Christ. In every winter, when the fields are bleak, and the cold gust goes whistling through the trees, there lies the hope that the flowers will spring again. In every spring there is the hope of summer. In every summer there is the hope of harvest. It is alive in nature and alive in youth. Those who are blind to it shall reap, at best, a dreary monotone existence. *To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all. –Oscar Wilde.*

The rest shall be brightly effected with a hope that...

...Heals Our Infirmities

Our bodies are destined for the grave and have no hope for renewal in this life. It is our minds that carry our greatest infirmities. The impotent man of 38 years at Bethesda could only utter a hopeless complaint when Christ asked him, *... Wilt thou be made whole? –John 5:6.* Upon the wake of his new day, a new remedy was given to him—... *Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee –John 5:14.* What could be worse than being a cripple for years? A mind that is beset by a doleful indulgence in the sorrows of this world. Age sets in when we have more memories of the past than hope for tomorrow. It is disappointing when folks grow old and have no vision for tomorrow, but it is a disaster to behold youth that are plagued by its crippling effects. Many grope aimlessly through life's various trials, stupefied by the lack of blessedness. The noonday sun has evaporated the dew of their youth and the only praise that they can muster is culminated from a handful of yesterday's pleasantries. A new attitude must be birthed by the dew of a new morning.

...Humbles Our Pursuits

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou

girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. –John 21:18. When we are young, we can overcome in the strength of our youth. As age takes its course, we will find a different alternative: victory through surrender.

...I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. –1 John 2:14. The world entices us to selfish living. Youth are often subject to schools of learning that teach them to "be all that you can be". There is a major focus on self-enhancement and preparation for the future. This may prepare them in a 'survival of the fittest' world but will leave them destitute when the strength and prowess of youth has departed.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. –1 John 2:16-17. Overcoming evil with good is the Biblical antidote for channeling youthful energies. Whether it is the lust within or the longing without, hope is conceived by planting a seed of kindness in the life of another. The pursuit of pleasure and lieu of leisure will always disappoint its recipient and leave him in a valley of despair deeper than when he began. *It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth ... He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. –Lamentations 3:27-29.* We are created to work in God's vineyard and those who have an appetite for it will reap in hope of its youthful reward.

...Hallows Our Trials

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope... –Romans 8:24. How often we can relate to Job in his pain. But before his pain had received an ounce of retribution, the healing streams began to flow as Job revered his Creator. When we can acknowledge that God is perfect in all the trials He allows, we then learn to worship in the temple not made with hands and disregard the frailties of the body. To sit down at the feet of Christ ignites a youthful spark that radiates the spirit within and conceives hope. The dew of youth then becomes our portion as Christ imparts eternal life and eternal youth to us. From the hour of the grave and through eternity we shall be young and bid defiance to weariness and death if we are living in the morning light of Jesus Christ. Heaven is a place of perpetual youth, and just like the light of the sun is reflected on the moon, so likewise the light of Christ is reflected on His bride. She is clean and young, *...a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing... –Ephesians 5:27.* Blessed is the venerable saint who arrives at the portals of heaven in such a condition.

Sometimes

Sometimes my heart is heavy,
Weighted with fears and care.
It's then my Lord calls out to me,
"Come My child, your burden I'll bear."

Sometimes questions flood my mind,
The answers seem evasive and trying.
That's when I lift these eyes to my God,
Claiming His love on me overlying.

Sometimes I feel like quitting,
The way before me seems long and hard.
But I think of the path of my Shepherd,
It was for me He was scarred.

Sometimes my mind is clouded,
I stumble with each step that I take.
Yet out of the fog, I hear a whisper,
"You are Mine, trust Me, a way I will make."

Sometimes I find my circumstances,
Seemingly harsh, and unfair.
But then my Father whispers,
"Dear one, do not despair."

Sometimes I feel all alone,
The ache within chokes and burns.
The Master speaks, "My chosen one,
I alone can fulfill, that for which your heart yearns.

Sometimes my eyes are full of tears
My heart feels near to burst.
And then my Savior reminds me,
This path, before me, He traversed.

Sometimes I worry and wonder,
How things will ever turn out right.
Yet the promise remains, all works out well,
For him that in God does delight.

Sometimes the future seems scary,
Not at all like what I had hoped.
Still, I set my eyes on His ultimate goal,
Knowing it's better than for what I had groped.

Sometimes I feel left behind,
While others lives go on so free.
But, in my Father's plans I will trust,
And look forward to His eternal jubilee!

Sometimes I find myself dreaming,
Of the future in heaven to come.
Oh what bliss will be the feeling,
To hear those words, "Well done."

-by Adrianna Fanton

Rest

by Vincent “John” Waldron MD
Gladys, VA

I rolled over in bed, listening to the sound of my pager going off. It couldn't have been more than 15 minutes since I had dropped into bed from my last admission. I looked at the number on the pager. Yes, it was the Emergency Department again.

I attempted to rub the sleep out of my eyes and stir my still sleepy brain to wakefulness. I picked up the phone and dialed the ER. “Hey,” the ER doctor said. “I've got two admissions for you.”

“Oh,” I said sleepily.

“You sound tired,” he said, jokingly.

I was tired. After graduating from Medical School, doctors go through an intense training period called residency. The first two years of that training period involved overnight calls in the hospital. It wasn't unusual to put in one hundred hours at the hospital in a week's time.

Even when we weren't on call, the days started early and went late. I often fought sleep as I was driving home from the hospital. I certainly learned a lot during that time, but I am also glad that those days are behind me.

Fatigue is part of the human condition. Everyone has had times when they struggled with tiredness. Maybe it was due to a job that needed to get done, a long trip, or sleepless nights due to a new baby in the family—whatever the difficulty, we determinedly push ourselves to make it through these challenging times.

From our childhood days we are taught that work is important. We need to be responsible and take care of the tasks that are set for us to do.

Work is ordained by God. In Genesis Chapter 2, God gave Adam the task of caring for the Garden of Eden. Later, in Deuteronomy 5:13, the Israelites were commanded to do all their work in six days and then rest the seventh day.

The New Testament gives a couple of more reasons to

work. We are to work so we can provide for our families (see II Thessalonians 3:10). In addition, we are to work so we can give to others who are in need (see Ephesians 4:28).

God expects us to work and that we do it in a way that will glorify Him. However, we also have need of rest, which God made provision for as well.

God Exemplified Rest in the Creation

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made –Genesis 2:2-3.

When God created the universe, including the earth and all it contains, it took Him just six days. Since God is God, we can be certain that He wasn't tired at the end of this work. Yet, despite that fact, He took a day of rest and set it apart. He did it as an example for us.

Even though the law of the Sabbath would not be instituted for at least two thousand years, the precedent was set in Creation... Rest one day a week.

God Mandated Rest in the Law

Perhaps the thing that comes to mind first is the Sabbath Day laws that were given in Exodus 20:8-11. It was specifically commanded that the people were not to work on the Sabbath. And further, they were not to cause other people to work either.

Another law which seemed very much focused on the need for rest was the Year of Jubilee. In Leviticus 25, this law mandated that every seven years the land was to lie fallow for the whole year, slaves were to be released, land was to revert to its original family's ownership, and debts were to be cancelled.

Within the Jubilee commands were certain promises. There was the promise of freedom—no matter how bad

things had been the previous six years there would be a reset. It was a promise of inheritance—the things that had been lost and sold would be reclaimed. It was a promise of abundance—*And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years –Leviticus 25:20-21.* Most of all, it was a promise of rest from labor—for the people and the land.

These commands were not put on the people to afflict them. Rather, God gave them knowing that without them His people would not rest enough and would not take enough time to focus on Him, their Creator.

Each one of us needs times of rest, but we need to understand that keeping the Sabbath is not simply about abstinence from work. Our efforts at keeping the Sabbath must include both rest and worship and it must be emphasized with the presence of God in our lives, without distraction.

The New Testament did not Change the Need for Rest

One of the verses that comes to my mind when I think about rest, is a promise that Jesus gave. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light –Matthew 11:28-30.*

The biblical book of Hebrews also speaks of the importance of rest and of our entering into God's rest. *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief –Hebrews 4:9-11.*

It is important to see that the New Testament concept of rest is more than simply time off from work. True biblical peace is intrinsically intertwined with the concept of peace, even in the midst of a chaotic world. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid –John 14:27.* Jesus gave peace to His followers that allowed them to be at rest, even when they were dealing with high levels of stress.

This is a blessing, for it is not enough simply to take time off from our normal work. We need to have that peace and calm which a connection with Jesus offers. Without *...the peace of God, which passeth all understanding...* –*Philippians 4:7*, our time off will be just as unrestful as our time at work.

It is clear that God wants us to rest. He knows that we need it, not just for spiritual reasons, but also for our physical health.

The folks in charge of the French Revolution made an attempt to eliminate all the institutions of the past. It was a particularly godless endeavor and among other things, the new government decided to “reform” the calendar.

In 1793, they established a ten-day work week. Each month would have three weeks with one rest day in each of these ten-day weeks. Their goal, among other things, was to eliminate all religious holidays and the celebration of Sunday as a day of rest. They believed that more work would be done by having fewer days of rest each month.

This created a huge headache for watchmakers. They needed to somehow make watches that would support the details of these new decrees—each day would be ten hours long, each hour would contain one hundred minutes, and each minute would be 100 seconds long.

It turned out to be a disaster. The people hated the changes and productivity dropped considerably across France. Finally, in 1806, Napoleon abolished it and went back to the old calendar and the system of Sunday days of rest. This scientific “experiment” was over. It turns out that people need times of rest and recharging and that a seven-day week with one day off to rest is not just a Christian concept, it is something that is necessary for health and wellbeing.

The Soviet Union, under Joseph Stalin, also tried a similar experiment of eliminating Sunday rest, with similar results.

The week, as God created it, (with one day in seven for rest) is necessary for us to remain productive.

Rest Reduces Inflammation

Part of the problem that modern people face is that they deal with high levels stress hormones, like adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones increase blood pressure and pulse rates. They also increase levels of inflammation in our bodies.

Chronic inflammation is not healthy, but fortunately, rest really seems to help bring those hormone levels down a lot. A good night of sleep is essential for healing, precisely because it turns down these hormones and allows healing of overworked nerves and tissues.

Autoimmune diseases and pain levels improve when people get adequate levels of sleep. Blood pressure and heart conditions also benefit when a person gets adequate amounts of restorative sleep.

Rest Allows for Healing

Exercise is a good thing. Doctors recommend doing regular cardiovascular exercise because it is healthy for our hearts, minds, and overall wellbeing.

It is not wise to exercise every day. It too, raises stress hormone levels and does not give our bodies adequate times to heal. People who exercise too frequently and with too much intensity are much more likely to end up with nagging injuries, joint and muscle pain, and fatigue. One study found that it takes 72 hours after doing weight training for muscles to fully recover.

People who exercise ideally need one to two days off a week to let their bodies recover from the activity. The harder you are training, the more you need those times of rest. Even someone who is training intensively for something like a marathon needs to take periodic days with no running or they will injure themselves.

Rest Decreases Pain Levels

There have been many studies that looked at people's reports of sleep and looked at things like chronic pain and tension headaches. At least 50 percent of people with insomnia also have chronic pain. Of course, it could simply be that people with chronic pain don't sleep as well as people who don't have that.

There have been several studies that looked at people's pain tolerance after sleep deprivation. They found that even a single night of sleep deprivation was enough to make people feel pain more acutely.

Rest Improves Our Immune Systems

There have been several studies that looked at function of

different parts of our immune systems and found that they work better when study participants have adequate levels of sleep. Probably the fact that inflammation levels are higher when we don't rest, increases the risks of infection.

When we push ourselves too hard without rest it is hard on our immune systems. On the other hand, the best way to recover is to make certain that we get sufficient rest.

There are many other things that rest does. It helps improve mood. It can help with academic performance and memory tasks.

As with all things, moderation is key. Someone who does nothing but rest and sleep, is not going to have any better function than someone who sleeps well for seven hours a night, nor will they be very productive.

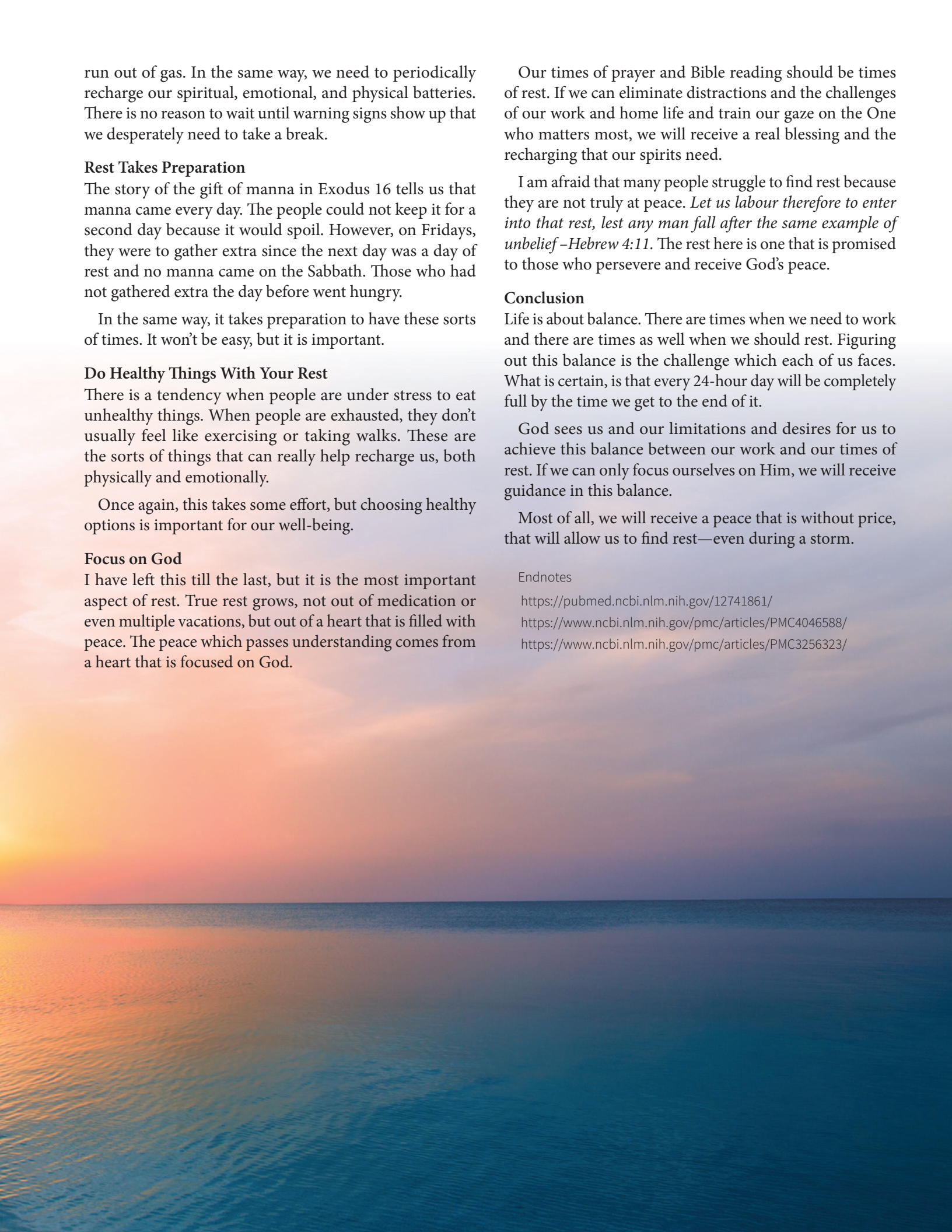
There are some basic rules that can help us with times of rest.

Rest Regularly

The message of the Sabbath is that we need to take regular, short periods of time to rest. The Jubilee Years tell us that we need less frequent, longer times to recharge. It takes effort and scheduling to make certain that these times are truly restful.

Maybe it is a bit like a car. You can only drive so far on a tank of gas. If you always wait until the warning light turns on to fill up that tank, eventually you will have this happen when you are too far from a gas station to fill up before you run out of gas. There is never a good time to





run out of gas. In the same way, we need to periodically recharge our spiritual, emotional, and physical batteries. There is no reason to wait until warning signs show up that we desperately need to take a break.

Rest Takes Preparation

The story of the gift of manna in Exodus 16 tells us that manna came every day. The people could not keep it for a second day because it would spoil. However, on Fridays, they were to gather extra since the next day was a day of rest and no manna came on the Sabbath. Those who had not gathered extra the day before went hungry.

In the same way, it takes preparation to have these sorts of times. It won't be easy, but it is important.

Do Healthy Things With Your Rest

There is a tendency when people are under stress to eat unhealthy things. When people are exhausted, they don't usually feel like exercising or taking walks. These are the sorts of things that can really help recharge us, both physically and emotionally.

Once again, this takes some effort, but choosing healthy options is important for our well-being.

Focus on God

I have left this till the last, but it is the most important aspect of rest. True rest grows, not out of medication or even multiple vacations, but out of a heart that is filled with peace. The peace which passes understanding comes from a heart that is focused on God.

Our times of prayer and Bible reading should be times of rest. If we can eliminate distractions and the challenges of our work and home life and train our gaze on the One who matters most, we will receive a real blessing and the recharging that our spirits need.

I am afraid that many people struggle to find rest because they are not truly at peace. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief—Hebrew 4:11.* The rest here is one that is promised to those who persevere and receive God's peace.

Conclusion

Life is about balance. There are times when we need to work and there are times as well when we should rest. Figuring out this balance is the challenge which each of us faces. What is certain, is that every 24-hour day will be completely full by the time we get to the end of it.

God sees us and our limitations and desires for us to achieve this balance between our work and our times of rest. If we can only focus ourselves on Him, we will receive guidance in this balance.

Most of all, we will receive a peace that is without price, that will allow us to find rest—even during a storm.

Endnotes

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12741861/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4046588/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3256323/>

...continued from page 3



after serving a term of service in Iraq, was struggling to cope with PTSD. Sure, I believe that PTSD is real, and the struggles are real, but as I read this man's story, I found myself becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of answers that were being provided to a severely struggling young man. Some of his deepest struggles stemmed from the flashback memories he had of when he had personally killed several of the enemy. No matter how many counseling sessions he went to he just couldn't come

to a place of inner peace and rest. His mind was troubled. He had difficulty sleeping. He had problems getting along with others.

I had to think "If only someone could come alongside this young man and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with him. If only he could be shown the Truth of God's Word that to take another human's life is sin in God's eyes (even if he is the enemy) and God will not allow him to have peace in his heart until that is taken care of. Also, that the real excitement is that IF he would come to God according to



the terms of the Bible and repent of his sin, then he could start walking with God and God could start giving him peace for his troubled soul.”

Over the last number of years, there have been numerous mass shootings here in the United States. Each time the public officials hold news conferences and share their thoughts in an effort to try to make sense out of another seemingly unexplainable tragic event. Usually, it’s not long until someone is talking about mental health and the need to step up public efforts to provide safety nets, screenings, and better and more treatments to curb this senseless violence.

Several weeks ago, there was a terrible, tragic event that took place in another state from where I live. In one of the big cities, a man pushed a woman off of the platform and into the path of an oncoming subway train. She didn’t survive. In the aftermath of such a horrific happening, the public officials made statements to the public in an effort to stem the potential public fear. They concluded that the man must have been emotionally troubled and that they would be stepping up their efforts in trying to provide a safety net for those with mental health issues, so that such things wouldn’t happen again.

Sure, when we look at the issue through the eyes of the world it seems to make sense. But is this the whole of the matter? Have we as Christians become so used to the ways of the world that we forget how far they have strayed from the Truth of God’s Word?

Let’s not point our finger at the world and the elected public officials. Are we, as the church, any better? How well do we know our Bible? How well do we know our Savior? When someone comes to us seeking

peace and rest within do we know how to take them to the Scriptures, and lead them to Jesus who can then show them the way to the Father?

Why am I saying all this? If we continue to provide the next generation of the church with artificial answers and temporary solutions to the problems of life, then they will NOT be prepared to ...*endure unto the end...* –Matthew 24:13.

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it –Luke 9:23-24.

1.

God has not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;
God has not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

Refrain:

But God has promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing kindness, undying love.

2.

God has not promised we shall not know
Toil and temptation, trouble and woe;
He has not told us we shall not bear
Many a burden, many a care.

3.

God has not promised smooth roads and wide,
Swift, easy travel, needing no guide;
Never a mountain rocky and steep,
Never a river turbid and deep.

-by Annie Johnson Flint


Today

I'll walk with God—Today—
Tomorrow may not be.
I'll make the best of TIME—right now—
That God has granted me.

I'll plan not for a life
That I might live in ease,
But only for today to live
My God alone to please.

Nor dare I think in years
Or move from leaps to bounds;
With God shut out, and self shut in
And selfish aims surround.

There are those who plan their lives,
Who give God little thought;
Who weigh themselves, not with God's truth,
As every day they ought!



“Boast not thyself,” I’m warned,
“Of what tomorrow brings;
Thy health and wealth—e’en life itself—
May all at once take wings!”

“This night, that soul of thine
May be required of thee:
And dost thou plan the New Year full
There, ‘neath some Christmas tree?”

“Wake up! Take stock, are you prepared?
Your lessons learned alright?
If God, in yet three hours, THIS DAY,
Should close your course TONIGHT?”

by Marvin L. Fieldhouse

The Heartbeat of
The Remnant

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I sought the LORD, and *he heard* me,
and *delivered* me from all
my *fears*. Psalm 34:4