



*The Advocate of Truth*

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"Many are called, but few are chosen...  
so give diligence to make your calling and  
election sure"

Matthew 22:14, 2 Peter. 1:10



## “...MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE”

By David Royer

My Dad, Chris Royer (1922-1994), ended several of his sermons with the above phrase written by Peter, one of the first Apostles recruited by Jesus. This Bible text is found in II Peter 1:10 “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your **calling and election sure**: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall”.

**CALLING**: God’s drawing an individual to salvation. The calling of God is solely by His grace. This gift is offered to those who believe in the gospel; have faith in Jesus Christ; who love and defend the truth, and strive to live in harmony with the revealed Word.

**ELECTION**: A selection. The chosen by God are offered all blessings of the gospel on condition of obedience to the Lord’s laws and ordinances, and they, having been tried and tested, are found worthy. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

Observation: Some people are not known by the Lord, and others are (Matt.7:20-23). We, as humans,

can only guess. We do know that only believers in Christ and those who persevere in the faith, are of the elect.

To put this verse in perspective, look at the surrounding texts. We see from previous verses 1-4 that Peter is speaking to existing Christians who already have received God’s grace for the gift of salvation and sanctification through their required faith in Jesus. . . .those who already have what is needed to lead a godly life.

Then why does Peter warn us not to let our guard down? Because without diligence and work to continue in obedience to God, we can quickly lose, or be distracted from, our original goal and intent. Remember: Satan, combined with our imperfect nature, is seeking to destroy us (I Peter 5:8). Also, in the “last days”, there will be an increase in false doctrines and misleading teachers (II Peter 2:1).

Continuing to understand the perspective, note that earlier verses 5-8 in II Peter 1, tells us what “things” to do, to “never fall” from our intellectual and spiritual security: <sup>5</sup>“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; <sup>6</sup>And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; <sup>7</sup>And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. <sup>8</sup>For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Finally, look at verse 11 that explains why we want our **calling and election sure**. “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

God wants us to have an assurance of our salvation, and the best way to do that is to be pursuing godly virtues and never stop growing in the Christian life. This does not mean we will be a perfect person and without sin, but rather, gain the confidence to know that our salvation is secure.

## A Short Thanksgiving Day Message THANKFUL FOR THE COMING KINGDOM

Bond Tennant

For those who may not be acquainted with the wonderful plan and purpose of God to establish His kingdom in the future on the earth, there may be a slackness in giving thanks to God. God's kingdom will bring future reconciliation for the dying world. Some may be distracted with the many problems and difficulties of everyday life. However, true children of God who know the truth are not discouraged with the many acts of violence and inhumanity that they see all around them. They recognize that these events are signs that we are living in the last days before the first phase of the return of Christ. They understand that Christ will establish a kingdom of righteousness after He returns to earth with the saints and defeats all enemies at the second phase of His coming. Therefore, the storm clouds of trouble do not dampen their spirit of thanksgiving but increases it.

One great cause of their thanksgiving is that the Lord has opened the eyes of their understanding to recognize the significance of what is taking place around them. They are thankful that they are living at such a time and can witness to their friends and neighbors concerning the approaching kingdom of Christ. The Psalmist David wrote, "All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom" (Psalm 145:10-12).

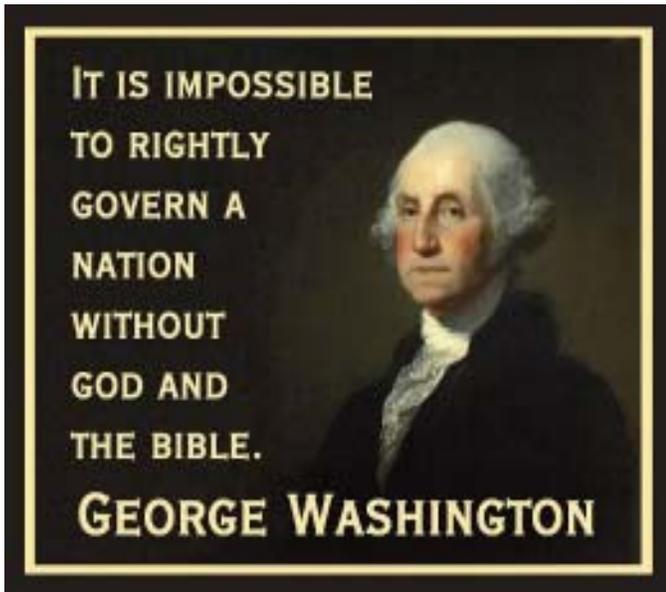


It has been a long and difficult journey for our country since the first designated day of Thanksgiving was celebrated by our forefathers at Plymouth colony nearly four hundred years ago. The population of our country has increased, and America has fought in many wars. The Revolutionary War won freedom from the mother country of Great Britain. There was the Civil War between the North and the South. There was the Spanish-American War, the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. More recently there have been the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The United States now continues to fight the ongoing war against terrorism. No doubt, many have lost real faith in the existence of a loving God who cares for them.

However, the custom of observing a national day of thanksgiving continues. Those who rejoice in a knowledge of the true and loving God and His Word are happy to take advantage of this special occasion for giving thanks. Children of God recognize that it is their privilege as consecrated believers to give thanks to the heavenly Father every day for His tender care over them. They know that while He may permit them to pass through difficult experiences, He is overruling these experiences so that all things may work together for their good, as those "...called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

The Apostle Paul wrote, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thessalonians 5:18). To properly give thanks "in every thing" means that every day will be one of thanksgiving. It means that they will not thank the Lord merely for those things which contribute to their immediate well-being and joy, but also for the trials which He permits to test and to develop them as footstep followers of Christ.

"...Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (Revelation 7:12).



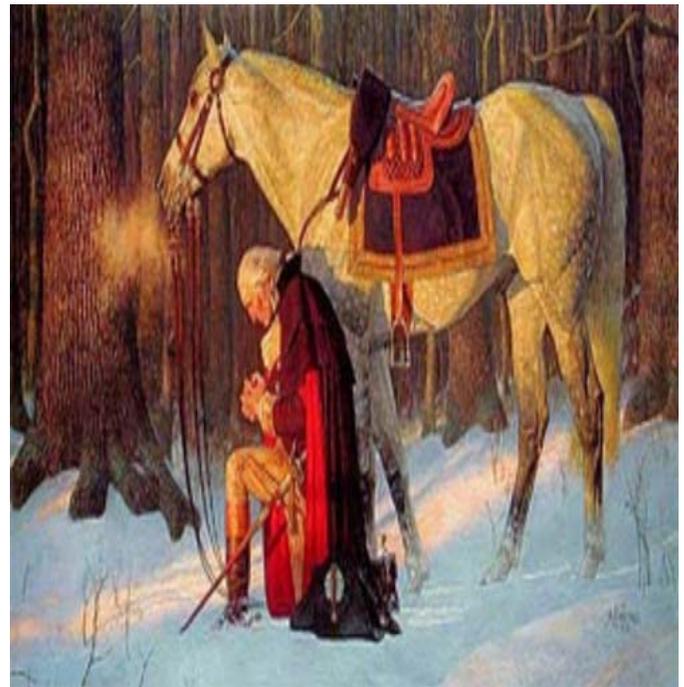
*“Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and—Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me 'to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.'*

*“Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately insti-*

*tuted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.*

*“And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.”*

*George Washington  
President of the United States  
October 3, 1789*



Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.



## THE DEVIL IS REAL

*Reprinted*

"Something terrible has happened, pastor! Can you come right over?"

That call sent me to the home of parents I knew well. Their boy had been jailed for possession of marihuana and attacking a young girl. Their consternation was evident, their grief pitiful.

"We don't understand this. We've led him to Jesus and sent him to Sabbath School all these years. You know he's president of the Youth Group. How could this happen?"

My heart went out to them. I offered comforting words, but they needed something else. My first question rocked them, "Did you teach him about Satan?"

"What do you mean?"

"Did you teach him how Satan works and what to do about it?"

"Well...he certainly knows about the devil."

"I didn't ask you that. Did you teach him how to DEAL with Satan?"

"No, not in so many words."

"Then I'm afraid what has happened is your fault."

"How can you say that?"

"Had you prepared him to deal with the devil as God has instructed, this probably never would have happened."

"We're ashamed to say this, but we don't know ourselves!"

I am writing for mothers and dads who long to see their children mature in Christ. It is not enough to secure their decisions for Jesus and then cram their heads with Sabbath School material. And don't count on youth activities to shield them either. They need more than the devotional side of the Christian life. They have an enemy who lives to destroy them. If they are not equipped to deal with him, the chances are they will fall easy prey to his wiles before they have gone very far with Jesus.

Most Christians are helpless at this point. They have little knowledge of this enemy. Even less have they any faith in his presence and power. Beyond that it has never occurred to them they are to do anything about him. What is so very sad is that there are some Sabbath Keeping people (that think they are doing the will of God) and do not believe in a literal Satan. Satan is a personality and is as real as people. If there is no Devil, there are no angels, and if there are no angels there is no Son of God, Jesus, and if there is no Son of God, then there is no God. The Father in heaven created His Son, His angels and along with them the devil, who was originally an arch angel called Lucifer. Such ignorance is dangerous. Christians schooled only in Bible study and devotions, are like the young girl who is devoted to her parents, but ignorant of boys. Love for her parents does not protect her from the scheming lad who knows how to take advantage of female ignorance in a parked car. Ignorance is dangerous in a parked car. Satan ignorance is dangerous in this hostile world. Love for Jesus affords no anti-satan protection.

Jesus puts it precisely, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Paul warns us to take up arms against him, and Peter describes him as a "roaring lion" about to spring.

Many who love God's Word ignore His anti-satan instructions completely. It's a little like telling Paul Revere to "Forget it!"

To obey God's commandments, one must first learn of Satan's methods, which closely parallel those of the Holy Spirit. Satan's spirit constantly bears witness with our spirit. Then one must move as deliberately AGAINST SATAN as he does toward God. You can see I am speaking of SATANWARD ACTION, which is not the same as Bible study or prayer. These are GODWARD acts which mean nothing to Satan.

Never should a Christian view Jesus' indwelling presence as insulation against attack. There is no such thing as automatic victory in the Christian life. Jesus' presence is a resource only, a means, if I may say so, by which we fight Satan. If you have any notion that the Christian life is no fight, Satan has reached you with a deception. The call to Christ is a call to active duty. Even the Holy Spirit is a part of the arsenal, part of the weaponry with which we fight. But fight we must. And it is something we have to do FOR OURSELVES! God tells us to.



**THE LOVE OF MANY  
SHALL WAX COLD**  
By Roberto Celaya Figueroa

Brothers and Sisters, we have all read Matthew 24:12 that says, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." **But did you know that beyond the message Jesus has for the world, there is a message stronger, energetic and direct for us as The Church of God?**

The message for the world refers to the carnal (love among) men, which substance comes from the last times that the Apostle Paul calls "difficult or perilous times" in which men become "...lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:2-5).

But the stronger, more energetic and direct message is for us, but it doesn't refer only to the carnal love. It covers the spiritual love. To understand this, first we have to remember what the definition that the Word of God (not the world) gives concerning love. I John 4:8 says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." We see that God is love, and whosoever does not love does not know God. We have to love, but how do we love? I John 5:3 tells us that "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." Then, in II John 1:6 it says, "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments..." Jesus told us that if we love Him, we'll keep His commandments, and abide in His love" (John 15:10). Now His commandments are the same as His Father's commandments. Jesus Himself clarified, "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49).

Considering the Scriptural definition of what love is, the way we should love has to do with keeping God's commandments, and the sign that the love of many shall

wax cold was referring mainly to the Church of God, which is the keeper of God's commandments and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12). Even more, the word "iniquity" mentioned in Matthew 24:12 is translated as wickedness and means violation of the law. Another part where this word is used is in I John 3:4 where it says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Therefore Matthew 24:12 involves in a way those who practice iniquity or wickedness (translation of the law) and in a different way those who have love (keep God's commandments) but end up waxing cold.

In these last days, if we don't stand fast, we could become part of "those" with a cold love. See Matthew 24:42; 26:41; Mark 13:33; 14:38; Luke 12:37; 21:36; I Thessalonians 5:6; I Peter 4:7; Revelation 3:3; 16:15. This "cold" love implies The Church of God to relax, to be flexible, to soften the fulfilling of God's commandments within its heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37), getting to the point of not fulfilling them as God demands (Matthew 5:48; I Peter 1:16). This will lead the Church of God to adapt to the ways of the world (Romans 12:2). There will not be few but many who no longer will love (Matthew 24:12).

Paul advised Timothy. He said, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Timothy 4:16). With this in mind, Paul said to the Corinthians "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Corinthians 13:5) Peter said, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God..." (I Peter 4:17).

If we are the cause of divisions and offenses to someone else (Romans 16:17), if there is envy and strife among us (I Corinthians 3:3), and if instead we do not walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:2-3); if we let bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and evil speaking be within us with all malice without being kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another (Ephesians 4:31-32), but if we walk in fornication, uncleanness,

covetousness, with foolish talking, and jesting, and if we are not subject unto the authorities of our church (Romans 13:1); if we do not endure sound doctrine of our church (II Timothy 4:3); if we do not obey God, if we are not subjected unto Him and do not keep His commandments (Deuteronomy 6:5), we are not loving, nor keeping His commandments. We cannot deceive God!

Let us remember what the Lord Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Holy Spirit of God that dwells in us transforms us through the renovation of our understanding so we can know "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). "(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13).

### WHO AM I?

Who am I that I should not suffer for my sins?  
Am I not a rugged, defiled man? A sinner?

O Yes! A vile one.

Who am I that I should not suffer pain and anguish?  
I am worthy of them all.

Jesus, my Savior has suffered great pains for me.  
Who am I?

Jesus prayed in the garden alone.  
In dark Gethsemane  
He knelt with grief and pain,  
Wounded and weary,  
Forsaken by all for me.  
Who am I?

He was beaten by the hands of cruel men  
From which He suffered many injuries,  
Each lash that fell on His back  
Has created great wounds  
Just for me.  
Who Am I?

He was mocked and they spat upon Him,  
A crown of thorns was placed upon His head,  
From which gushed great drops of blood  
Just for me.  
Who Am I?

He was made to carry my sins,  
So great which I should carry,  
All in agony and pain, He did it for me.  
He suffered many stripes for me.  
Who Am I?

He was pierced in his side  
By the hand of cruel men with a spear,  
From which gushed out water and blood  
Just for my cleansing.  
Who Am I?

He was given gall to drink, but He would not drink,  
He cried "Father! Forgive them for they know not what  
they do." He died on the cross as the vilest of men.  
Just for me.  
Who Am I?

--George A. Tyson

## THE SECRET OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Reprinted

A great secret – the “...mystery ... hid from ages and from generations...” the Apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 1:26, “now is made manifest to his saints”. That secret, which the world sought after in vain, which wise men studied vainly to uncover, which all the philosophies of all were powerless to reveal, is simply this: “Christ in you, the hope of glory”.

This is “...the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (I Corinthians 2:7-8).

This mystery is God’s gift of Himself, the new life by which the children of God live, so that with the Apostle Paul they can truly say: “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” This became possible only by the manifestation of God in Christ His only begotten Son. It is possible

only in the Church of God. In fact, there is no true Christian living without it.

Rivers of blood and ink have been spilled in bitter controversies over which church is the right church, what doctrine is right doctrine, what ceremonies are necessary, what creed and what dogmas are essential, what commandments are to be obeyed. No matter how powerful a church system may be, no matter how elaborate are the services, how spectacular its rituals, how wealthy the organization, it can make no claim to being truly like Christ and of a Christian character if it fails to manifest this secret to its followers.

Works of men – sacrifices, pardons and blessings performed by the fingers of the most pious persons not only cannot substitute for that life by the faith of the Son of God within, but make it impossible of attainment. They rob the individual of the essence of being like Christ and doing the things that Christ did – the life which he can only live as a child of God.

Not even one’s own faith can substitute for that essential inner life, since it is life “by the faith of the Son of God.” Only with this is the child of God fully assured of grace, peace, mercy, sanctification and salvation. For he is actually identified with them since he lives, yet not he, but Christ liveth in him. He then becomes a useful member of the family of God.

## When The Earth Will Shake

By David DeLong

When the Lord comes back to earth  
The land will crack and quake;  
The anger of the Lord will show  
When the earth will shake.

He'll be the King of all the earth,  
And do so for His sake;  
The world will be subdued to Him  
When the earth will shake.

We must be ever vigilant,  
Oh, Church of God, awake!  
So that we won't be caught off guard  
When the earth will shake.

# Causing The Righteous To Go Astray

By David DeLong

"Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession" (Proverbs 28:10). I wrote an article in the Advocate of Truth a few months back entitled "The Liberal Soul". It expressed a partial belief that I have about what is happening in America, and especially in our government, today. I wish now to express more fully my views concerning that belief.

My purpose in writing these articles is not to turn the Advocate into a political paper. But, when biblical morals are being so blatantly disregarded in America and in portions of our government, and even being overtly attacked, I feel it is my duty to speak up. I mentioned in my article "The Liberal Soul" that the liberal left party in our government has become the party of anti-God. Now let me say at this point that God is neither a Democrat nor a Republican. His ways and will are far above any political party that exists. However, as human beings, our options are very limited in regards to what we support when it comes to our government. We MUST, at all times and at all cost, support those movements which reflect more of God's ways and will than any other movements.

My purpose in writing these articles is also not to offend anyone. But, let me be bold and say that the Democratic Party of today is not the Democratic Party of your parents, nor even the party of John F. Kennedy. It is being filled with liberal left members who are blatantly anti-God. And it is being obviously led by Satan, himself. What political party is so foolish to support open borders to our country? What political party is so blinded that it can't (or won't) see what evil socialism is doing to the various countries of the world? Who is so evil that not only do they want to murder babies from the womb, but also want to murder them after they are born? Who is so misguided that they can't (or won't) see that funding "X" amounts of programs in America (Medicare for all, college funding

for all, etc., etc., etc.) will not only bankrupt our dear nation, but it will destroy it? These and many other destructive policies can be traced back to the liberal Democratic Party of today.

Some may complain that they don't like President Donald Trump's methods of tweeting "disrespectful messages" to people. But let me take a moment to say that President Trump is a far better president than ANY of the Democratic hopefuls would be for 2020. Under his administration we have had the most robust economy that we have experienced in at least 50 or so years. Unemployment is way down, the stock market is mostly doing well, and businesses are coming back to America. Many are touting the lowering of taxes and regulations that have been a hallmark under the Trump administration. But, I personally believe that the Lord is blessing our country because of America's standing firmly with Israel and other righteous stands that we are taking under the Trump administration, such as the Right to Life movement.

So outlandish has the Democratic Party become, that they are letting four freshman Congresswomen lead the party. This group, known as "The Squad", has taken over leadership of the party because longtime members of Congress such as Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer apparently don't have the courage to stand up to them. They don't want to be called racist themselves, something the Democratic Party has been calling president Trump. The Squad, however, contains members who are very racist, speaking anti-semitic remarks against Israel, etc.

I say these things because the liberal left Democratic Party is leading many, including righteous people, astray. Many are looking to leftist people for the solutions to our problems, not knowing that the leftist people ARE a part of the problem. This may include some beliefs of members of the Church of God (7th Day). Please, don't be fooled by them.

The Republican Party is not perfect, and by far, neither is Donald Trump. But, we must not support movements such as the liberal Democratic Party with their blatant

anti-God agendas. Otherwise, it might be said of us that we are leading the righteous astray by our beliefs and example.

# Addicted To Ministry

By David DeLong

"I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth" (I Corinthians 16:15-16). It is interesting that the Apostle Paul speaks of the house of Stephanas "that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints". The word for "addicted" in the Greek is "tasso" and it means "to arrange in an orderly manner, i.e. assign or dispose (to a certain position or lot):--addict, appoint, determine, ordain, set."

It appears that the house of Stephanas was in the habit of orderly and systematically placing family members in positions of ministering to the saints. Perhaps one family member saw to the food distribution to the saints which visited their family. Perhaps another oversaw the washing of their feet when they arrived. Maybe another saw to it that the saints had clean beds to sleep upon during their stay. In any event it was not a haphazard way of ministering. Things were well thought out and undertaken. In essence, they were addicted to ministry.

We know that very little gets done without planning. Planning is the key to any business, whether it be in a career, or in work in the Church. Things tend to fall into a rut without planning. In the Church, many of the saints' talents get overlooked or not used without a proper assessment. Often, a brother or sister will not use their talents for God without being asked to do so. One way that we can approach a saint who has a singing talent is to say to him or her: "brother, or sister, I really enjoy listening to

you sing. Would you be willing to give a special sometime soon in church?" It doesn't have to be the pastor who gives this encouragement. Any church member can do so. And then arrangements can be made with the pastor for this to take place.

Much more work for the Lord can be accomplished when we have the attitude of being addicted to ministry. We need to be careful that the "addiction" doesn't become obnoxious or annoying, but with the proper planning much can be done for the Lord's sake. Perhaps we need to review our own talents and interests and begin ministering in the Church in ways never done before. At least we can pray that the Lord will show us ways to be ministering for Him.

I have seen (and have been a part of) chalk drawings depicting a story or scene from the Bible. You can put a large piece of paper, maybe three feet wide and six feet long on the back wall of the church behind the pulpit and have folks draw a picture of the Sabbath School or sermon that is being expounded upon. It really generates interest! A church member could possibly give a puppet show about a story from the Bible to the children in church. Word of mouth about such an event can surely draw more children, and thus families, to church.

Being addicted to ministry is to be ready to seize upon ways to draw new members to church, under God's guidance, as well as to minister to the already existing members' needs. May the Lord help us to be like the house of Stephanas in being addicted to ministry.

# "Except It Be For Fornication"

By David DeLong

In Matthew 19:3-9 Jesus makes this reply to the Pharisees: "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

It is thought by some that the wife committing fornication in this passage concerns her only in the engagement, or espousement, period before she is fully married to her husband. But this is not so. Notice that Jesus defines the marriage situation as "...And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

There is only one way for a man and his wife to become "one flesh" and that is through union in the marriage bed. Therefore, this fornication is not addressing what the wife did before she became one flesh with her husband, but after she has become one flesh with him. She is fully married to her husband, not just espoused to him. To be one flesh before marriage is to commit sin.

Therefore, Jesus is giving this one exception to fully married people for divorce: in this case, if the wife commits fornication (a word which can express many types of sexual sin such as adultery, homosexuality, incest, etc.) then her husband can legally and morally divorce her and be fully free to marry another. The same could be said if the husband also commits fornication on his wife. However, forgiveness can, and in some cases should, be extended to the transgressing party.

The Apostle Paul had to address this issue on several occasions with the brethren in the Church at Corinth. For instance, we read about fornication being committed in I Corinthians 5:1-5. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Again, some may think that the fornication being committed here is between unmarried people: that is, the man was unmarried and his father had died, leaving his wife unmarried. But this is not necessarily so. Why, for instance, did not the Scriptures mention his father's widow instead of his wife, if the father had died. It appears that the father was still living, making the fornication into adultery.

It is true that fornication can refer to sexual sin between unmarried people. But, it is also true that the word

fornication can refer to any sexual sin including adultery. For proof of this I turn to I Corinthians 10:8. "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand."

This passage of Scripture is referring to the children of Israel committing fornication with the women of Moab in Numbers 25:1-9. "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand."

The word "whoredom" in verse one is "Zanah" in the Hebrew and it means "to commit adultery". So Paul is saying that when the Israelites were committing fornication, they were actually engaged in adultery. In the book of Hosea, chapter 2, verse 2, we see a form of the word "zanah" being used again as "whoredoms". "Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah. Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts" (verses 1-2). We also see here that "whoredoms" also means "adulteries". And because of these whoredoms, God put away Israel, divorcing her ("she is not my wife, neither am I her husband"). Fornication, including whoredom and adultery, is therefore the one reason that Jesus said could be used to divorce one's spouse.

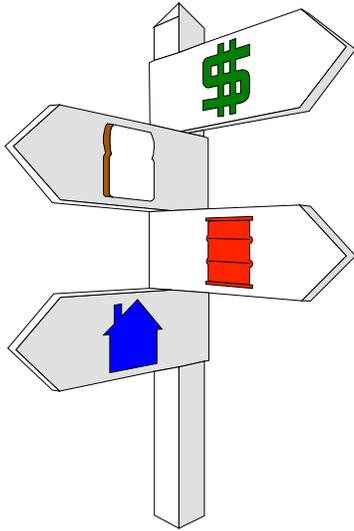
## "He That Winneth Souls"

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). According to this verse, it takes a wise person to win souls for the Lord. In fact, winning souls is actually an art. The first thing we should remember is that it also takes the Holy Spirit in a person's life to speak the right words to a non-believer. In some cases the disciples of Jesus were instructed not to think of the right words to say, but they were to depend upon the Holy Spirit to speak through them. "And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:18-20).

In other cases, Peter taught that we should be ready to share the Word of God and our ministering to others. In I Peter 4:11 he wrote: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." In chapter 3:15 Peter wrote: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear".

The Apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Those types of answers take time in studying the Scriptures to be able to reply to the various people who ask questions concerning your faith.

In essence, we should become expert soul winners, having a testimony that we can share with others, and being knowledgeable in the Scriptures to be able to speak for the Lord. It takes the Holy Spirit's guidance to lead us in sharing the gospel with the lost, but it also takes a diligent effort on our part to also be able to share with them. May the Lord help us in the spiritual art of soul winning for Christ.



# THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

*If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.*

## A CHRISTIAN NIGHTCLUB

The following is an article entitled *Church takes its lounge act to a higher degree* that appeared in the **Houston Chronicle**:

On the first Friday of the month, God Encounter Church transforms to become a whole different type of religious experience.

The lighting dims. Lounge tables pop up. Singers and poets gather near the microphone. The church located at 12423 Cutten, shifts gears and essentially becomes a nightclub.

Unlike other clubs, however, Shift Christian Lounge centers on faith and fellowship.

“We need to be able to create different avenues so that people can serve God, have fun and be themselves,” founder and pastor Tony Ervin said. “This is an environment where you can come in and relax – and be out at night.”

The idea for a religion-themed nightclub came from his time in Orlando, Fla., Ervin explained.

“Christian lounges are big there, he said. “When I came here, I thought, maybe we should give it a try and see how people respond.”

Marcus Sullivan, a deejay and radio host of a morning Christian hip-hop show on 91.7 FM, was one of the first people tapped to become a part of the event.

Ervin called and recruited him as a host and emcee for the night.

At first, when he heard about the new venue, he couldn't totally envision it. “Once I pulled up, I could feel the energy of the lounge,” he said. “And there's entertainment that's really good, professional singers, poets,”

Just like a regular club, Sullivan ended up staying until 1 a.m. “And I had an amazing time,” he said. “I'm sold on it.”

Houston needed a space like this, he added. He can imagine the list of performers growing as they discover the opportunity. He does not know of any other platforms dedicated to Christian artists.

“It's just not being done,” Sullivan said. “We had Christian hip-hop artists headlining, spoken word and even a mime. We had everything. It brought our faith. It brought out friends. It brought out fun.”

He said having a safe space for faith, open at night, was popular with his friends and listeners.

Christians do exactly the same thing that secular people do,” he said. “Christians go to the Texans game. They go to concerts. They go to clubs.”

Younger Christians are looking for a new way to connect with new friends around their faith, Ervin said. “When you come to God, you shouldn't lose your identity,” he said. “You just change worlds.” Shift Christian lounge seeks to fill that void. The grand opening, the first Friday in June, was well attended.

“Slowly, it’s building a buzz,” Ervin said.

When people saw Sullivan’s social-media posts about the June event, they wanted to go to the following occasion. “The morning after, I woke up to dozens of comments,” he recalled. “People were saying, “this is fresh. This is dope. This looks awesome.”

From his experience, Sullivan is certain that the concept will catch on. “People will fall in love with it,” he said. “I think that it’s going to be huge.”

And he believes the idea came right in time. “The name says everything,” he said. “A shift in culture needs to happen. We can’t do the same old thing and get the same results.”

That’s what Ervin wanted to do – to help pull younger generations back to the church.

“It came about because I wanted to create an atmosphere for millennials,” he said. “We have a lot of millennials walking away from the church. The elders are preaching the same thing, to come to where we are. We need to go and meet them where they are. That’s what Jesus did. He met us where we’re at.”

Tickets for each event are available online and at the door. Proceeds go to the performing artists and to keep the lounge in business.

Ervin said if the demand rises for more frequent gatherings, he’ll head back to the drawing board.

Sullivan has a hunch that this is the beginning of something that can gain greater momentum in Houston. “It’s a night out,” he said. “It’s a date night. It’s a social event. It’s a networking event.”

### **Comment**

This article gives forth something for every Christian to consider. Why must a Christian follow the way of the world in order to connect with others of faith? There are some interesting things brought out in this article.

Let us quote a portion of this article, “Christians do exactly the same thing that secular people do.” “Christians go to the Texans game. They go to concerts. They go to clubs.”

“Younger Christians are looking for a way to connect with new friends around their faith, Ervin said. When you come to God, you shouldn’t lose your identity,” he said. “You just change worlds.”

Let us analyze this quote. First, Christians do not do exactly the same thing that secular people do. Jesus expects his followers to be different than secular people. Most of all, Christians do not go to night clubs.

Second, the best way to connect with friends about faith is by word of mouth and neutral love.

Third, when one comes to God, he must lose his own identity as an old man of sin and put on his new identity as a new man following our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **PONDER THIS**

In many circles today, the plain teaching of the Bible regarding the fall of man and his present state of separation from God are made light of and discounted as too primitive a belief to be retained in modern theology. The authenticity of the Genesis account of the entrance of sin into the world is often rejected by labeling the book as mythology, noteworthy only for its literary style. Instead, man is pictured as making steady progress toward the sublime state as a result of his own exalted efforts. However, the Scriptures view the matter much differently!

### **GROWING HUMAN ORGANS**

I read that researchers in Japan aim to grow human pancreases in rats. They believe that this project carries the potential for a futuristic resolution to the shortage of organs and organ donors.

### **THE MILITARY**

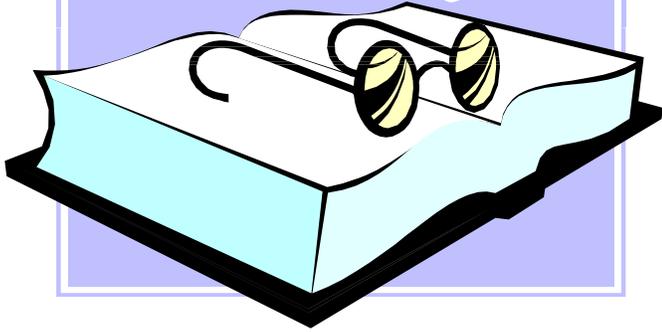
It is reported that the military pool of recruits is drying up. There’s even competition from within. Seventy one percent of Americans ages 17 to 24 are ineligible to join the military because of obesity, lack of a high school diploma or a criminal record, according to 2017 data.

### **Comment**

Where will the military get the recruits required to keep it strong as many member troops serve their time and return to civilian life? Would the draft system have to be restored?

# BIBLE

## Study



### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**QUESTION:** Ephesians 4:4-6 reads, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Will you please comment on these three verses of Scripture?

**ANSWER:** We have proclaimed in many ways that the UNITY among God our heavenly Father, Jesus Christ His only begotten Son and we the adopted Believers, is basic to the whole concept of the Family of God. If this UNITY is the foundation of the Family, how is the foundation of this superstructure named? The Apostle Paul tells us that “In Jesus Christ the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.” Precisely how and in what way does this UNITY manifest itself in the Church of God?

Ephesians 4:4-6 lists seven ways we must follow in order to have UNITY among the brethren along with the Father and Jesus. These seven ways are listed in the following paragraphs.

**ONE BODY** - The Church of God is not many but one corporate entity. Rebuking the saints of Corinth concerning division and “party spirit,” Paul asks them “Is Christ divided”? Obviously, the answer is “NO!” Christ is the one head for the one body. This is why saints rejoice

together, sorrow together, suffer together, triumph together – they are one body.

**ONE SPIRIT** - Not “spirits,” but “Spirit!” Paul acknowledges to the Corinthian children of God that there are various gifts, but still the “same Spirit.” The Church of God – in terms of the individual Believers and of the total body – must be motivated, inspired, and directed by the one Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God.

**ONE HOPE** - The hope of the resurrection and eternal life, so Peter says, “By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

**ONE LORD** - Peter said on the day of Pentecost, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

**ONE FAITH** - Timothy is reminded that “Servants (attendants) ... must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience,” and he is exhorted to “fight the good fight of the faith.” Indeed, “this is the victory which overcomes the world, our faith” – but only as we hold to the ONE FAITH! Unity cannot exist without the vital element of a common, mutually shared, and experienced faith in God and in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

**ONE BAPTISM** - John the Baptizer carried on a ministry of baptism, but this is not the “one baptism” shared by children of God. His baptism was a baptism based on repentance, indicating that the one being baptized had genuinely repented of sin and was prepared to accept the Savior and become a citizen of the kingdom as it was inaugurated by Jesus. Birth of the Water – the “one baptism” – is also based upon repentance and forgiveness of sin.

**ONE GOD AND FATHER** - From the beginning it has been so – one God! In the “*Shema*” (Deuteronomy 6:4ff.), a regular feature of Jewish worship, God says to His people Israel: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.” He is “over all, through all, and in all” of His people, the Church of God.

**QUESTION:** Will you please comment on being begotten of the Spirit and afterward being born of the Spirit?

**ANSWER:** Many who read the Bible think that in His discussion with Nicodemus Jesus was referring only to conversion from sin to righteousness and a filling with the Holy Spirit. But this is not all Jesus was speaking of. This is apparent from the Master's statement that those born of the Spirit can come and go as the wind. However, before there can be a birth of the Spirit there first must be a begetting of the Spirit. This begetting occurs when one enters the narrow way and begins to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

This point is somewhat obscured in our English Bibles. There is only one Greek word for both begetting and birth. The reader must determine from the context which meaning is intended. For example, when Jesus said that those "born" of the Spirit could come and go as the wind, we know that He was referring to Spirit birth, and not Spirit begetting. Other texts use the word "born" when the context indicates that the reference is to be the Christian at the present time. In these instances, the word "beget" or "begotten" would clarify the meaning of the text.

A beautiful thought can be associated with begetting which is followed in due time by birth. It is during this period that the embryonic new creature is nourished and matures before birth. This development takes place while the mind of the new creature is contained in an earthy body. This creative process goes on, and in due time the new creature is ready for birth.

**QUESTION:** What was the mercy seat?

**ANSWER:** The mercy seat was the lid of the ark of the covenant. It was solid gold. Please read Exodus 25:17-22. The mercy seat was seen by the Hebrews as the place where the Lord Himself was enthroned.

**QUESTION:** The fifth Commandment of God's Ten Commandments states, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." What does God mean by honoring our parents? Please list some specifics.

**ANSWER:** The following are just three specifics:

**Honoring our parents means to obey and respect them.** "For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy

mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death" (Mark 7:10).

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

**Honoring our parents means to listen to their instructions and obey them.** "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Proverbs 1:8).

"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding" (Proverbs 4:1).

"Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened (hindered); and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life" (Proverbs 4:10-13).

**Honoring our parents means to be wise, never foolish.**

"...A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother" (Proverbs 10:1).

"A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother" (Proverbs 15:20).

**QUESTION:** What is wrong with drinking alcoholic beverages?

**ANSWER:** Drinking alcoholic beverages is related to mental and physical illness, and it is related to poverty and broken homes. It is also related to crime, unemployment, and immorality.

Doctors say drinking alcoholic beverages impairs reason, will, self-control, judgment, physical skill, and endurance. It removes inhibitions and weakens social control. In translation, this means that when one drinks alcoholic beverages, he loses control of his thinking and his standard of values.



## India

Water wells being drilled in India.





**Fresh water from a well and a blessing prayed upon a well.**



**LESSON I**

**GIDEON CHOSEN BY GOD**

*Scripture Reading: Judges 6:1-24.*

*Golden Text: Judges 6:16.*

*And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."*

*NOTE: In Judges 5:31 we learn that Israel had peace for 40 years under Deborah's rule. We shall study now how the Lord again gave them victory over their enemies when they cried to HIM.*

1. How long were the Israelites in the hands of the Midianites? Judges 6:1.
2. Where did the Israelites seek refuge from the Midianites? Judges 6:2.
3. After the children of Israel had their crops and animals destroyed, did they then turn to the Lord for help? Judges 6:4-6.
4. Did God again answer their plea? Judges 6:8-10.
5. An angel appeared to Gideon while he was threshing wheat. Read Judges 6:11-16, and then tell in your own words what the angel said to Gideon.
6. Gideon doesn't believe that the angel is sent from God. What does the angel do to persuade Gideon? Judges 6:19-23.
7. Gideon still has doubts about leading Israel. What did God do to show Gideon that He wanted him to continue leading Israel? Judges 6:36-40.



**LESSON II**

**GIDEON PREPARES FOR BATTLE**

*Scripture Reading: Judges 7:1-25.*

*Golden Text: Judges 7:6.*

*"And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water."*

*NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned that God chose Gideon to lead the Israelites against the army of the Midianites. Let us study now how Gideon accomplished his defeat of the enemy.*

1. How many men did Gideon have to fight for Israel? Judges 7:3-4.
2. The Lord could not work with so many men. He wanted to show Israel that it was through His help alone that they could defeat the enemy. What method was used to choose those who were to fight with Gideon? Judges 7:5-7.
3. What did God tell Gideon to do that night, and who was to go with him? Judges 7:9-11.
4. How large was the Midianite army? Judges 7:12.
5. What was the dream that Gideon heard being told? Judges 7:13-15.
6. Read Judges 7:16-21, and then tell what method the 300 used to startle the Midianites while they slept.
7. What did the Midianites do? Judges 7:22-23.

**LESSON III**

**THE BIRTH OF SAMSON**

*Scripture Reading: Judges 13:1-25.*

*Golden Text: Judges 13:24.*

*"And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him."*

*NOTE: In Judges 8-11, you may read more about Israel's disobedience to God. We have studied some of the terrible things which happened to Israel because they didn't obey God. For the present, we will go to Judges 13 to study the life of Samson who was Israel's deliverer.*

1. Who were the parents of Samson? Judges 13:2.
2. What did the angel of the Lord say to Samson's mother when he appeared to her? Judges 13:3.
3. What instructions did the angel give to her? Judges 13:4-5.
4. Did she tell her husband about the angel's visit, and what was his reaction to her story? Judges 13:6-8.
5. Did God hearken to Manoah's plea? Judges 13:9-10.
6. What was the conversation between the angel and Manoah and his wife? Judges 13:11-16.
7. While Manoah was offering his meat offering unto the Lord, what happened to the angel? Judges 13:19-21.
8. When Samson was born, was he blessed by God? Judges 13:24-25.

**LESSON IV**

**SAMSON'S MARRIAGE TO THE PHILISTINE**

*Scripture Reading: Judges 14:1-20.*

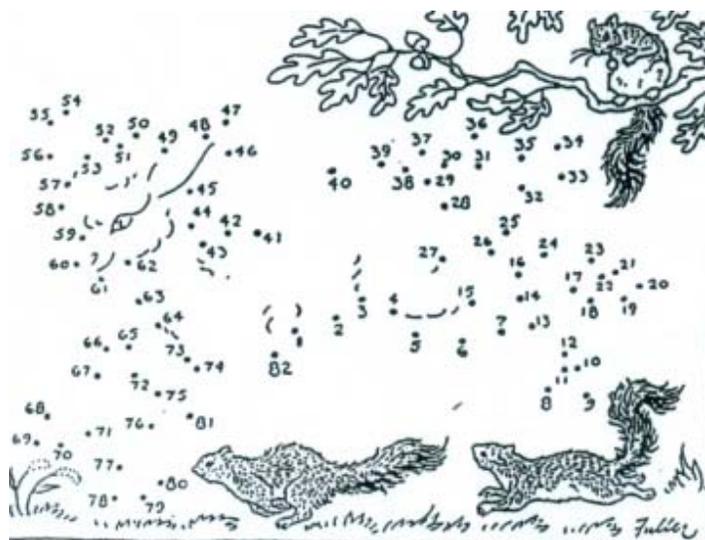
*Golden Text: Judges 14:4.*

*"But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had*

*dominion over Israel."*

*NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned that Samson was blessed of God from his birth. We will now begin our study of how God used him to break the Philistines oppression.*

1. When Samson went to Timnath, what did he tell his parents when he returned? Judges 14:1-2.
2. Were Samson's parents pleased with his report, and what did they not know? Judges 14:3-4.
3. As Samson and his parents went back to Timnath, what incident occurred to show the strength of Samson? Judges 14:5-6.
4. When Samson went to take his wife from the Philistines, what riddle did he put forth to the 30 companions? Judges 14:11-14.
5. They could not expound the riddle in 3 days, so what did they ask Samson's wife to do? Judges 14:15.
6. Did the men tell Samson the answer to the riddle before the seven days were up? Judges 14:18.
7. What did Samson do to again show his great strength, and what happened to his wife? Judges 14:19-20.



*Draw from dot to dot.*

## EXTRA THANKS

By Jean Gould



It was on Monday, coming home from school, that Billy found the little yellow dog. He was standing under a tree in the rain, crying softly. His fur was matted, and little streams of water ran down his nose and off his paws. He stared at Billy with such sad, pleading eyes - there was just nothing to do but stop and pet him. And the next thing Billy knew, he was bringing the pup home, wondering what Mother would say.

One look at the little dog was enough to tell Mother he needed help, and pretty soon the puppy was warm and dry and had a good meal inside him. When Father came home, they decided to put an ad in the paper, and if no one came for the dog, Billy could keep him, "but you will be the one to look out for him Billy" Mother said. And she told him all he must do to care for his pet.

Billy nodded, feeling very important. He gave the dog a bath, fixed a place for him to eat in the kitchen and to sleep in the basement. He listened every time that the phone rang, afraid it might be someone answering Father's ad in the paper.

But no one called, and no one came. So now the little yellow dog belonged to Billy, and he had to choose a name for him.

"Buff would be a good name," said Billy to the little yellow dog one day early in November. The puppy wagged his tail and looked at Billy with big soft brown eyes that looked up from shaggy yellow fur.

"Now, Buff," Billy went on, "You must not chew up slippers or leave any biscuit around or bark all night long."

"Woof" said Buff, which meant, "I'll be a good dog."

Billy fixed Buff's collar, gave a short whistle, and the two of them started down the street together. Billy felt very proud and happy.

Halfway down the block, children started running up to them. A new dog was something special.

"Oh, I say, what a nice dog!" It was Linton, the English boy, who came up first with his twin sister Leslie. "Hello, old fellow!" he said, taking one of Buff's ears in his hand and holding it up. When he let go, the ear flopped down over Buff's eye.

"He's cunning!" laughed Leslie. "What's his name, Billy?" "Buff," said Billy.

Jimmy came up then, and Marjorie and Mary Sue and big Bob. They all crowded around, asking questions about Buff and admiring him. The little dog stood quietly and let everyone pet him, feel his fur and those long ears, and didn't mind a bit.

"He's a good pooch, all right," said big Bob at last. And Billy knew Bob was right.

After that Buff was part of everything that went on. He came running to meet Billy every day when school was out, and the two of them went off together. Buff learned to do tricks like catching a piece of biscuit when Billy tossed it in the air, rolling over on his back, and he would jump through Bill's arms when he held them together like a hoop. Billy felt sure there had never been another dog like Buff.

And then, just three days before Thanksgiving it happened. When Billy came home from school that afternoon, no Buff came running to meet him. "Mother," called Billy, "have you seen Buff?"

"He was outside waiting for you awhile ago," Mother said.

Billy looked all around the house, but there was no sign of Buff. He went down the street calling. "H'yuh, Buff, H'yuh, Buff!" But no little dog came running answering to his call. And no one in the block had seen the little dog either.

Billy was worried. His brothers Todd and Tim, took their bikes and rode around looking, but they couldn't find Buff. Mother called the animal shelter, but they said no lost dogs were turned in that day. When Father came home, he said they must put another ad in the paper, only this time it would be in the "Lost" instead of the "Found" column. Billy felt two big tears coming as he thought of Buff being lost.

For the next two days Billy stayed close to the house when he came home from school, thinking he'd hear some news about Buff. But not a word came; and by Thanks-

giving morning, Billy felt all hope was gone. It was about ten o'clock when he saw the big auto drive up. He saw a man get out and behind him came a little yellow dog. It was Buff! It was his very own Buff!

"Is this the place?" began the man as Billy ran and opened the door. But he couldn't finish. For with a glad bark, Buff jumped up and greeted Billy with great laps of his tongue. And Billy hugged the little dog as hard as he could. "I guess this is the place, all right," laughed the man.

Then he explained that Buff had come home with his dog Spot. "I'd have brought him back before this," the man said, "but I was called out of town. The first thing I did when I got home was to look in the paper for an ad. I guess Spot wanted company, and invited Buff to come home with him!"

The whole family thanked the man for returning Buff. Todd and Tim crowded around Buff, petting and hugging him. "Let's take him outdoors", suggested Todd. And the three boys decided to take a romp in the yard with Buff.

Presently Mother called them to come in and get washed for Thanksgiving dinner. When everyone was around the table, Father gave the blessing the way he always did, offering thanks for food, home, health, and family and God's loving care. He finished, but Billy's lips moved a moment more before he looked up.

"Whats the matter? Did I leave out something, Billy?" asked Father.

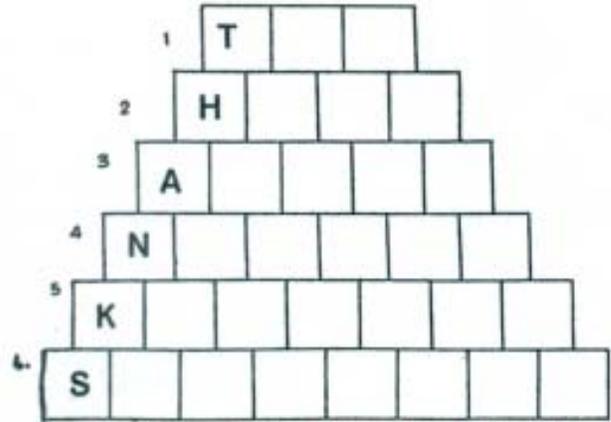
"Oh, no . That was just extra thanks - for Buff!" smiled Billy.

**THANKSGIVING PYRAMIDS**

The two pyramid puzzles are based on the words THANKS and GIVING. Use the clues to fill the rest of the puzzles. Use your Bibles to help find the answers.

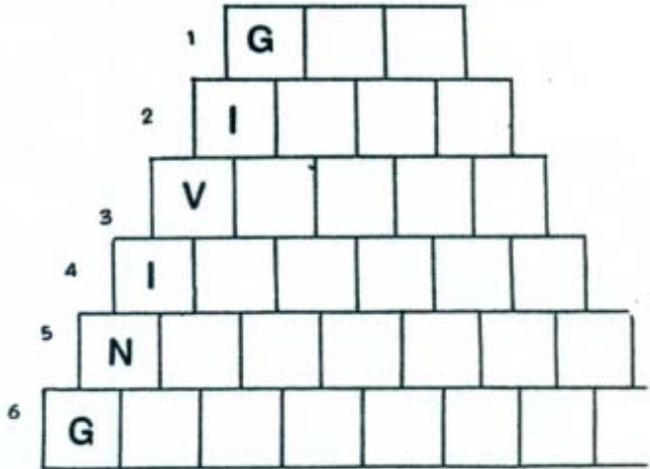
**THANKS**

1. The number of Commandments.
2. David played this musical instrument to entertain Saul. (I Samuel 16:23).
3. A messenger for God. (Genesis 22:11).
4. This is used for sewing. (Psalm 45:14).
5. God's place of rule over the earth. (II Samuel 7:13).
6. Someone who watches and tends to the sheep. (Isaiah 40:11).



**GIVING**

1. The Creator of all living things. (Genesis 1:1).
2. Image or statue that people bow down to instead of God, (Acts 7:41).
3. This is what grapes grow on. (Habakkuk 3:17).
4. The name given to Jacob and his descendants. (Genesis 32:28).
5. The fourth (4th ) book in the Old Testament.
6. All people in the world other than the Jews. (Romans 11:25).



A young deer is lying on a grassy area with scattered brown leaves. The deer is looking directly at the camera with large, upright ears. The background is a mix of green grass and brown autumn leaves.

*AN ANSWER*

*How often we have a problem,  
One we cannot solve on our own;  
And we are forced to ask for assistance,  
But are quietly left alone?*

*"I'll look into it" is always the answer  
When they intend to offer no aid;  
Then forgetting all about us  
And the weak little promise they made.*

*They never consider we are helpless,  
And some things we cannot do for ourselves;  
"I'll look into it" is all they will promise,  
And quietly put us on the shelf.*

*Very often the help that is needed  
Is needed right then, and right there;  
We don't need someone to "look into it",  
What's needed is someone to care.*

*These people are those who "look into" small things,  
When it's within their power to help;  
Like a mirror, when they "look into" something,  
The only thing they see is their self!*

*--Betty Whetstone, (deceased)*

