

JUNE-JULY 1982

# The Good News

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## OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

Are You Building  
**FAMILY  
HARMONY?**

See Page 6



# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

JUNE-JULY 1982

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**COVER:** Real family harmony and joy seem hard to come by in today's world. Yet solid family relationships are possible for Christians who apply certain principles, even when one mate is not a member of God's Church. Read "Special Blessings for Those With Unbelieving Mates," beginning on page 6. Photo by Four by Five.

## Letters

### International Good News begins

We have received the first issue of the French *Good News*. It is absolutely F-A-N-T-A-S-T-I-C! . . . It is a vital tool that will help both the membership and the ministry (some of whom don't speak English). I would like to thank you and your team for all your efforts to make it a success.

Olivier and Sue Carion  
Loveral, Belgium

*Note to readers: In January The Good News began to publish international versions in the French, German, Spanish and Dutch languages. Interested readers whose first language is not English may prefer one of these other editions, and may request subscriptions, in the language of their choice, by writing to the Good News office nearest them.*

### Preparing for "final exams"

It is truly inspiring to our family that each new issue of *The Good News* is more encouraging, more instructive and more lovingly corrective than the last issue! Only through the power of God's Holy Spirit working in you, Mr. [Herbert W.] Armstrong, and in the writers of the *Good News* articles, can you more effectively instruct God's people through this powerful medium. Only through this same Spirit are our minds and hearts more malleable and open to the warning to prepare for "final exams."

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Densmore  
Concord, N.H.

### "Hidden Enemy"

I would like to express my thanks for the many wonderful articles that God has inspired in *The Good News* and other publications of His Work. I especially enjoyed the article by Herbert W. Armstrong, about emotional and spiritual maturity, in the February, 1982, *Good News* ["There's a Hidden Enemy in Your Home!"].

It is a very startling truth that in this world very few people ever grow up emotionally or spiritually. Also of extreme importance is that we must have the proper control over our emotions and rightly direct them in order to fulfill our Christian calling.

It is surely one of the basic proofs of the apostleship of Mr. Armstrong that God is continually revealing His basic truths through him . . .

Stephen Nesdoly  
Hudson Bay, Sask.  
(Continued on page 29)

# How YOU Can Overcome

*How can you overcome and master your human nature? —  
and keep ALL God's commandments?*

By Herbert W. Armstrong

**I** FEEL I must have a real heart-to-heart talk with my family of readers and co-workers, sharing with you thoughts that came to my mind.

It concerns the *most important* thing in life and eternity for you. But at the moment, I was thinking about myself.

Every person — yes, even you — is his own worst enemy. All my life I have been impelled to fight my worst enemy — that troublesome inner *self*, which by nature is desperately wicked.

I was not born with a mild, submissive, weak-willed inner *self*. Had I been, I probably never could have been used as God's instrument in bearing His message to you. My mother, who lived well into her 90s, said I was a very strong-willed boy, and while I was still young enough to be under parental discipline, I caused her and my father no end of trouble.

Since growing into the age of self-discipline, this same evil, determined inner self has caused me no end of trouble. And I should add that since I gave that self over to God, it surely must have tried His patience!

## **The troublesome inner self**

That brings us to the point. The thought that came to my mind concerned this very troublesome inner

self. How, came the question, can I myself ever become finally *saved*, and inherit eternal life in the Kingdom of God, with such a powerful, seemingly irresistible inner force of evil constantly pulling the other way?

When God says "there shall in no wise enter into it [the Kingdom of God] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. 21:27), it surely seemed impossible that I should be able to "overcome" and "endure unto the end."

But the same instant the answer flashed to mind — God will save me!

I can't save myself. When I look at this troublesome, evil self, so human and full of faults and weaknesses, so beset by temptations of pride and the flesh, with all its limitations and shortcomings — knowing that to be finally saved I must GROW in grace and God's knowledge, must develop in righteous holy character, must overcome this *self* and temptations and weaknesses and must *endure* through trial and test and opposition and discouragement unto the end — well, when I look at it that way, it seems utterly HOPELESS to expect ever to be saved.

And I wondered, as this thought flashed through my mind, how many of my readers and co-workers are tempted to look at it the same way — to feel a sense of futility and helplessness

— perhaps to become discouraged and lose faith?

Ah, that's the key word — FAITH!

Our plight isn't hopeless at all!

## **How we shall be saved**

Of course, of ourselves, it *is* impossible to be saved. But with GOD *it is certain* — if we yield to Him and TRUST Him. We shall be saved, *not* by our own power to overcome and develop perfect characters, but through FAITH IN GOD'S POWER!

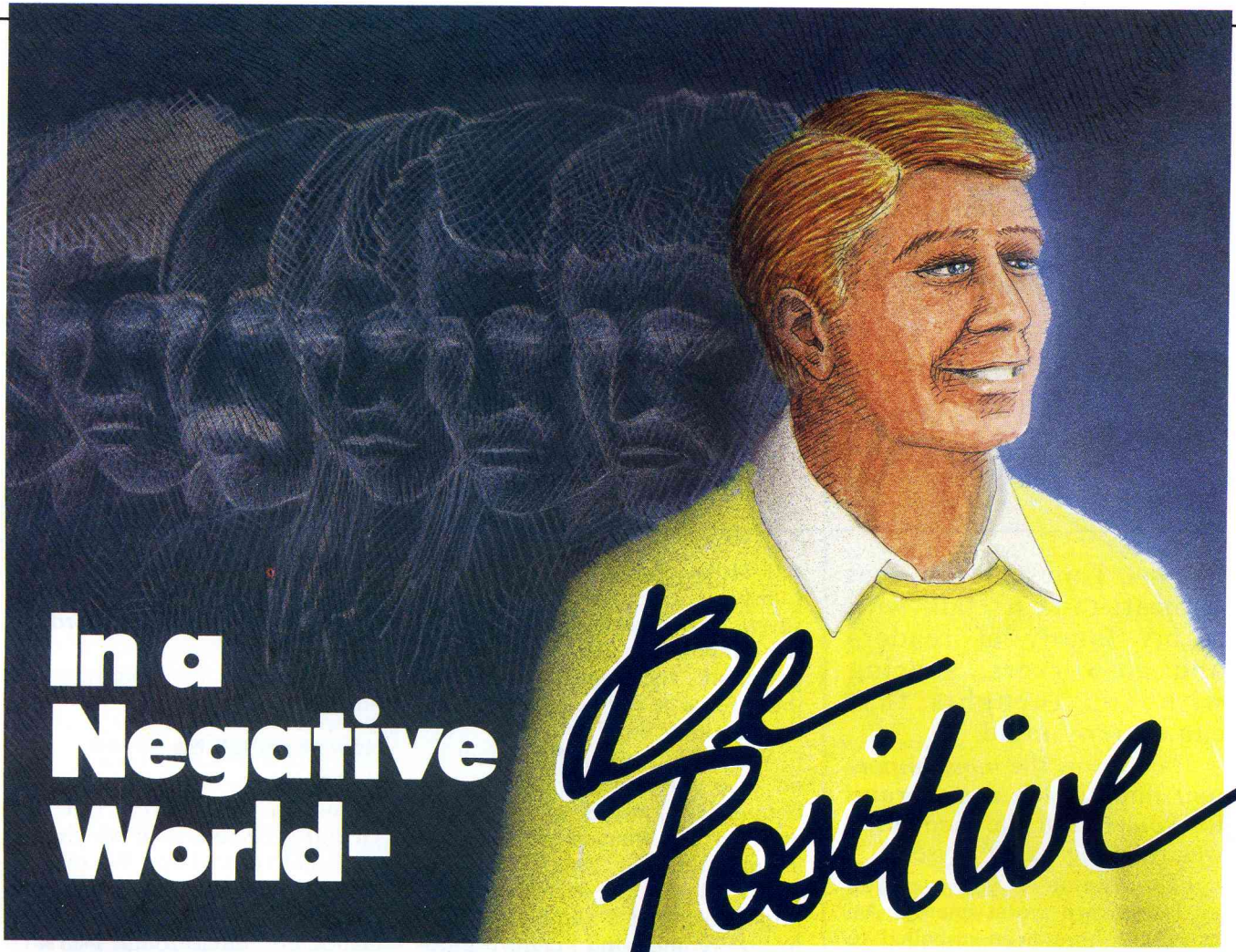
But right here is where 999 out of 1,000 become deceived by the fables of this time. And when the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch!

Because we *can't* save ourselves — we *can't* master the evil inner self — we *can't* always resist every temptation — we *can't* keep God's holy law perfectly — and, of ourselves, we would fail to overcome, to grow in spiritual character and to endure to the end — the false teaching is going out that JESUS DID THESE THINGS FOR US — that we don't need to do them.

Millions today believe that God imputes Jesus' righteousness to us, counting us as righteous when we are *not*!

There couldn't be a more soul-damning delusion of the devil!

No, Jesus didn't live a good life for you, in your stead! You are  
(Continued on page 27)



# In a Negative World-

# Be Positive

By Dibar Apartian

*Here is an important key that can promote your spiritual well-being.*

**W**hat are your first thoughts when you meet someone for the first time? How do you react? What impresses you most? His looks? His voice? The way he is dressed?

What if you already know the person? What is the first thing that crosses your mind when you see him? His faults? A misunderstanding you might have had with him? Perhaps a wrong he has done you?

Do you usually have nice thoughts upon meeting a person, whether an old acquaintance or a stranger?

Be honest. Take time and think before you answer.

And what are your first thoughts when you get up in the morning? Good or bad? Pleasant or distasteful? Are you already haunted by the various problems you will have to face during the day?

It should come as no surprise that much of your well-being depends on your attitude — your frame of mind.

One beautiful morning, as I was walking on the Ambassador College campus in Pasadena, I smiled and greeted a student and said, "Isn't it a beautiful day?" Without hesitation, he answered, "Yes, sir — but it's supposed to be quite smoggy later on!"

How disheartening! But this is the way we often think and reason. Overcome with dread about what is ahead of us, we are oblivious to the beauty that surrounds us. We think of the smog that may set in later, instead of the sunshine we should be enjoying at the moment.

### **The Bible is positive**

Strangely enough, many people can even read the Bible in a negative frame of mind.

First of all, they consider Bible study a repetitious chore — uninteresting — a routine they would gladly do without. Some even have so little understanding that they think the Bible's teachings — primarily the Ten Command-

*Illustration by Monte Wolverton*

ments and the other points of God's law — are negative. They see the "don'ts" rather than the "dos" in God's Word.

Christian growth requires positive thinking and a confident outlook on life. God is positive — His teachings are positive.

Naturally, all of us encounter obstacles — we sometimes face difficult situations in life. But we make ourselves miserable when we stress the problems and difficulties rather than the good side of things, the "all-things-work-together-for-good" aspect (Rom. 8:28).

Read and study the Psalms. Aren't they a source of comfort and consolation? Some people reason differently — they see only the heartaches and physical pains that David, in momentary periods of dejection, expressed in those songs. Actually, every psalm contains a positive teaching.

We human beings have ups and downs. That's normal. But with God's help we can pull ourselves together, control our thoughts, overcome the obstacles and go forward in life, fully convinced that God is our Master, our Protector and our Savior.

Even though you may find in the Psalms some verses with negative overtones — verses where human feelings are expressed — each psalm invariably ends praising God in an uplifting tone.

Take, for instance, Psalm 22. David must have written it at a time of sorrow and distress, for he cries out to God, saying: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent" (verses 1-2).

Admittedly, those are not positive thoughts. But the Psalm doesn't end there. Look what David writes in the following verses, which are filled with hope and encouragement: "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in

thee, and were not confounded" (verses 4-5).

Do you get the point? David didn't dwell long on his problems. He quickly shifted his mind to focus on God and regained confidence.

When you are downcast and negative, try to find reasons to be positive. Count your blessings and tell God how grateful you are to Him for what you have.

Do you know why Christ began what is known as the "Lord's Prayer" — the sample prayer outline we are to follow — with brief statements praising God's power and majesty (Matt. 6:9-13)? Because doing so helps us to build in our minds a strong, positive attitude toward God, even before we address Him about our problems. Indeed, we must first realize that we are speaking to the Creator of the heavens and the earth — the One we call our Father.

The statements "Hallowed be thy name," "Thy kingdom come" and "Thy will be done" practically sum up the whole Gospel. Once your prayer begins with this positive attitude, you can speak with assurance. You have more confidence, more faith, because you realize that the almighty God who hears you can do all things.

However, if you start your prayer with all of your problems, your focus is in the wrong direction. You haven't established a firm relationship with God. That's why sometimes your prayers are of little value, and you feel as though you are just talking to yourself — as though your prayers are not going any higher than the ceiling.

David never doubted God. The Psalms do not express doubts about God.

When David weakened, his doubts were about himself and about his own strength — he wondered whether or not God would come to his rescue. But he never doubted God's power and love. That's one reason David was a man after God's own heart.

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and

verily thou shalt be fed" (Ps. 37:3). If you have this type of an attitude, you will never turn away from God or from His Church.

David further stated, "Delight thyself also in the Lord" (verse 4). How can you delight in the Lord if you are negative? How can you praise God if you have a sad heart and a sad countenance? It's impossible. You cannot delight in the Lord unless you really enjoy life and are positive.

Notice verse 7: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Do you realize that if you lack patience, you end up becoming negative?

You must learn to be patient — to wait patiently in a positive attitude. That's what "rest in the Lord" means. You must be still emotionally, not entertaining doubts or negative thoughts in your mind. God can handle your problems — and He will — if you are still.

Doubting and entertaining negative thoughts in your mind is not remaining still. Take time and think: Could the real cause of your negative, disturbed state of mind be something you've done wrong — something you don't want to admit? Is there something in your life that needs to be changed, but you don't want to make the necessary effort? If that be the case, your prayers won't be answered.

### Job's patience

When you read the book of Job, do you find it negative and rather depressing, what with all Job's complaining and suffering?

Actually, during Job's intense misery, Job never doubted God. He did not truly understand what was happening to him or why. He was having to overcome his self-righteousness. In his temporary discouragement he even wished he could die — he cursed the very day he was born! But Job never doubted God's existence, power and wisdom.

Imagine! After losing almost everything he had — his children as well as all of his material pos-

sessions — Job still kept a positive attitude toward the Creator.

He “rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:20-21).

Notice: Job praised God!

Later, when his wife told him to curse God and die, Job answered: “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips” (Job 2:10).

Job was patient. Despite the many questions he posed, he never doubted God. Amidst his tribulations and lamentations, he said: “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:25-26).

It is human to sometimes doubt one’s relationship with God and to question why things happen. But a true Christian should never doubt God. The best way to maintain your equilibrium is to always keep in mind the reason for your calling. This will give you the courage you need no matter what happens.

The apostle James wrote: “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (Jas. 5:11).

### See beyond the dark days

Today, as world conditions worsen, some in God’s Church allow their minds to dwell too much on the negative aspects of the forthcoming prophesied events. They dread the days of tribulation just ahead.

But why not look beyond those dark days and think of the won-

derful time when Christ will return with power and glory to rule the whole world?

Too many of us forget our blessings and emphasize our difficulties. That’s a sure way to become negative. Learn to be grateful for what you have. See the good in your life and help others see the good in theirs.

Your positive attitude can be a key to the happiness of those around you. Be a stepping-stone and not a stumbling block. Your greatest blessing is that you are called of God to understand His truth — to be a part of His Church!

Are you convinced that you are in the true Church of God? If so, how can you ever turn back — return to the dark world out of which you came?

No, there can be no return for you. God is with you and will always help you — you can count on Him at all times. “The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace” (Ex. 14:14).

This is the promise God gives all of His people. But He can only fight for you if you let Him. In order to “hold your peace” you have to chase all negative thoughts out of your mind.

This doesn’t mean that you have to be inactive or unproductive. To “hold your peace” means to not be anxious — to not worry. If you do your part, God will always do His.

Enjoy life — enjoy being alive. Enjoy the Church. Enjoy the family God has given you. Whatever your problems and trials, take them to God who has promised to fight for you.

Our forefathers, when facing obstacles, constantly doubted God and His intentions. But Moses, their leader, never doubted God. The people wanted to return to Egypt; Moses never did. They wanted to compromise with God’s laws; Moses didn’t.

Don’t ever think about giving up — returning to the world. Don’t ever desire to alter God’s laws — to make them more suitable to your own selfish needs or

life-style. Some are willing to compromise to procure better jobs or have more friends. But when you begin compromising, you also begin doubting God.

The Bible records countless promises God has made to you. But they are conditional. If you don’t respect the conditions, God’s promises won’t be fulfilled in your life. When you forget this, you become negative. Likewise, when you complain and justify yourself — or when you accuse others — you automatically become negative.

### Satan is at work

Why, in God’s Church today, do we have serious problems? Why do some even leave the Body of Christ?

The answer is obvious. All of us are still human and carnal. We are living in a world where Satan — the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4) — will do everything in his power to influence our thoughts, to put doubts in our minds and to persuade us to become negative.

In fact, Satan himself is the most negative being in the whole universe. Do you know why? Because he is a liar (John 8:44) — and liars are cut off from God. Satan accuses the brethren before God’s throne (Rev. 12:10), that makes him all the more negative. He judges and condemns falsely.

Are you occasionally guilty of having the same attitude? Judging, accusing, complaining, criticizing — these are the tools Satan uses to make you negative. He wants you to disbelieve God.

When the Israelites left Egypt, they had every reason to be grateful to God, every reason to be happy and joyful, every reason to count their blessings and to rely on God. However, the very next day after they left Egypt, they began to complain; they had already lost confidence in their Savior. They doubted His intentions and motives.

Things are not much different today as we approach the final

(Continued on page 28)

# What Does 'The Work' Mean to You?

By Richard Rice

**H**ave you ever wondered why we refer to what we do as "the Work"?

Why does Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong use the phrase "the Work" to describe the great commission of God's Church today?

Is this phrase a mere human invention — just a catchall term used to indicate the Church's activities — or is it a title inspired by God and based on biblical instruction? Rest assured that the phrase "the Work of God" is used in the Bible and carries profound significance for us today.

## Work — not play!

The Bible refers to God's Work numerous times, but here is one example: "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is *the work of God*, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29).

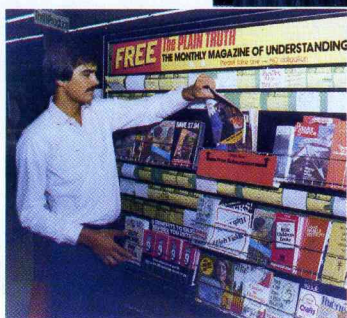
Why is this important?

For years Mr. Armstrong has taught that God has specially called us now to do a job — to proclaim God's Gospel to the world as a witness.

God called and anointed Mr. Armstrong as our human leader to raise up this era of God's Church, to start Ambassador College, to preach and publish the Gospel, to appear before kings and world rulers with God's message and to



**Mr. Armstrong's meetings** with world leaders (shown at left with George Ladas, president of Cyprus), a vast publishing effort in several languages, handling WATS-line responses to literature ads — all part of what is referred to as "the Work."



prepare a people God can use to change the world in the world tomorrow.

We refer to all these activities together as *the Work*.

Notice: It's called *the Work*. Not play!

Not leisure! Not entertainment, but *the Work*!

In this world most people, it seems, feel the greatest achievement is to get away from work and enjoy some personal pleasure or recreation.

But God enjoys work! He rejoices in His works (Ps. 104:31). He greatly desires to finish us as His greatest handiwork (Job 14:15), so we can, under Christ's leadership, rebuild the world, help bring many more sons into God's Family and then go on to other work such as finishing the universe.

Work involves labor, exertion, effort, toil, productivity. Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). Jesus spent His time working — preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, helping people, giving of

most (Matt. 23:11).

Jesus often used the analogy of work to teach lessons about the great commission, as in the cases of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16) and the laborers in the harvest (Luke 10:2). These examples showed the work involved in preparing for God's Kingdom.

In Matthew 24:46, Jesus blesses the faithful servant who will be doing the Work of God when He returns.

## Make the best effort

It seems, then, that in light of the very title God uses to describe His Work, He is exhorting each

of us to step forward and to give our best effort in accomplishing the awesome task at hand. Whatever our jobs or offices, whether we are ministers, deacons, pillars or members of the work crew, we should take this lesson deeply to heart and apply it to our lives.

The next time you hear "the Work" mentioned, remember it's not an ethereal, meaningless phrase. It's a term that beckons us to roll up our sleeves, pick up our tools and go to work! □



Photos: Warren Watson, Scott Smith, Nathan Faulkner



**J**oseph and Moses. David, Hosea and Esther. What did these spiritual pillars all have in common? The answer is surprising!

All were powerful and effective servants of God while their marital partners were unbelieving (Hos. 1:2-3), outside the congregation of Israel (Gen. 41:50, Esther 2:10, 16-17) or just plain hostile (Ex. 4:26, II Sam. 6:20-23).

What eloquent testimony to the opportunities available today for those in the Church of God with nonmember mates!

God specifically promises special blessings for those with husbands and wives outside His Church. What are these blessings? Let's study God's Word to see. Expect some surprises.

#### **A special service**

God carefully spells out that members with unbaptized mates are called to special service in His Work. Notice: "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him" (I Cor. 7:12-13).

How clear and precise. As long



# Special Blessings for Those With Unbelieving Mates

*Do you sometimes feel you're fighting a losing battle with your unconverted husband or wife? Read this encouraging instruction from God's Word.*

By Neil Earle

as the nonbeliever sincerely and seriously desires to maintain a normal family relationship, the marriage should continue.

Why? Why doesn't God imme-

diately call both husband and wife into the Church? Paul says: "But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk.





**Setting a good example, planning wholesome recreation, scheduling special evenings, teaching children about biblical principles — these are a few of the challenges and opportunities open to those with unbelieving husbands and wives. God promises special blessings to those who apply wisdom, humility, tact and selfless concern.**



And so ordain I in all churches” (verse 17).

Why is God so emphatic here? Why did Paul rule that, all other things being equal, members married to nonmembers should stay together? Notice verse 16: “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”

The potential payoff in a non-member-mate situation is the possibility that an unbelieving husband or wife will someday respond to God’s calling. Notice I said “someday.” But we are “now” people, forgetting that one of our God’s names is “the Eternal.” As Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong says, the Eternal has plenty of time. Patiently persevere.

Why does God choose to work this way sometimes? Remember when Jesus came to His hometown of Nazareth? The Bible records that “he did not many mighty works there because of

their unbelief” (Matt. 13:58). Why? Prejudice and preconceived opinions can block the flow of God’s Spirit (Acts 7:51).

Consider your mate. Wrong examples, disillusioning childhood experiences, misplaced hopes, blinding materialistic pursuits, sheer hardness of heart — these can make it difficult for people to respond to a direct call from God (Heb. 3:7-8). So God sometimes uses the indirect approach. No one is more clever, subtle and skillful than the Master Designer of the universe (Dan. 2:20).

Outstanding Christian character has impact (Matt. 5:14). Many with mates outside God’s Church have so transformed themselves by the molding and

fashioning influence of God’s Spirit (Rom. 12:2) that they are beacons of God’s way. Their mates have come up against the most irresistible force in this universe, the power of God’s Spirit flowing out in kindness, gentleness and patience (II Tim. 1:7, Gal. 5:22).

Hundreds reading this article have seen God’s hand at work in this complex situation. God would love to do the same for all of us (Eph. 3:20). On one condition. Here is the great caution God’s ministers offer to those with unbelieving mates: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:5).

### **God must do the calling**

Don’t take matters into your own hands (Prov. 21:30). Forget trying to engineer your mate’s conversion. Mr. Armstrong has for years emphasized John 6:44: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”

Realize the deep implications of that verse. Leave the calling in God’s hands. No human has the eloquence, the skill, the prowess to accomplish what God hasn’t yet accomplished.

Oh, how tempting it is for wives or husbands to “accidentally” leave certain *Good News* or *Plain Truth* articles displayed on the coffee table in the hope that their mates will happen to see them and — presto! — “join the Church.”

How clever it seems to go along with a husband’s or wife’s social pursuits in the hope that he or she might feel somehow obligated to attend the next Church activity!

How many men and women try to subtly steer conversations their way so they can end by offering a foolproof (they think) list of arguments for the Church!

Avoid these carnal gambits! “This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying

and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (Jas. 3:15-16). Such strategies usually boomerang miserably.

Remember, giving to get something in return is not God's kind of giving (Acts 20:35). That is mere merchandising. Respect your mate's position. God does. He forces no one to go His way. Man can choose not to obey.

Yet God does, however, look for opportunities to attract others to the truth through the sincere, selfless, submissive examples of His people (John 1:40-41).

I Corinthians 7:16 is God's statement of intent in such cases.

Not a few of those once overtly hostile to God's truth are now deeply committed members.

Miracles happen. There are always the bitter, incorrigible cases, the Nabals who do not learn (I Sam. 25:25), who threaten the physical and spiritual survival of God's begotten children. Such cases need to be brought to the ministry.

Yet, still, our primary job is to change ourselves, not our mates (Matt. 7:5). Never forget that through the workings of God's Spirit in our minds, God can reach people otherwise imperious to His call. Place the onus upon yourself to set the example of optimism, stability, discretion and efficiency. God will help (Jas. 1:5).

### God may use your mate

There is still more. Members with nonbelieving mates are already serving God in ways they perhaps don't realize. Consider this: How many people who would not listen to a *World Tomorrow* broadcast or subscribe to *The Plain Truth* receive a personal witness because they are friends or associates of your husband or wife?

"You know John's wife? Well, she belongs to that Worldwide Church of God — you know, the group that keeps Saturday and other Jewish festivals."

"Now keep this to yourselves, girls, but I hear that Mildred's husband has joined some religious



group that believes Europe will attack the United States. Can you believe it?"

"I don't agree with your wife's religion, Hank, but it certainly seems to have changed her for the better!"

Get the picture? God may often use your mate's unconverted status to spread more of His truth into more lives and can further the Gospel in ways you might not know (Ezek. 33:30).

Nonmember mates have numerous business and social contacts they might not have as baptized members. Unwittingly, they are often used to advertise God's Work in many more lives simply because they aren't members.

Don't be surprised if the talk about your "strange religion" (at which your husband or wife might even take potshots behind your back) sows seeds that will eventually sprout (Eccl. 11:6).

Don't limit yourself. God can use your mate's nonmember status to shine His light into nooks

and crannies of this world that a broadcast or magazine might not penetrate.

Open your eyes to God's hand in your life. Catch the vision (Prov. 29:18). Set a good example for your husband or wife's friends and associates. Quit wasting time idealizing out of all proportion the marriages where both mates are members. We all have our problems (Eccl. 7:20).

God knows your situation. If He hasn't changed it yet, trust Him to know what He is doing (I Cor. 1:25). One day we will learn that the great, magnificent God was far ahead of us all along (Job 42:2-3). Is that really so hard to believe?

### What about children?

What about the blessings God extends to the children of members with unbelieving mates?

It should be encouraging to note that the scripture explaining how the children in God's Church are "holy" applies to those in this

situation: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (I Cor. 7:14).

How does God bless entire families if only one mate is baptized? Through financial stability, employment opportunities, healings and special protection (Prov. 11:11). Many case histories in God's Church testify to this solid truth.

Yet God often works a special work in the offspring of those with nonbelieving mates (Prov. 11:21). Many are the young people inspired by parents battling for their beliefs in uphill struggles against antagonistic mates. Sometimes it prods them to think more deeply about God's Church at an earlier age than they would if both parents attended.

They learn to "count the cost" (Luke 14:28). Early. The ratio of children departing from the Church of God is not unusually high in the cases of those with only one parent converted. Ask your minister!

This should be inspiring. Was John Mark's father ever a member? Probably not. Only his mother is mentioned in scripture. Yet she was a vital part of the early Church (Acts 12:12). What did righteous, capable Kings Azariah, Hezekiah and Josiah have in common? All three were the products of righteous mothers who steeled their sons in God's ways even while their fathers were weak, wicked or both (II Kings 15:1-3, 18:1-3, 22:1-2). No easy task in a time when the wrong word or look from a king spelled instant death!

These noble mothers remind us there is sometimes more intensity and sincerity in training children the right way when only one mate is a believer. There is a strong prod to make the most of every day.

### **Fathers: Lead the family**

Fathers, if your wife resents your family Bible studies, compensate for it by setting a vibrant,

enthusiastic example at the supper table (Prov. 15:7). Does your mealtime conversation sparkle? Are you a lift to everyone's day (Prov. 12:18)?

Do your children look forward to your coming home? Are you the one they're going to remember as the real fireball of the family, the one who planned the fun activities, the one they could count on for a friendly word or a pep talk when necessary (Matt. 5:13)?

Or do you selfishly bemoan your life situation and miss the daily opportunities to show your offspring that God's way of life is truly the abundant life (John 10:10)? Remember, enthusiasm is contagious. Our children will remember how we live.

Ask God to help you shed false pride and worldly concepts of masculinity. Humbly beseech God to help you guide your children. Learn to express love and warmth.

Serve your family. Plan the right balance of wholesome recreational activities. Utilize sports, athletics and family outings to shrewdly drive home basic lessons: Nothing good comes without effort. Lose gracefully. Persevere. Plan wisely. This is more effective than preaching or lecturing.

Surround your children with a warm, hearty, masculine exuberance for life and its challenges and, when bedtime comes, occasionally kneel down and lead them in thanksgiving to their spiritual Father who blesses, protects and teaches us. Few women will resent this!

Many men with wives hostile to the Church outflank the problem by just such a strategy (Prov. 24:5). They are richly blessed. Their children know who the happy parent is in their family. Do yours?

### **Mothers: Instill biblical principles**

Women with nonmember mates can work with their children on simple areas of godly conduct such as basic table manners, politeness, respect for elders, punctuality, orderly

schoolwork and successful performance of chores. These are biblical principles.

Wisely schedule the time for Bible lessons you want to cover. Appreciate your husband's sensitivities and sore spots. Pick a time when your mate will not feel like the Church is competing with him in his involvement with the family. What to do on Friday night is usually a puzzler here.

Why not make some Friday nights theme nights? Take music, for example. Plan a relaxing hour listening to the more lasting, uplifting, inspirational masterpieces that add tone and dignity to the Sabbath. Do some homework. Brush up on the subject. Serve snacks afterward. This might lead to a discussion about some profitable area of life that your husband would enjoy sharing.

Or what about family photograph albums? What better way to count your blessings some Friday night than to reminisce about your trips, travels, life opportunities or even your family tree? This can lead to wholesome, godly discussions on thankfulness, looking on the bright side, changing times, customs, morality. But stay on top of the situation by first seeking wisdom from God (Jas. 1:5).

### **Your special calling**

Refuse to be pushed around by life's circumstances (Prov. 24:10). God called you alone and you can make it on your own, with His help, if you have to.

Look upon your mate's nonmember status as your extra incentive to develop tact, wisdom, resourcefulness. Refuse to indulge in self-pity. Wake up to your opportunities.

God, by placing you in the special category of bearing His way of life before your family's scrutiny and daily observation, has given you a terrific vote of confidence.

How? Because, calling you in that way, He knew you could handle it, with His help (I Cor. 7:24). What a special calling you have. Make the most of it! □

# Can You Trust the Grapevine?

*How should we view unofficial information that comes to us through several people?*

By Bill Butler

**Y**ou may have heard about how a certain military message became garbled in transmission. The story goes something like this:

It seems an important colonel gave the following set of instructions to his second-in-command:

“Major Healy, at 0900 tomorrow there will be an eclipse of the sun, something that doesn’t occur every day. Have the company fall in on the street in fatigues to see this rare

phenomenon. I will explain it to the men. If it should rain, we won’t be able to see the eclipse, so have the men muster in the gym.”

The major, in turn, passed this on to Captain Drew:

“Captain Drew, the colonel has ordered an eclipse of the sun for 0900 tomorrow. If it rains, you won’t be able to see it from the street, so the eclipse will take place in the gym, in fatigues. Naturally this doesn’t happen every day.”

The captain passed it on to the lieutenant:

“Lieutenant Allen, tomorrow at 0900 the colonel will hold an eclipse of the sun in the gym. This doesn’t happen every day. If the colonel gives the order for rain, muster will take place in fatigues in the street.”

The lieutenant gave this message to the sergeant:

“At 0900 tomorrow the sun will eclipse the colonel in fatigues in the company gym. If it rains in the gym, you will fall out in the street.”

Finally the sergeant told the men:

“OK, men, if it rains tomorrow, the sun will eclipse the colonel in the gym. It’s a shame that doesn’t happen every day!”

Obviously, the facts became muddled. Information often becomes increasingly confused — even distorted — each time it changes hands. And so it is with reports or stories passed along the “grapevine.”

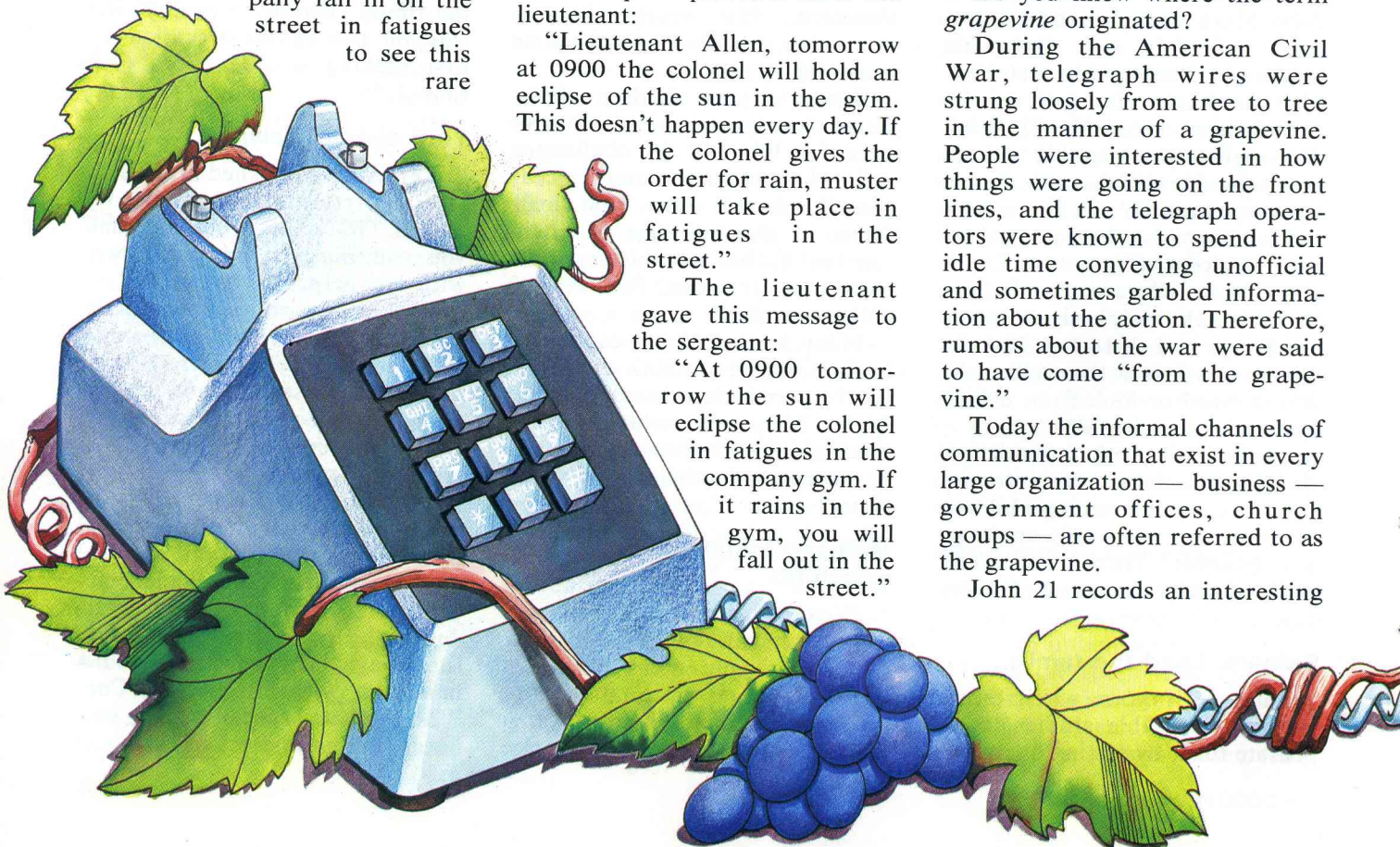
## Information distorted

Do you know where the term *grapevine* originated?

During the American Civil War, telegraph wires were strung loosely from tree to tree in the manner of a grapevine. People were interested in how things were going on the front lines, and the telegraph operators were known to spend their idle time conveying unofficial and sometimes garbled information about the action. Therefore, rumors about the war were said to have come “from the grapevine.”

Today the informal channels of communication that exist in every large organization — business — government offices, church groups — are often referred to as the grapevine.

John 21 records an interesting



example of the grapevine at work. Jesus was telling Peter about what Peter could expect in the future (verses 18-19). Peter then asked Christ what would happen in John's future.

Jesus answered, "If I choose that he should survive till I come back, what does that matter to you?" (verse 22, Moffatt version).

This started a "saying" (King James Version) or, as the Moffatt version words it, a "report" among the brethren that John would not die.

This, of course, was not what Jesus said at all: "Jesus, however, did not say he was not to die; what he said was, 'If I choose that he should survive till I come back, what does that matter to you?'" (verse 23).

We today are susceptible to passing on or believing information that comes through the grapevine, just as people were during the early New Testament Church.

Let's look at some of the difficulties in grapevine communication.

### Exact words not used

Stories or messages frequently become less complete as they are retold. One communications expert says that after a story has changed hands four times, it often retains less than 5 percent of the original details. However, even when a story is retold completely, if exactly the same words are not used, the meaning can have a totally different impact.

For example, suppose a young man was advised to whisper the following sweet sentiment into his fiancée's ear: "Darling, to look in your eyes makes time stand still for me." But he forgets the exact words and says, instead, "Darling, you have a face that would stop a clock!" Not the same thing at all!

As you can see, we must be careful how we hear something and how we repeat it.

Other problems arise when extra, unfounded details are added to a story. You may have played the game where someone whispers a message to one of a group of people in a room. The person who heard the message whispers it to the next person and so on, until the message has gone around the room. When the last person repeats aloud the message he heard, it is seldom the same as the one the group started with! Details have been omitted, confused or added.

Confusing or omitting is especially serious when dealing with God's words. From the beginning, however, man has been changing and adding to what God says.

One example of such an addition is found in I John 5:7-8: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*"

Did you know that not one of the words italicized in these verses is found in any of the accepted New Testament Greek manuscripts? The words were added in the fourth century by a monk copyist who wanted to "prove" the false doctrine of the trinity.

(For a more detailed explanation of these scriptures and the trinity doctrine, write for our free article entitled "The God Family and the Holy Spirit.")

Revelation 22:18 warns about the serious consequences of adding to God's Word in this way:

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." See also Deuteronomy 4:2.

### Changing the emphasis

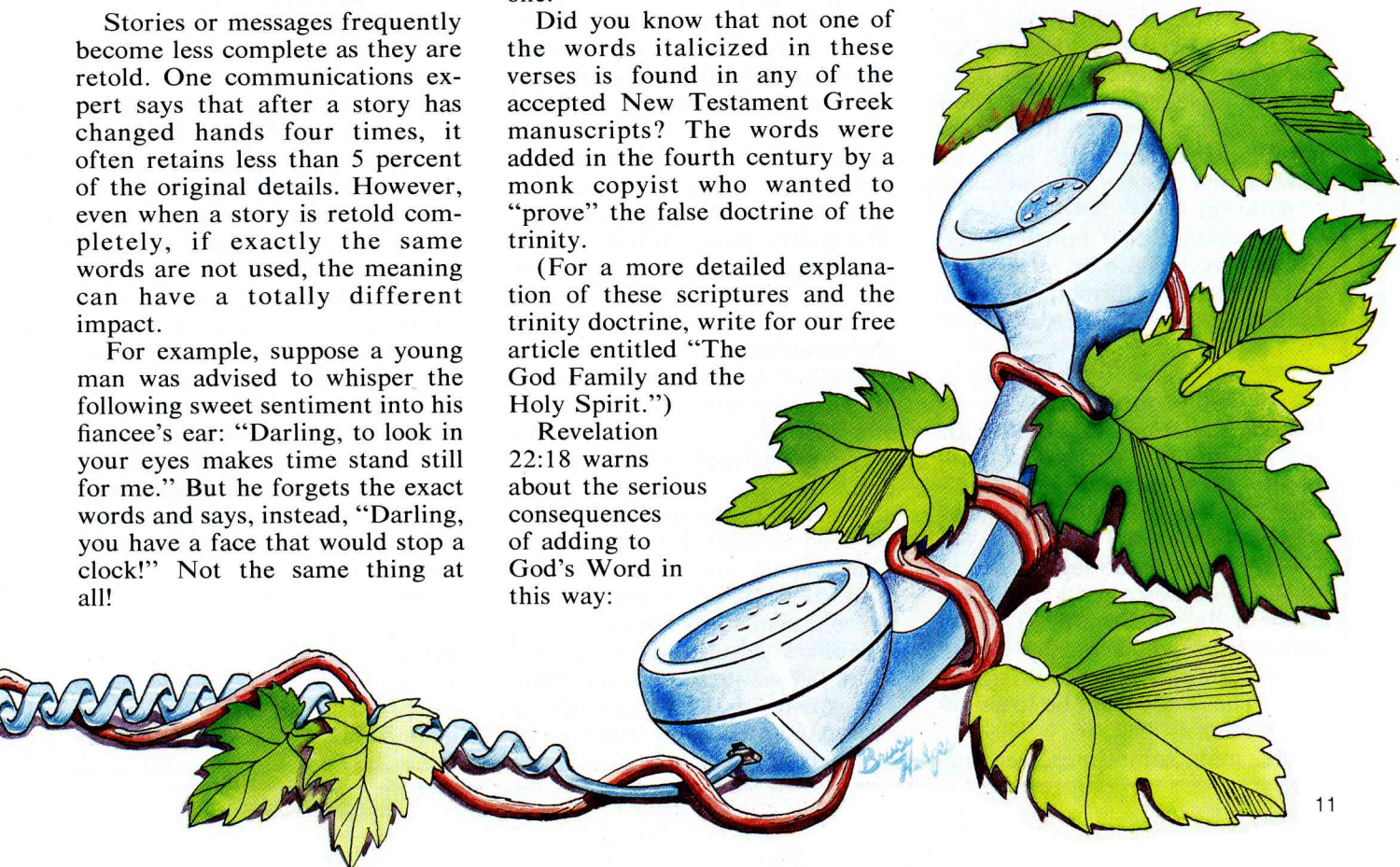
Even if a story is told completely and not embellished with additional information — even if the same words are used — the meaning can still be altered by a change in emphasis.

Take the story of the U.S. senator who was offended when a fellow senator called him a liar. When the senator demanded an apology, the offending party said: "Mr. Jones, I called you a liar it's true. I'm sorry."

But after these words were passed on through a few others, the emphasis was misplaced and the "apology" sounded like this: "Mr. Jones, I called you a liar! It's true! I'm sorry." Same words, but the reemphasized version sounded like a reaffirmation of the original statement rather than an apology.

The translators of the King

Illustration by Bruce Hedges



James Version of the Bible confused the real meaning of Luke 23:43 by inadvertently shifting the emphasis: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

It should read: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise."

This slight change alters the whole meaning of the sentence in an important way. The first version implies that the thief would be in paradise with Christ that very day. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Christ was looking into the distant future and making a prophecy — not making a statement about that day. No man has ascended into heaven, and the "paradise" to which Christ referred was not necessarily heaven in the first place! For more information, write for our free booklet, *What Is the Reward of the Saved?*

### Counterfeit information

Even when we convey a story correctly, we should be sure that passing the information on is appropriate. A story may be understood well enough and even conveyed well enough that none of the distortions mentioned above occur. However, it still may not be proper for us to pass the information on at that time — or at any time.

Information distributed by the wrong person could be referred to as counterfeit information. It's a good deal like counterfeit money.

Do you know what makes a dollar bill counterfeit? Is it because something is wrong with the printing — perhaps a low-quality ink or paper was used? No, that of itself would not make money counterfeit.

For money to be legitimate, it must be authorized by the government. In other words, it is the source from which money comes that determines whether it is genuine. The same can be true of information.

We may sometimes become

privity to information that may be true, but which should be conveyed only by someone in authority.

For instance, we in God's Church may somehow hear certain "news" from headquarters in Pasadena; the "news" may be the type of information our local pastor should announce. Even if it is good news, we should not upstage the minister whose responsibility it is to make formal announcements on certain subjects.

We may not present the information in the proper context, or we may not have the proper background information. When the proper person makes a statement in the appropriate forum, the statement has the maximum chance of being complete and accurate.

### Bridling the tongue

The grapevine is often used — innocently, we think — to convey interesting stories about people or occurrences. However, such stories may defame another person's character or cause him to be viewed in a bad light. A careless comment or negative story can undermine other people's confidence in a brother or sister in God's Church and can cause divisions in Christ's Body.

The Bible offers many serious warnings against using our tongues and ears inappropriately. The apostle Paul labeled backbiters unrighteous (Rom. 1:29-30). But in Psalms we're told that refraining from backbiting is righteousness (Ps. 15:1-3). Backbiting means to speak evil of an absent party or to slander. This is one of the worst uses of the grapevine method of communication.

When we hear blatant slander, we need to apply Proverbs 25:23: "The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue."

Human nature wants to talk about bad news, carry evil reports and gossip, rather than talking about such positive subjects as news about growth in the Work

or new truths Christ uses His apostle to reveal.

We should always keep in mind what we are told in James 1:26: "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

Also read James 3:2-8, which shows the damage we can cause by misusing our tongues.

### Edify and uplift

We as Christians should exercise the right and proper uses of communication. God's Word instructs us about these uses as well.

God wants us to spread encouraging and positive news — and there is a lot of that about God's Work at this time. "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" (Prov. 25:25).

God is putting His Church back on the right track and preparing the Church as a bride for Christ when He returns. Good news is all around us! And that news is what this magazine strives to present.

Romans 14:19 tells us to "follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

And God inspired the apostle Paul to write, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Eph. 4:29).

If we practice positive and uplifting conversation with one another in true Christian fellowship, God will bless us: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Mal. 3:16).

Spreading news from person to person is not evil in itself, but we should be careful that the news we spread is accurate and edifying and that we are the ones who should be spreading it. □

# Christ's Letter to You!

*Suppose you received a special-delivery letter from Christ Himself, containing instruction and encouragement especially for you today. Incredible? Well, you HAVE received just such a letter!*

By David Albert

**I**t's true! We are incredibly blessed to have received a special letter from Christ to all of us in God's Church at this time.

It is a personalized message, announcing a fabulous opportunity, making four inspiring promises and including a stern admonition. And this letter is entirely positive, containing no words of criticism.

This letter, to the Philadelphia era of God's Church, is found in Revelation 3:7-13.

It may be only seven verses long, but it is packed with meaning for all of us.

## **Know the Author**

To fully appreciate this letter, you must first get acquainted with its Author, who describes Himself as He is today in Revelation 1:10-20. Read this dazzling description of the living Jesus Christ before you attempt to drink in of His message.

Understand the mystery of the seven stars and the golden candlesticks, which represent the seven eras of God's Church to exist, in succession, from the first century until Christ's Second Coming (verse 20). Note that Christ iden-

tifies Himself from the beginning as being "in the midst of the seven candlesticks" (verse 13), His Church through the centuries.

Compare Matthew 16:18 and 28:20. Christ promised to build His true Church and to be with it to the end of the age. And Christ *is* with us today, guiding our activities and helping and inspiring us to endure until the end.

When you have thoroughly familiarized yourself with the divine Author of the letters to the seven church eras, you are ready to study the letter God wrote to us — to the Philadelphia era.

Each letter begins with a salutation in which Jesus Christ, the living Head of God's Church through the centuries, identifies Himself to each church era. He does so each time in a different manner. In the cases of the first five churches, He does so by referring to parts of the description you read in Revelation 1 — the stars, the candlesticks, the sword.

But now notice: The salutation of the letter to the church of Philadelphia is altogether different. Entirely new concepts are introduced. This letter to the Philadelphia era is different from the others from the outset, and the more familiar you become with it, the more you

will realize how different it is in every respect.

## **The key and the door**

The first verse of our letter (Rev. 3:7) introduces two hitherto unmentioned concepts, the key of David and the open and closed door. What are these items, and why do they suddenly appear here in the letter to the sixth era? Now we begin to see the unique message to our Church today.

You can't be in God's Church today without knowing something of the key of David. Luke 1:32-33 is a good place to begin to unlock this vital truth. Luke shows that God the Father is going to give to this same Jesus Christ, about whom we have been reading, "the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever."

We in God's Church know what that means. We know that the throne of David has continued to our day, and that Christ is coming to sit on that very throne and rule over the house of Israel. We also know the modern identity of Israel, which is one of the great keys to unlocking the meaning of Bible prophecy. For more information, write for our free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.

Because we have this key, we

know that most Bible prophecies are written to and about Israel in the last days of this age. We know God wants a warning message sent to Israel (Isa. 58:1), and we know who those people are so we can focus our Work on them.

The Sardis era of God's Church would not accept this all-important truth when God used Herbert W. Armstrong to reveal it. It was, in part, over this key of truth that Mr. Armstrong was forced to sever his relationship with the Church of that era.

Isn't it fascinating, then, that this is the very first concept Christ uses to identify Himself to our Church? It was one of the main truths that separated the fifth and sixth eras of God's Church, the one that opened Mr. Armstrong's eyes to the meaning of Bible prophecy and the Work he was to do.

What about the open door? The phrase *open door* indicates an opportunity to preach the Gospel (I Cor. 16:9, II Cor. 2:12). Christ is indicating here that this Philadelphia church has an opportunity, as no other era has had, to preach the Gospel.

What a stark contrast with other eras when it was often punishable by death to even own a Bible! By comparison we have had, from the beginning of our era, the printed word coupled with the use of electronic media to preach the Word with power. In addition, we have enjoyed, in the United States, freedom of religion, freedom of the press and the abundant prosperity needed to do the Work (compare the poverty of at least one earlier era — Revelation 2:9).

This remarkable and rare combination of circumstances makes possible, at this time in the history of God's Church, this special opportunity to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations.

### **Behold the "Beholds"!**

Notice verse 8: "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door." *Behold*

means "look at, pay attention to, take special notice of."

Please do! Compare what Christ says about the works of the other church eras. Nowhere does He say "Behold" of their works. Christ uses the word *behold* four times in our letter.

Yes, our Work today is something to behold. There has not been anything else like it in the history of God's Church through the ages. We should take care not to become casual with our commission. God Himself tells us to take special note of and be prop-

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erly impressed with what He is doing in our time.

"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev. 3:8). No human being can stop this Work. Jesus Christ, God's all-powerful Son, has promised to keep the door of this Work open until He is ready to close it, after which no man could possibly open the door again. Preaching the Gospel as a witness to all nations is essential to God's purpose.

But does this imply that the Philadelphia church will be big and powerful? No. Christ reminds us, "for thou hast [only] a little strength" (verse 8). With a membership of less than 100,000 worldwide, we are seen by the world as only a tiny sect. But our voice and our message

are out of proportion to our small size; God greatly multiplies our power and effectiveness in many ways.

Verse 8 concludes with the reasons why we are able to accomplish much in God's service. God says, "Thou . . . hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

The Philadelphia church has always been known by God's name. We are called "The Church of God," unlike other churches that leave God out of their names and instead use the name of a man, a doctrine, a method or a type of church government. The Philadelphia church takes the Bible literally and lives by it, keeps God's commandments and uses God's name in its official title.

### **Special promises**

What follows in verses 9 and 10 of Revelation 3 are the first two of four special promises in this letter. These promises are introduced with, again, that attention-getting word *behold*.

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

The "synagogue of Satan" is nothing other than Satan's false churches. Saying they are Jews simply means claiming to be God's true, chosen people (Rom. 2:28-29). They are not, of course, "but do lie."

That part of verse 9 is easy enough to understand, but God repeats the "Behold" when He tells us what He's going to make these false spiritual Jews do in the future: "Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet."

How could human beings worship other human beings without



committing idolatry? There is only one possible explanation. Those being worshiped will have been changed from human to divine. They will have become God! The Philadelphia church knows that this is, precisely, our incredible human potential. If there were no other verses in the Bible to do so, this verse would suffice to reveal our destiny as the literal sons of God. This Church knows the ultimate purpose of human life.

Our free publications *Why Were You Born?* and *The Incredible Human Potential* explain in detail these truths. You may have these publications by writing to our office nearest you.

What does God want the false churches to learn from worshipping before those of us who have been changed into literal, spirit-born sons of God? Notice: "That I have loved thee."

God loves this Church. Soon He will make all humanity know just how much He loves and cares for this Church that is so special in His sight.

When Christ speaks to the other church eras, He has some word of criticism or, in some cases, harsh rebuke for each. Notice Revelation 2:4, where Christ speaks to the Ephesian era: "I have somewhat against thee." Revelation 2:14 and 20, to Pergamos and Thyatira respectively: "I have a few things against thee."

Notice Revelation 3:1: Christ simply tells the Sardis era that they are spiritually dead, and in Revelation 3:16-17 He describes the Laodiceans as "lukewarm" and "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

If God felt thus about the Philadelphia church, He would say so plainly, for He is not bashful about giving criticism where it is due. How remarkable, then, that we find no such words of criticism or rebuke in our letter. The letter is entirely positive, indicating God's pleasure with this Church that He Himself says He loves dearly.

Isn't it, therefore, sadly ironic

that human beings influenced by this Church's unseen enemy — Satan — become filled with bitterness and resentment and then attack and criticize the Church and Work against which God Himself does not take the opportunity to speak? Don't ever become a part of such Satan-inspired attacks on God's Church (Rev. 12:10). Don't criticize the Church God says He loves.

But what is to become of the Philadelphia church in the future when the world stands on the brink of the final holocaust? Will

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What does God want the false churches to learn from worshipping before those of us who have been changed into literal, spirit-born sons of God? Notice: "That I have loved thee." God loves this Church. Soon He will make all humanity know just how much . . .

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we, too, have to suffer in the Great Tribulation?

No! That is the second of the four special promises. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10). We will be protected in the tumultuous days ahead, but there are some important qualifications we need to understand.

Unfortunately, the first part of this phrase in verse 10 is not clearly translated in the King James Version. A clearer translation is found in the Phillips version, which reads, "Because you have obeyed my call to patient endurance . . ." That makes it much plainer.

To qualify for God's protection, we must heed God's instruction to endure to the end. As Christ says in Matthew 24:13, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." We must endure, hang on, persevere, overcome, hold fast.

A place of protection for the Church that has been faithful will be provided (Rev. 12:14). There God will protect the Philadelphia church from Satan's wrath during the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. In that place we will experience final preparation and additional growth before Christ's Second Coming.

### **The word of admonition**

Next comes the letter's principal word of instruction or admonition, prefaced by another "Behold." Here is a stern admonishment: "Behold, I come quickly: *hold* that *fast* which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11).

Christ is here telling us, "Look, I'm coming soon!" We don't have long to wait. We dare not say, "My lord delayeth his coming," as we know some will (Matt. 24:48). Instead we should say with Christ, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Why should we endure to the end? Why hold fast? Christ supplies the answer in no uncertain terms: "That no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11). If you don't endure to the end, someone else will take your crown, your reward, your office and position in the Kingdom of God. Why? Because you won't be there!

Is it selfish to want your reward in God's Kingdom? Was the apostle Paul selfish because he looked forward to receiving his crown (II Tim. 4:7-8)? Paul was coming to the end of his work and ministry. He knew his death was imminent (verse 6), but he also knew that "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." Clear-

ly, Paul was looking forward to his reward, and that's not bad or wrong. God intends that the promise of our reward serve to stimulate and inspire us, to help us endure in the face of strong opposition.

But we shouldn't just want to "get ours" alone. We should also want to see the other faithful servants of God receive their rewards. Paul did: "And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (verse 8).

One of our greatest rewards will be to see our fellow saints and brethren receive their crowns and be told, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21). What a time of happiness that will be!

### **The final two promises**

One would think, perhaps, that after all the positive and inspiring things Christ has already said in this letter, He would end on a note of admonition or instruction. But no, Christ gives two additional promises for our encouragement.

Notice the first of them in verse 12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." Pillars, according to Galatians 2:9, are leaders. We are called to be leaders in God's coming Kingdom, serving at His very headquarters.

And there is a reason for this: We, perhaps more than the Christians in any other church era, have been trained to understand the "headquarters" concept of government. We have been well organized and have been trained in God's administrative system of doing things.

Much can be said about pillars from a structural standpoint as well. Pillars are typically main features of a building, as they are on the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena, the building dedicated to God's glory. They are the mainstays and uprights. They are both beautiful and functional.

Two features of pillars deserve special attention:

1) They can support weight such as a roof or ceiling. They stand up under the load — take pressure — and are even more stable when they do so.

2) They can stand alone if necessary. They don't need lateral support if they are placed squarely on the foundation. When all the other parts of a building are gone, the pillars can still be standing even centuries later.

There's a lesson in that for all of us. We, too, are commanded to "Stand therefore" and "having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13-14).

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Why should we endure to the end? . . . Christ supplies the answer in no uncertain terms: "That no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11). If you don't endure . . . someone else will take your crown . . . in the Kingdom of God. Why? Because you won't be there!

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Once in God's Kingdom, we will "go no more out" (Rev. 3:12). This doesn't mean we will be captives in God's capital city. Far from it! We will travel through the universe in God's service. But the phrase, no doubt, is used here as in I John 2:19: "They went out from us, but they were not of us," speaking of those who leave God's Church.

In other words, we will never fall away or lose our positions once we have attained them. We will be eternally safe and secure. That isn't true for us yet, as we know.

### **Our new names**

The final promise concerns our new names. Revelation 3:12 reveals them: "And I will write upon him the name of my God,

and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

As God's sons we will all bear the family name of God. We will also be called by the name of the new Jerusalem, which will indicate where and how we serve. We will also bear Christ's new name as His brethren and fellow servants of His Father.

In addition, we will probably have our own new names as indicated in Revelation 2:17. No doubt these names will describe us well and be fitting for our talents, works and accomplishments. They will be beautiful names to hear — titles of honor and distinction forevermore.

Think of it: This name will be yours alone. No one else will go by it. It will identify you for who and what you are for all eternity. Won't it be fascinating to see what new names God has in mind for all of us?

### **"Let him hear"**

The final verse of the letter Christ wrote to us offers the same admonition Christ directs at all the other church eras: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This means we should be aware of the letters to each of the seven churches — that we should avoid any of the problems and errors described in them.

But it is especially important to deeply understand the letter Christ has written to our Philadelphia era.

Can you hear this message? Can you receive it in all its intended fullness and rich meaning? Are you inspired by it? Will you respond to it as God intends you to, with good works and steadfast endurance? Will this letter Christ has written especially for you and me today shape our thinking and our doing?

If so — if we're faithful and endure to the end — we're going to live to see it all come true! □

# Do You Have an Idol?

*Surely idolatry could not be a problem today!  
Don't be too sure — first read here about the  
practical applications of the Second Commandment.*

By John Halford

**D**o you have an idol? “What! Me, have an idol?” you might respond. “Don’t be ridiculous! Of course not. The very idea of a truly converted Christian having an idol is ludicrous.”

God’s chosen people would never give space to a grinning graven image, would we? Why, we’ve all gotten rid of pictures of “Jesus,” statues of praying hands and other religious trivia. While, strictly speaking, these items might not be considered idols, they are nevertheless not needed as aids to worship by those who can worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

And yet, God doesn’t waste His breath. One of His Ten Commandments still warns us today: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them” (Ex. 20:4-5).

God would not have made that command part of His fundamental law unless idolatry was something His people needed to be on guard against at all times. All the Ten Commandments apply to us today.

Perhaps we had better look at this Second Commandment more closely.

Could we possibly be harboring a graven image?

The Bible relates many examples of how God, through His chosen servants, condemned idolatry. One of the most striking is found in Isaiah 44.

## **God condemns idolatry**

Isaiah was probably giving us an eyewitness account of something he saw going on in Jerusalem nearly 3,000 years ago, shortly before ancient Judah was taken into captivity. He describes a tradesman carving an idol from a piece of wood:

“The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in the form of man . . . that it might dwell in a shrine” (Isa. 44:13, New International Version).

With biting wit and a touch of sarcasm, God through Isaiah condemns the utter stupidity of the individual who “cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. . . . Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal . . . He also warms himself . . . From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it, and says, Save me; you are my God” (verses 14, 16-17, NIV).

And nobody, says Isaiah, stops to think how foolish such an exercise is. The man takes the trunk of

a tree, using half of it as fuel to serve himself. The other half of the same trunk he carves and chips into an idol, and then he serves it!

We all agree with Isaiah. That’s crazy. Surely we don’t do that, do we? Don’t be so sure.

The many New Testament warnings against idolatry show that this sin was not just confined to God’s people in Old Testament times. In fact, their example was recorded specifically as a warning to us, lest we make the same mistake (I Cor. 10:11).

While science, technology, fashions and styles may change through the ages, human nature does not. Let’s examine, then, Old Testament idolatry, and learn from the mistakes of others.

## **Worshiping false gods**

The ancient Israelites were guilty of two kinds of idolatry. Sometimes they would worship a totally false god — Baal, perhaps, or Molech — that they imported from a neighboring pagan society. At other times, they would degenerate into false worship of the true God. Throughout their history, they were usually guilty of one or the other, and sometimes both.

The rulers of Israel and Judah often took the lead in introducing idolatry into their realms. As soon as the northern 10 tribes of Israel

# “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image... Thou

split with Judah, their king, Jeroboam, built his own altars and changed the date of the Feast of Tabernacles to a “more convenient” time (I Kings 12:26-33).

King Ahaz of Judah actually plundered God’s Temple in Jerusalem to supply materials for a temple to the gods of Assyria (II Kings 16:10-18).

Such actions sealed the fate of the two Old Testament kingdoms. God could not use them. God’s people must put God first. His way, His law and His Kingdom must be uppermost in the minds of those who serve Him. God will not share His people’s time or favor with any other god.

In spelling out the Second Commandment God tells us: “For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” (Ex. 20:5).

Queen Jezebel, pagan wife of Israel’s King Ahab and arch-enemy of Elijah, was driven by an almost missionary zeal for Baal. She filled the land with false worship. And so Elijah, in his showdown with the prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel, challenged the people: “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” (I Kings 18:21).

God’s end-time servant, coming in the power and spirit of Elijah (Mal. 4:5-6), is telling us exactly the same thing.

How many times have we read in Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong’s letters and articles that God’s Work must be the most important thing in our lives, that nothing else in this world must come before the Work and that if we put the interests and pursuits of this world first, we will not make it into the Kingdom of God?

An idol doesn’t necessarily have to be a physical graven image. It can be anything that we place before the true God. Eze-

kiel warned the elders of Israel that although, technically, they might not have had any idols, they had set up “idols in their heart” (Ezek. 14:3-4, 7).

If something turns your heart away from putting God and God’s Work first, it can be considered an idol. Which is more important, your hobby or your Bible study? Do you spend more time jogging than praying? Do you worry more about how you look to others than how you look to God?

Hobbies, physical fitness and personal appearance and grooming are not wrong. But remember what Isaiah said about the tree trunk. Are these things serving you — or are you serving them? Anything can become an idol.

Go into a museum sometime and look at the idols people down through the ages have worshiped. Wood, metal, bits of stone, houseflies — the ancient Egyptians

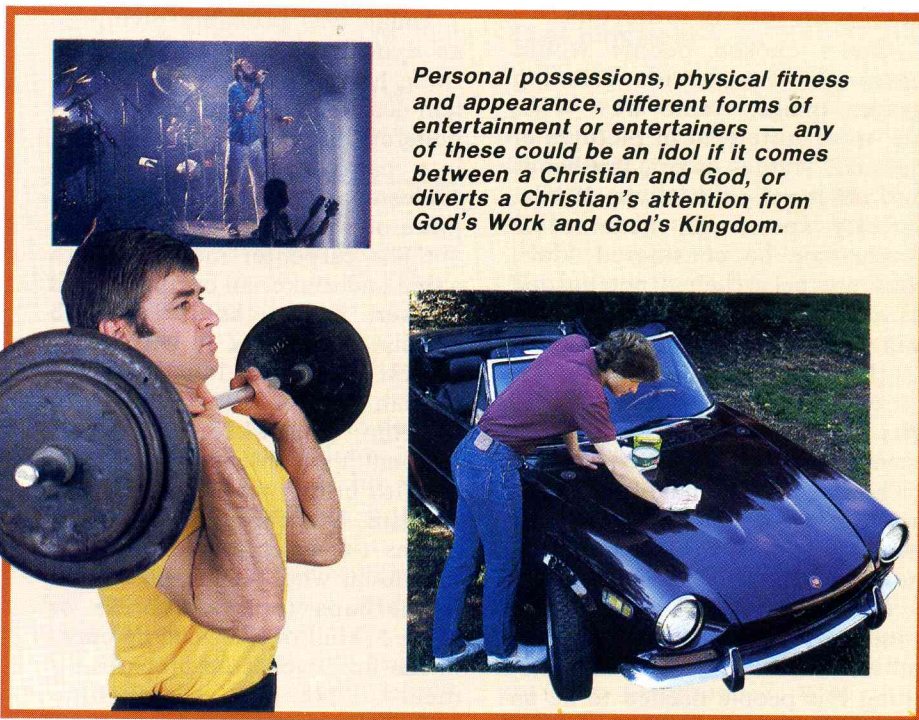
mobiles and other material possessions, and at how we eagerly followed the fornications and adulteries of our jet-set entertainment idols.

Our physical possessions can become idols. Read the first chapter of Haggai. Haggai warns that in the end time, some will lavish expense and attention on their own homes while neglecting the house, or Work, of God.

A wife, a husband, children, a career — all these could become false gods. And even some vain image we have of ourselves could become a roadblock that prevents us from overcoming.

## **False worship of the true God**

Yes, like our forefathers, we are quite capable of importing false gods and giving them, instead of the true God, our time and attention.



*Personal possessions, physical fitness and appearance, different forms of entertainment or entertainers — any of these could be an idol if it comes between a Christian and God, or diverts a Christian’s attention from God’s Work and God’s Kingdom.*

even idolized dead cats! Wait — before you laugh too loudly, is something equally as ludicrous getting between you and God?

In the Millennium, people will probably look back and marvel at the way we worshiped our auto-

The other form of idolatry in ancient Israel was false worship of the true God.

The prophet Amos was sent to the Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II. It was a time of precarious prosperity —

## shalt not bow . . . to them, nor serve them" (Ex. 20:4-5).

like today. Amos told the people that they were self-righteous and complacent. They prided themselves on being religious. They would sing hymns, keep festivals and assure each other that God was with them.

But it was a religion of convenience — only an outward show. The whole nation had become dishonest, greedy and selfish. Crime was rampant. The needs of the poor were ignored, and justice was perverted.

Amos told the Israelites that they were no better than idolaters. Just making religious-sounding noises was not enough. Amos could well have been writing to our nations today. And, of course, he was!

One of Israel's worst episodes of idolatry happened just a few weeks after God had thundered out His Ten Commandments to the people waiting at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Moses, you remember, had gone up the mountain for additional information. Aaron was left in charge. But Moses was gone for more than a month and the people grew impatient.

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us" (Ex. 32:1).

Aaron knew better, but succumbed in a moment of weakness. He told the people to give him their jewelry, out of which was made a golden calf. The people then said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (verse 4).

Perhaps trying to save the situation, Aaron built an altar, and announced that "To morrow is a feast to the Lord" (verse 5).

Aaron, in an effort to please the people, compromised with the worship of God — committed idolatry. Perhaps he intended the golden calf only as an "aid to worship." But the people, not long out of slavery, degenerated into whole-

sale idolatry. The "feast to the Lord" got out of hand, quickly turning into a drunken sex orgy (verse 6).

God sent Moses down the mountain to rectify the situation. Moses angrily destroyed the calf and asked a quivering Aaron what had happened (verses 20-21). Aaron explained that the people were getting frustrated at waiting. He had asked for their jewelry and thrown it in the fire. Next thing he knew, here was this golden calf (verses 22-24)!

That has to be one of the lamest excuses in history. Yet, in a way, we can sympathize with Aaron.

Once we start on the path of compromise and liberalism, and becoming crowd pleasers rather than God pleasers, events sometimes move faster than we can control them. And suddenly, everything we thought we had built crashes down around our ears.

The apostle Paul referred to this incident of the golden calf in warning the Corinthian church against idolatry (I Cor. 10:7).

This form of idolatry, brought about by lack of faith, frustration, impatience and compromise, can afflict us all. Note the lesson: Even though most of us would not deliberately fashion an idol, we could find that one has "come out of the fire" all of a sudden. Idolatry can creep up on us.

### **"Keep yourselves from idols"**

Our responsibility is to back up Mr. Armstrong, doing our part in the Work, to grow personally in grace and knowledge and to wait patiently for Christ's coming. But we get impatient. God's way conflicts with things that we, carnally, want to do.

God's law prevents us from becoming something we want to become. God's demands on "our" time — in prayer, Bible study, Sabbath-keeping and observance of the Holy Days — become irritating to our human nature. The

demands on our income in terms of tithes and offerings start to seem, to us, unreasonable.

And so, instead of changing ourselves, we try to find ways to change what God wants.

Mr. Armstrong has often called the core of right doctrine and sound belief the "trunk of the tree." But if, instead of clinging fast to the "trunk of the tree" as we have so often been admonished to do, we start to chip bits off the tree to make it look the way we want it to, we make a terrible mistake. A little bit here, and a little bit there — just like the carpenter Isaiah described.

You know what we get when we do that, don't you? That's right — an idol. Even though we think we still know God, we have figured out our own way to worship Him — a way that suits us. Theologians may call that "comparative religion," "sects" or "denominations."

God calls it idolatry! That is why John so firmly warns the New Testament Church, "Keep yourselves from idols" (I John 5:21).

A pagan idolater, given a spiritual understanding of the stupidity of his actions, can change. Remember what Nebuchadnezzar said when God restored his sanity after seven years of madness (Dan. 4:36-37). But a Spirit-begotten Christian who becomes ensnared in idolatry is another matter.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come [in other words, have understood the truth], If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance" (Heb. 6:4-6).

That Second Commandment was not meant for another time and another age. It was given to save us today from making mistakes that could keep us out of the Kingdom of God. □

**“Never give in!”** So declared Winston Churchill in his famous address at Harrow School on Oct. 29, 1941. “Never give in, never, never, never — in nothing, great or small, large or petty — never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.”

Powerful words, those. And it was those words and words like them, spoken by one of the great leaders of modern times, Winston Churchill, which helped inspire the British people to survive the torturous rigors of World War II.

While bombers crisscrossed over London, dropping their payloads on the capital city of what was then the world’s greatest empire, and while mothers huddled with their babies in the bomb shelters and cellars, it was this attitude of nev-

er giving in that buoyed the hearts of a war-weary people and gave them the resolve to endure.

Winston Churchill’s warning to “Never give in” was good advice 40 years ago during World War II, and it still is good advice today.

And it should have even more meaning for us as true Christians as we daily fight the Christian fight against unseen spiritual powers — as we struggle toward God’s Kingdom without chance of flight or furlough, knowing no spiritual rest until Christ’s return.

### No room for quitters

Clearly, Jesus Christ left no room for quitters in this Christian struggle for God’s Kingdom when He said, in Matthew 24:13, “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

In this one verse Christ made plain that almost making it isn’t enough. He shows that enduring is not merely one step in the salvation process — it is, in a sense, the only step.

For without enduring — that is, without remaining faithful to Jesus Christ through all our trials and problems, to the very end — we simply will not be in God’s Kingdom. Near misses don’t count.

It is easy to misread Mat-

thew 24:13, where Christ says we must endure to the end. It is easy to assume that we *will* endure, and therefore interpret Christ’s words as meaning we must merely be patient or good till the end. But the history of God’s Church shows that Christ knew exactly what He was saying.

Over the years, many who were seemingly converted and who joined the fellowship of God’s Church have, for various reasons, gone back into this world. Surprising? Does a person’s failure to endure show that his pastor or the Church in general somehow failed to do its part?

No. The Church has not failed; the person himself did. He neglected to endure. Christ knew that this would happen and designed the trials of this end time for the very purpose of sifting the quitters from among us.

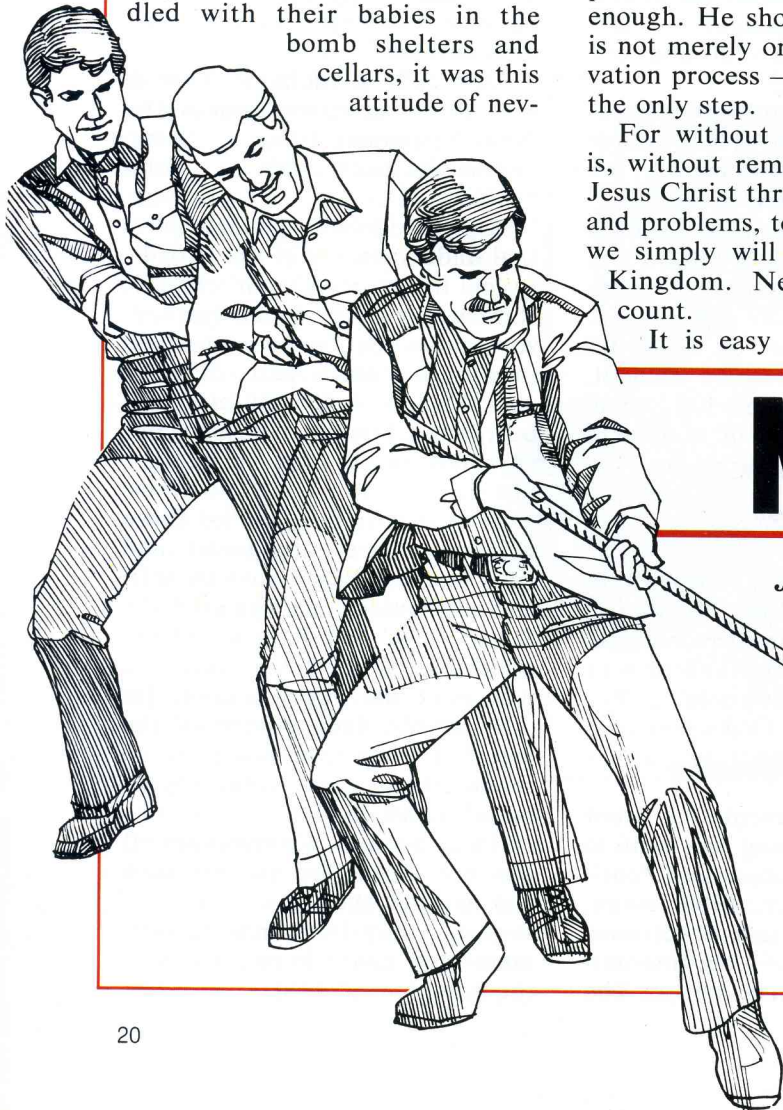
So be careful! There is no room for self-righteousness in our quest to endure to the end. Just because you are reading this article and have endured till now does not mean that you have made it or that you are safe. You have not yet endured to the end because the end has not come yet.

Yes, we all have endured until now, by God’s mercy and patience, but we have not endured to the end. We have not yet faced the future and the trials it will surely bring our way.

# Never Give In!

*Jesus Christ promised salvation only to those who “endure unto the end” (Matt. 24:13). Will you endure? Or will you be overcome by this life’s trials and simply give up?*

By Bernie Schnippert



We cannot assume we have endured much at all, for we may not yet have been tried severely. True, the Church in general has faced numerous heavy trials, but not every person in God's Church has been heavily tried.

Something which may try one may not try another, and vice versa. It may be a trial for a starving man to miss one more meal, but for a well-fed American to miss breakfast or supper is only a minor inconvenience. The well-fed American and the starving man may have both missed the same meal, but it can hardly be said that both really endured.

So don't sit in judgment or pompously presume to know how well you'll fare in the future. Even the apostle Paul knew he himself could miss out on salvation, even after preaching it to others: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27).

### How to endure

Christ's admonition that we should endure unto the end is in itself a solemn prophecy that Christians will have difficult times, for enduring implies the presence of trials.

And trials will surely come upon each of us at one time or another: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (I Pet. 4:12). No, it is not strange. It is, indeed, God's very planned method for dealing with us to build character.

And because it is God's plan and method for building character and preparing us for His Kingdom, it is absolutely necessary that we should endure all such trials.

It is not good enough that we almost or nearly endure, or that we endure even for a little while. No, we simply must "endure unto the end."

But how? How can we make sure that we will endure through-

out the future, when we do not even know what the future will bring to us as individuals? How can we be sure that we will "never give in"?

The answer can be found in the character of the same man, Winston Churchill, who admonished his nation to never give in, in the famous speech cited earlier.

In another speech, this one on Dunkirk in the House of Commons, June 4, 1940, he displayed the quality of character that would catapult the British people through the darkest hours of the empire. He said:

"We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender."

More than any other quality, that statement oozes the ingredient that will insure that we will endure to the end of whatever trials or troubles we may face. That quality is *resolve*. Resolve is the determination to reach the goal no matter what.

Resolve helped bring the British through World War II. Resolve helped David slay Goliath, Daniel face the lions, Christ face His tormentors and Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong face the severe trials that have come upon him in bringing God's truth to you and me. And resolve will see us to the end of our Christian struggle.

But we are not born with resolve. No, it must be built into our character. Here is a process that, if followed, can help us walk in the paths of men who finished their course and kept the faith, like Abraham, David, Daniel and Jesus Christ.

### Concentrate on the goal

The first step in building resolve is revealed in the exam-

ples of faithful servants of God like Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" and faced numerous other trials and temptations (Heb. 11:32-34).

How did these men and women gain the resolve to face these trials — the determination to endure until the end? Verse 13 tells us: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them."

In other words, they saw clearly the goal of the Kingdom of God and they desperately wanted it above all else. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country" [that they seek the Kingdom of God] (verse 14).

We can endure to the end if we plant the goal of God's Kingdom in our minds with burning desire. If someone wants something badly enough, he will get it. God will not withhold the Kingdom from us if it is truly our main goal.

### Refuse to accept the possibility of failure

But even seeing the goal clearly and wanting it is not enough. After clearly seeing the goal, a person must consciously reject, as simply unthinkable, the failure to reach that goal.

To learn to reject failure as unthinkable, we must clearly look failure in the eye. We must admit to ourselves that failure is possible if we allow it, but then we must shudder at its prospect and simply reject it once and for all as a path we will not follow.

If we do this, our trials simply become hurdles to overcome rather than dead-end brick walls to

stop our progress. Paul displayed this attitude when he wrote of his own trials, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (II Cor. 4:8-9).

Realize this: **One who refuses to accept failure must succeed.** Winston Churchill refused to accept failure by saying and believing: "We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. . . . We shall never surrender." He succeeded. So can — so must — we!

### **Willingness to pay any price**

To these two steps a person must add yet another ingredient: the willingness to pay any price to be in God's Kingdom — no matter what the cost. This means a willingness to face any trial, no matter how severe or anxious.

Jesus Christ expressed this willingness in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He prayed that the cup of His crucifixion might pass but reaffirmed that He would drink the cup if it were God's will.

And Winston Churchill reaffirmed his attitude of paying any price when he said: "We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air . . . We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be."

Have you ever found yourself saying, "I could never go through such and such a trial if it were to happen to me"?

If you have, you have not yet made the commitment to pay any price no matter what. In the hidden recesses of your mind, you doubt whether you could face — or would be willing to face — some horrible trial that may come upon you, whether through your own fault or not.

**Yet if we are not sure we could face any trial, how can God be sure — unless He perhaps brings that very trial upon us?**

No, we should not hope that severe trials come upon us, but we should resolve in advance to accept whatever trial may come and be willing to pay the price if need be.

God promises that no trial will come upon us that we cannot bear (I Cor. 10:13), but He does not promise that no trials will come upon us that we think we are not able to bear.

We must make up our minds now that no trial of any type will be too great. If we fear any trial, we are admitting that something exists that could stop us from enduring unto the end.

### **Seek help from man and God**

The final key for gaining the resolve necessary to endure to the end is to seek help from both man and God.

As true Christians we should help each other endure our trials and tribulations. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 shows the value of a friend when it says, "Two are better than one . . . For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."

All of us at one time or another need the help of a brother or a friend. We should all be willing to give help when needed, but we should also all be willing to receive help when needed.

Lest any of us think ourselves too independent to receive help from another, we should reread the story of Elijah. Even Elijah, who had been fed miraculously by a raven, needed the help and provisions of a poor widow (I Kings 17).

And when the discouraged Elijah felt that he must have been the only person on earth trying to serve God, it inspired him to find that he was not alone — that others were remaining faithful to God (I Kings 19:9-18).

Read how Jesus Christ endured: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross"

(Heb. 12:2). Notice that although Christ is credited with having endured the cross, even He — Jesus, the Savior, the Son of God and the Messiah — received help from a mere human in the person of Simon of Cyrene, who bore the cross for Him (Matt. 27:32).

If Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, endured the cross with the help of a physical man who bore it for Him, how much more should you or I accept the well-intentioned, helping hand of a brother or sister in Christ, or the hand of a minister who extends himself to us in our time of need?

Of course, our greatest help comes not from man but from God, to whom we turn in prayer and humble supplication in our time of need. With God's help we can endure all things and make it into God's Kingdom.

### **Face events with hope**

If we implement these points, we shall follow in the footsteps of the great people of the Bible. And, as Job boldly faced his trials and, through spiritual ups and downs, saw it through to the end, so also shall we face prophesied events with hope and determination.

The apostle James spoke of Job's determination and said: "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (Jas. 5:11).

The Lord who was pitiful and of tender mercy toward Job because Job endured will be pitiful and of tender mercy toward us if we resolve to endure. For, as Christ so clearly said, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13).

Salvation is the greatest show of "tender mercy" God can give a human!

Remember Winston Churchill's advice: "**Never give in, never, never, never, NEVER!**" □



# MINISTUDY

## God's Law— Basis of True Christianity

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

*The Good News*, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

**Instructions:** The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and *read in your Bible* the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

During His ministry, Jesus Christ taught obedience to God as He preached the good news about the coming government of God on earth. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" was the essence of Jesus' message (Mark 1:15).

Over and over again the Bible emphasizes repentance from sin. And sin is defined in the Bible as the breaking of God's great spiritual law (I John 3:4).

As we already know from our study of the Scriptures in previous Ministudies, repentance is the first step toward salvation. We must repent of (turn from) breaking God's law as one of the conditions to receiving God's forgiveness of our sins.

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" is Solomon's admonition to all mankind (Eccl. 12:13). Let's review several vital facts about God's law and see how God's Commandments form the basis of true Christianity.

1. Are all 10 of God's Commandments conveniently listed for us in the Bible? Ex. 20:3-17, Deut. 5:7-21. How may we know that there are 10? Ex. 34:28, Deut. 4:13, 10:4.

2. Did the patriarch Abraham — the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:16) — know of God's law and think it was important to keep it? Gen. 26:5. What was the prophet David's attitude toward obeying God's law? Carefully read and ponder the entirety of Psalm 119, noticing especially verses 97-100 and 105.

Both Abraham and David were commandment keepers. They had great respect for God's law. That is one vital reason why they will hold responsible positions in the future government of God on earth.

3. Did Christ Himself obey the Ten Commandments? John 15:10. Did He teach others to obey them? Matt. 19:17-19.

These verses in Matthew 19 clearly show that Jesus was specifically referring to the Ten Commandments. He knew that God's 10-point law would bring peace, fulfillment and joy to any individual or nation who would choose to obey it.

4. Does the Bible show that the very Church Jesus built would be teaching obedience to, and literally endeavoring to keep, the Ten Commandments and other instructions of Christ? Rev. 12:17, 14:12. (Chapter 12 of Revelation personifies God's Church as a woman.)

The Worldwide Church of God upholds the Commandments of God. God's Church echoes the words of David and follows God's law as the Christian standard to live by.

5. Is the law of God holy, just and good? Rom. 7:12. Does peace of mind come from keeping the Ten Commandments? Ps. 119:165.

The person who keeps God's law has a clear conscience. He is at peace with God, with himself and with his neighbor. He has "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).

God gave His law to make man happy and to lead him into the peaceful, full, abundant life — and above all, to lead him into eternal life. But because of disobedience to our Creator's holy, righteous law, the world is filled with strife, poverty, ignorance and suffering today.

# MINISTRY

**6.** How did Jesus enlarge upon the keeping of the Ten Commandments? Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28. Did John understand these spiritual principles of God's law? I John 3:15. Did Paul also understand the spiritual aspects of God's law? Rom. 7:14.

Contrary to the belief of so many today, Jesus did not come to do away with the Ten Commandments. Rather, He came to teach mankind how to live by the spiritual intent of God's law.

And so hatred against another human being is the spirit of murder. Sexual lust is the spirit of adultery. Christ showed how God's Commandments apply to our innermost thoughts and attitudes as well.

In Old Testament times God required only a physical, mechanical and visible obedience from His people. In other words, obedience only in the letter.

This was because the Old Testament Church of God — the nation of Israel — was not given opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit to help them obey the spiritual intent of the Ten Commandments as well as the letter of God's law.

But in New Testament times God has made His Holy Spirit available to those whom He calls. And He desires that His Spirit-begotten children follow Him in the spirit — the "fullness" — of His law.

**7.** How did Jesus Christ of Nazareth sum up the great Ten Commandment law of God? Matt. 22:35-40. In what one word is the very nature and character of God summarized? I John 4:16.

As the essence of God's spiritual character is love, the Ten Commandments are expressions of the very character of God.

Jesus showed that the Ten Commandments are in reality a guide to teach us how to love. The first four commandments show us how to love God, while the last six of the Ten Commandments show us how to love our neighbor — all fellow human beings.

**8.** If we possess and exercise God's Spirit, will the love of God that God's Spirit imparts enable us to "fulfill" — to obey — God's law? Rom. 5:5, 13:10.

The divine love of God, imparted to converted Christians by the Holy Spirit, is expressed within the bounds of God's law — the Ten Commandments.

Love is not left to interpretation by the individual Christian. Rather, he is guided in expressing God's love by the provisions of the Ten Commandments.

Therefore, the love of God is manifested first of all in adoration and worship of God and literal obedience to Him, and then in outgoing concern,

compassion, kindness and service toward fellow human beings.

The love of God enables us to fulfill the spirit of God's law. The love of God was the tool that Jesus Christ used to fulfill — to obey — God's law Himself.

As the apostle Paul explained: "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:8-10, Revised Standard Version).

**9.** Could there be any truth whatsoever in the widespread belief that having "love" nullifies the need to literally keep God's law? I John 5:2-3, John 14:15, 15:9-10, II John 5-6.

The apostle John placed a great deal of emphasis upon love. But never did he or any other inspired writer of Scripture say that love put away, superseded or destroyed the law of God. John, who was a close friend, disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ, made it plain that one who truly has the love of God will be obeying the Commandments of God.

**10.** Is it possible to earn one's salvation through obedience to God? Rom. 6:23. And yet, can anyone enter God's Kingdom — the very Family of God — as a lawbreaker? Matt. 7:21, 19:17-19.

You cannot earn your salvation by keeping either the Ten Commandments or any other law of God. Eternal life is clearly a gift from God, and a gift is not something you earn. No man or woman could earn immortality in 10,000 lifetimes of keeping the Ten Commandments.

But neither can you enter into eternal life as a lawbreaker (I John 3:4, Rom. 6:23). Obedience to the Ten Commandments helps one to grow more like God who is love, until finally one is born into God's spiritual Family at the resurrection. And no rebel will ever be permitted to enter that divine Kingdom.

Jesus Christ plainly stated that as Christians we are to strive to keep the Ten Commandments with our whole beings and with His help through the Holy Spirit, trusting in Him to apply His sacrifice in our behalf when we fall short and as we repent (I John 1:7-9).

The time is coming soon when the whole world will come to understand and appreciate what an incredible blessing the law of God really is (Isa. 2:2-3). □

# What Are You Thinking?

*What we allow ourselves to think will eventually determine whether we enter God's Kingdom! How familiar are we with our thoughts and how they affect our lives?*

By David Carley

**A**s a man thinks in his heart, so is he, says God's Word (Prov. 23:7).

Here God reveals a fundamental law by which our minds work. We are, in essence, the sum total of what our thoughts make us.

What we allow ourselves to think and believe is extremely important, because our thoughts are the building blocks from which all our ideas, imaginations, habits and ultimate character are formed. Our actions are always preceded by thoughts.

Man has always followed after his own thoughts and beliefs. God said the people of ancient Israel walked "after their own thoughts" (Isa. 65:2). In the time of Israel's judges, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25).

In short, man reacts to and performs the thoughts he believes in. It makes no difference whether the thought is right or wrong. We are able to choose the thoughts we wish to believe in and act on.

And therein lies the cause of every evil from which this world suffers!

## **Man's mind is incomplete**

Man, a mortal being with a physical, chemical existence, can receive physical knowledge only. Man receives this knowledge

through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

But man's problems are spiritual! He needs to know how to have proper relationships with both God and fellowman — and those areas are spiritual.

Yes, man is made in God's image (Gen. 1:27). God gave man a spirit that imparts the powers of intellect and reason — the element that raises man above the level of animals to the God plane — the element that makes him like God (Job 32:8).

But man's mind is incomplete. To understand and deal with spiritual things, man's mind must have imparted to it God's Holy Spirit — the mind, motivation and attitude of God.

The first humans, as Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong has explained, had the chance to receive the Holy Spirit, but rejected the opportunity. God then shut off the Holy Spirit from man, except those God would call for special purposes during the first 6,000 years of a 7,000-year plan.

And that is the state in which man finds himself now! His mind is utterly incapable of discerning right from wrong without God's Spirit, and thus he finds himself constantly in trouble because of his thoughts, his motivations, his conflicts with other people and his inability to have a right relationship with God. For more information on this vital subject,

request a copy of Mr. Armstrong's newest booklet, *Never Before Understood — Why Humanity Cannot Solve Its Evils*. It's absolutely free.

We in God's Church, who have God's Holy Spirit, are to be learning to judge properly between right and wrong, and to choose the right. And that means learning to control our thoughts, from which our actions spring.

## **Bring every thought into captivity**

In short, God has called us to learn to think, feel, say and act as He does — to develop His thoughts, emotions, character and mind.

Christ said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Paul said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

The loving mind, thoughts and ways of God are found in print in the Bible. The Bible was designed to guide us in building the kind of mind God has. Our job requires that we become experts at recognizing and rejecting all that is not godlike in our thinking.

Every thought we think is either oriented toward God's loving way of thinking or Satan's selfish way. God's thoughts are always positive and motivated by outgoing concern. Satan's thoughts are negative, though they may seem positive: Consider, for instance, the

“pull yourself up by your own bootstraps” philosophy based on vanity and self-exaltation.

All satanic thoughts are based upon selfish motives and produce nothing but vanity, heartache and foolishness. God’s Word says, “The thought of foolishness is sin” (Prov. 24:9). So all thoughts motivated out of selfishness are foolishness and therefore sinful!

How many of us are robbing ourselves of spiritual growth,

allow material desires to rise above godly desires.

Some consume their time and thoughts with the foolish misuse of their emotions. Fear, worry, doubt, anger, hate and other powerful emotions are good only if they produce something worthwhile in our lives. For instance, if we worry, we should worry about whether we are pleasing God; if we hate, our hatred should be directed toward sin. Otherwise,

In order to eradicate our foolish thoughts, we must recognize them for the sins they are and repent of them on the spot, praying to God for forgiveness. And we must do so every time the sinful thought occurs, be it once or 1,000 times a day.

Isaiah said, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord” (Isa. 55:7). Once we have recognized and repented of our evil thoughts, then we must turn to God and allow Him to give us the right thoughts we should think.

The next *r* is that we *replace* our sinful thoughts with God’s righteous thoughts. God made our minds to react to — to actually become — what we think about all day long.

That is why God told Joshua: “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, [why?] that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein” (Josh. 1:8).

King David also knew the importance of filling his mind with the Word of God. He said: “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Ps. 119:97). The way to get rid of the wrong is to replace it with the right.

Even after we have replaced the wrong thoughts with the right ones, the battle is not over. Satan will strive to inject wrong thoughts back into our minds. Bad thoughts, emotions or habits tend to return again and again. This brings us to the vital last *r*.

When the sinful thought returns, we must *resist* it and repeat the first three *rs* again. If we are persistent in applying these four steps every time the wrong thoughts, emotions or habits occur, they will have less and less of an effect on our lives, until one day they will be gone.

In short, we must learn to develop God’s way of thinking, growing toward “a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13), which is our God-intended destiny! □

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## God has called us to learn to think . . . as He does — to develop His . . . emotions, character and mind . . . Paul said, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

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health and happiness by allowing our minds to indulge in foolish ways of thinking each day?

Foolish thoughts come from within and without. Those from without come from Satan and his world. “The prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2) saturates the world with his selfish attitude.

Some prime vehicles through which Satan disseminates his ways of thinking are radio, television, movies and the printed media; we need to be selective in how we use these media. Even our friends and relatives can be used to introduce foolish thoughts into our minds. We must not allow the world’s satanic ways to be poured, unchallenged and unabated, into our minds.

Foolish thoughts may also come from within. Daydreaming can, for instance, waste valuable time. To escape reality, many squander their time indulging in useless, selfish fantasies, or by wishing things in the past or present were different, or by daydreaming of a better tomorrow.

Our fleshly desires can also affect our thoughts. Wrongly manifested, our desires provoke thoughts of “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness” and every other wrong, self-serving lust of man (Gal. 5:19). Many

such emotions may be vain, foolish and sinful.

### Eliminating foolish thoughts

How, then, may we rid ourselves of wrong thoughts and develop God’s mind and way of thinking? Following are four steps. In English, they all begin with an *r*.

The first *r* is to *recognize* our wrong thoughts. Just as we find it easier to see the “mote” lodged in someone else’s eye than the “beam” in our own (Matt. 7:3), it is often easier to see our misdeeds than it is to see our ways of thinking that caused them.

Recognizing our improper thinking is the most difficult part in overcoming our problems, but we will not be able to overcome our problems until we do. We need to deeply study God’s Word and begin to think as God thinks — begin to see as wrong what God sees as wrong. When we do, half the battle is won.

Next we must *repent* of wrong thinking, however it may be manifested in our emotions or habits, each and every time we recognize it. Peter told Simon Magus to “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee” (Acts 8:22).

# Overcome

(Continued from page 1)

not excused from keeping God's commandments, living a righteous holy life, overcoming, growing in spiritual character and enduring in spite of all opposition, persecution, trial and test unto the end. YOU and I must actually *do* these things in order to be saved!

Here is the great mystery! Since we *must* do these things to be saved, yet are utterly *unable* to do them, it is natural to conclude either that God sent Jesus to do it for us and excuse us from accomplishing it, or else to become discouraged and be tempted to quit trying.

The true answer is the KEY to salvation!

## Key to salvation

We can't save ourselves. GOD will save us!

But how?

Not by saving us *in* our sins — not by deceiving Himself into counting us righteous by imputing Jesus' righteousness to us while we remain *unrighteous* — BUT BY SAVING US FROM OUR SINS, by giving us His very own Spirit!

God's Spirit gives us His POWER to overcome these cantankerous selves, His LOVE to actually fulfill His law, His PEACE to avoid strife with enemies and resentment and bitterness at their injustices, His PATIENCE to endure!

We can't save ourselves — GOD must save us!

But He does it by *changing* us, through His indwelling divine supernatural power, from what we have been into the holy, righteous characters He wills to make of us! He does it by forgiving past sins not only, but *cleansing* us from sinning now and in the future!

God does not look upon our hopeless plight — our evil natures, our weaknesses and inabilities — and say: "Poor, helpless humans! Since they are unable to master and overcome

their evil natures, to keep my law, to endure trial and test and temptation and to grow into holy characters, I'll be merciful and have my Son do it for them, and save them just as they are in all their sins."

Instead, God who knows our every weakness — who knows and understands this human nature in every one of us — sent His Son into the world to proclaim HIS MESSAGE to us that we must yield to GOD's government over our lives — that we must REPENT and turn *from* our filth of the flesh and pride of mind and heart.

He sent His Son into the world to be tempted in all points as we are — human as we are — to prove that a human *can*, with the help of the Spirit of God, live without sin — TO SET AN EXAMPLE FOR US THAT WE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS and live also without sinning!

He sent His Son into the world to die for us — not living a good life in our stead, but paying the penalty of our past sins in our stead — that we might be reconciled to God, so that we might receive His Spirit, begetting us as His SONS, so that God through the power of His Spirit may CHANGE us from mortal sinners into immortal, holy sons of God!

## "Come as you are"?

Some hotels and restaurants, catering to tourists who may be in old clothes and dirty from traveling, post a sign: "COME AS YOU ARE!"

The favorite "invitation" or altar-call hymn sung by the popular denominations in revival or evangelistic services is "JUST AS I AM."

But *be not deceived* — GOD WON'T RECEIVE YOU JUST AS YOU ARE! You can't sit down at His immaculate, holy table with your wrinkled, soiled clothes and dirty hands, which symbolically represent the human sinning condition.

No, you must be first WASHED in the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ — and before Jesus, as your Savior and Mediator with God, can wash you of the filth of

your sins, YOU MUST FIRST REPENT OF TRANSGRESSING GOD'S HOLY LAW, WHICH MEANS TO BE SO SORRY THAT YOU FORSAKE YOUR WAY AND THE WORLD'S WAY AND TURN TO A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAWS AND WAYS!

Of course you'll have to come *as you are* to Christ for CLEANSING from the filth of your past life — but *confessing* your filthy, sinful condition, asking *Him* to cleanse you and wash you in His blood, because you can't cleanse yourself — so that He may present you chaste and pure and spiritually clean to His Father, that you may then receive the indwelling POWER of God *that will enable you to overcome* and keep God's law, and live as His sons ought to live!

## Receive God's power

Jesus showed by His life that we *can*, if we rely upon God in faith for the power to do, live the way of God's will as expressed in His spiritual law! Of Himself, even Jesus said He could not do it — "the Father that dwelleth in me," He said, "HE doeth the works" (John 14:10). And again, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also" (verse 12).

And so it was that, almost the same instant the temptation to doubt the final result came to my mind, as I thought of my own weaknesses, faults and limitations, the answer flashed strong and firm:

"GOD WON'T LET ME FALL! He may punish me more yet to chasten and teach me and make me righteous, but He won't let me fail — He will impute His very own righteousness *by implanting it into my life* until, through His power energizing me, I'm really living it — ETERNALLY!"

And that comforting and definite ASSURANCE of the final result, based on God's own unbreakable PROMISES, just warmed my heart and made me feel good clear through — and so I had to share this glorious assurance with all of YOU! Read Jude 24 and II Peter 1:10. □

# Be Positive

(Continued from page 4)

days of this age, when Satan is more active than ever before (Rev. 12:9-10).

How does Satan accuse you? By spreading false rumors about you and your friends. **By putting negative thoughts in your mind.** By making you tune in to his wavelength. Satan is successful in his ravaging task because some of us allow ourselves, through discouragement and lack of faith, to be his victims.

The Bible is given to us for

By the way, for more information about this process of true conversion, why not request our free booklet, *What Do You Mean . . . Conversion?*

The Bible doesn't promise you an easy life during this present age, but it promises you a glorious life for all eternity. It warns you that, as a Christian, you will be hated, tried and even persecuted — especially during these end times. Expect, therefore, oppression and tribulation.

But be courageous and positive, because you are not alone. God is with you! Set your eyes

and ability you need to overcome. Rely on God! He will never turn His back on you.

Remember this positive, reassuring truth, as stated by the apostle Paul: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

Do you realize that there isn't a person in the Church of God, around the world, who has been called to condemnation? Quite the contrary. God has called those who are able to overcome and reach the goal.

What's the Kingdom of God worth to you? What's God's presence in your life worth to you? Is living God's way depriving you of fun? God knows what's best for you. He wants you to be part of His Family. He wants you to have real fun the right way, the pure way — not the world's way, which leads to death!

You don't even necessarily have to understand God to obey Him. Obedience must always come first. It is unfortunate, but some first try to understand, rather than obey. That's why they fall by the wayside.

## A certain promise

Isaiah wrote: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:6-7).

**This promise is certain. If you seek God, you will find Him.** But seeking Him doesn't mean understanding all of His ways, for they are infinitely higher than yours (verse 9). **Understanding often comes only after obedience.**

Blessed is the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1:2-3).

This is an absolute truth. Believe it — and live by it! □

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Often, you see only the enormity of your difficulties, rather than focusing on Christ and overcoming those difficulties. Christ . . . will give you the power to overcome. Rely on God!

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reproof, correction and instruction. Suffering will lose much of its sting when we face circumstances with a positive attitude. **As long as Satan is the ruler of this world, doubts will exist. But God is greater than Satan — and He will always help you when you turn to Him.**

## If God be with you

Life is not always easy for anyone. But in God's Church we have much to rejoice about, much to be grateful for, much to look forward to.

The apostle Paul wrote, "And we know that **all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose**" (Rom. 8:28).

You love God, don't you? If God has truly called you and you have repented of your sins and been baptized — if you have received God's Holy Spirit and are in the process of being converted now — then you can, with God's help, live according to God's purpose — no matter what the circumstances may be.

constantly on Him and on Jesus Christ.

If you see God's hand in your life each day, no trials or persecutions will ever be able to shake you or overpower you, however severe they may be.

Remember the apostle Peter's experience when he saw Christ walking on the water. He cried out, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water" (Matt. 14:28). Christ told him to come. Without hesitation, Peter got out of the boat and began walking on the water.

"But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me" (verse 30).

**So long as his eyes were on Christ, Peter did not sink. He had faith and a positive attitude. But the moment he took his eyes off God, he began to doubt — and therefore sink.**

This is true in everyone's life. Often, you see only the enormity of your difficulties, rather than focusing on Christ and overcoming those difficulties.

Christ is always ready to help you. He will give you the power

# Letters

(Continued from inside front cover)

I have just read your article "There's a Hidden Enemy in Your Home!" in this month's *Good News* [February]. Many thanks for it.

The article was packed with meaning, wisdom and plain righteousness. Its presentation was a work of art, having the appeal of something done out of a reasonable spirit. Plainness, sobriety, soundness and intelligence are other words that come to mind when I try to describe it. Truly, a breath of fresh air!

John Stephen Redmond  
Bootle, Lancashire, England

## "Sin's Deadly Power"

In the March issue of your *Good News*, I wrote "A MUST — READ AND REREAD" beside the article by Richard Rice, "How You Can Overcome Sin's Deadly Power!" This is truly guidance from God in admonishment for all brethren. Thank you, Mr. Rice, for listening and passing it on to all of us.

Mrs. Floyd Slagowski  
Carlin, Nev.

"How You Can Overcome Sin's Deadly Power!" (March, 1982) is truly an example of "apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25:11). Through this article the reader can't help but have his or her spiritual vision brought into focus on the reality of what the Christian life is all about — our hope in Christ, our goal of being one with God!

Julie Henness  
Stanford, Mont.

## A special thank-you

This latest issue of *The Good News* deserves a special thank-you to everyone involved, especially the authors of the fine articles. . . . "How You Can Overcome Sin's Deadly Power!" was so plain to understand — that sin is actually a power or law that is at work in all of us. And the only way to rid ourselves of it is to starve it by nourishing God's nature to develop it in us just as physical food nourishes us.

And the straightforward way Mr. [Clayton] Steep writes about "What Really Happened in the Wilderness?" Pulling no punches in simply stating that the churches of this world have no explanation for the experiences of the church in the wilderness. So many analogies he brings up that I have never thought of that apply to this church era.

David Ladner  
Birmingham, Ala.

## Fine articles

I received the February, 1982, issue of

the *Good News* magazine yesterday. Glancing through it I knew that this issue was full of fine articles. Thanks to God for blessing us with such a fine magazine that contributes much to our spiritual growth. Thanks to you and all the staff there and all the writers for working hard to make this such a fine magazine. Please keep up the good work — it is much appreciated.

Tilak Peris  
Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

## "Proverbs 31 Husband"

Just received my copy of the February *Good News*. It is a well put together magazine. It seems as though extra work went into putting this magazine together this month. All of the magazines are wonderful, but there are times when it seems you all outdo yourselves. Anyway, every article, I promise, will be thoroughly read by me.

I was taking the magazine to work with me the next day after receiving it and as I was reading the article on "The Proverbs 31 Husband!" I noticed the lady sitting next to me was trying to read along with me (I ride a bus to work). That afternoon, she asked if I would save the magazine for her. I just thought you might be interested in knowing how eye-catching this magazine is.

Mattie Sanders  
Fayette, Miss.

Being a single woman I was greatly impressed by the article on "The Proverbs 31 Husband!" by Ronald Kelly. . . . I'm always being reminded that I have to be a Proverbs 31 woman, but I don't think those men realize what it takes to be a husband to one. So thank you, Mr. Kelly. Your article was great and a real eye-opener.

Yvonne Bowers  
Westminster, Calif.

## Too strong a message

Please remove my name from the *Good News* mailing list. I'll never be perfect and since I don't read the magazine, it should be sent to someone who does.

What I'm saying is that it's too strong a message for me.

Reader  
Washington

## "Learn to Be Grateful"

After reading the article in the February *Good News* magazine titled "Learn to Be Grateful — for Everything!" I was inspired to write and thank Raymond McNair for the article and you for all of the work you have done to serve us.

I am not a member of the Church, but just by using the knowledge that I have acquired from the Worldwide Church of

God, I have been tremendously blessed in many ways. I have a beautiful family, friends, job and great health because I know what and how to eat.

I just can't begin to name all of the blessings I have received because of the knowledge I received from God through your great works. Again, thank you.

Myrna C. Richardson  
Marietta, Ga.

## Admonishing and correcting

Thank you very much for the fine edition of *The Good News*. It is a much needed magazine admonishing and correcting us. It is so surprising how much we need. The article "What Really Happened in the Wilderness?" [March] is a veritable gold mine. I never realized the exact meaning of Christ being the bread in the wilderness.

Loren H. Westcott  
Harrison, Ark.

## Pleasure to have GN

What a great pleasure it is to have the *Good News* magazine to read. I wish to express my sincere appreciation, first to God for inspiring Mr. [Herbert W.] Armstrong to create *The Good News*, and to Mr. Armstrong for his labor in perfecting it, then to each member of the staff who must work long hours in many instances to make this beautiful, quality magazine available to each of us.

Ruth McMasters  
Cameron, W.Va.

## "Ministudy" interesting

It is with pleasure that I study the "Ministudy" in *The Good News*, writing each scripture in a notebook as I did when studying the Correspondence Course. Mr. [Richard] Sedliacik makes it all so interesting, and he is to be commended for his fine explanations.

Margaret Crumb  
Lakeland, Fla.

## Learned valuable lessons

I . . . wish to remain on your mailing list for the *Good News* and *Plain Truth* magazines. I believe that through the years I have learned more valuable things in these two publications that I have in any other. Biblical prophecy is truly the most important of all events happening in our time, and I pray that the Lord shall enable you to continue with His most valuable work for years yet to come.

I realize that Christ's return is not far off, and that He has used your organization to so sincerely tell this to a most troubled world.

Louise Willey  
Denver, Colo.

Test Yourself



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## Why Were You Born?

- Why is finding your purpose for being alive a life-and-death matter for you?
- What does the answer to the question "Why were you born?" have to do with mankind's future survival?
- What is the missing dimension in all knowledge?
- What will be the crowning, supreme masterpiece of all God's works of creation?
- What does redemption have to do with this great, supreme creation of God?
- What does redemption mean?
- God and Jesus Christ alone fully possess holy, righteous character. Can you describe what godly character is?

Is there any purpose for human life? Does life, after all, have real meaning you have not realized? You need to know! This month's quiz covers information found in Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong's booklet, *Why Were You Born?* Can you correctly answer all the questions above? If not, why not reread the booklet? Or, if you have not read it, request a free copy by using the card in this issue or by writing to our office nearest you.