

The Advocate of Truth





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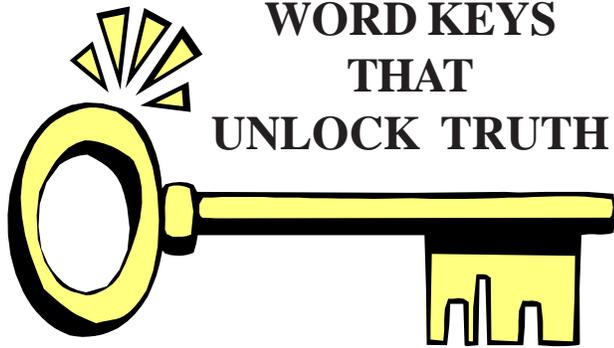
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WORD KEYS THAT UNLOCK TRUTH

BACKSLIDE

To backslide means to turn gradually, voluntarily, or insensibly from the knowledge, faith, love, and profession of God, after having once solemnly become His.

In Hosea, the undying love of God is described toward a people whose hearts have wandered far from His ways. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him" (Hosea 14:4).

Scripture metaphorically describes the backslidden state as: serving two masters, forsaking the Lord, going our own way, leaving our first love, forgetting God, falling away, growing cold, departing from the faith, putting a hand to the plow and looking back (Luke 9:62), salt that hath lost its savour (Matthew 5:13), a dog returning to his vomit (Proverbs 26:11), a dead branch (John 15:6; Hebrews 6:8).

The backslider does not suddenly wake up one morning and go out to commit sin. Over a long period of time, he may have become lax in his life, or entertained fleshly desires.

Spiritual decay is a gradual process. If it came as a stone hitting our faces, we would recognize just what it is. But Satan is sly, and his tactics are subtle. The wasting

away that occurs in the heart of the backslider may be nearly imperceptible. As we fail to focus upon spiritual things, the flesh seeks fulfillment.

First the prayer life may be crowded out with other interests. These other interests may be innocent pastimes such as sports, hobbies, or television. As we fill our hearts and lives with fleshly desires, our hunger for the Word of God diminishes. As we ignore God's appeal to return, our zeal and concern for souls subsides due to a sense of guilt and hypocrisy. In time, the fear of God departs, and a complete reordering of priorities in our life occurs.

Then one day, we realize that our abhorrence of sin is gone. It becomes easy to justify actions we never otherwise would have considered acceptable. Since our sensitivity to spiritual things is not what it used to be, we may sense very little guilt. The farther we stray, the more distant the Voice of God becomes, and the more difficult it seems to find our way back.

We need not look long in Scripture to find examples of the backslidden. Israel's repeated backslidings are well documented, as are those of many Old Testament individuals: Lot, Genesis 19:1-22; Saul, I Samuel 15:11, 26-28; Amon, II Kings 21:22-23; Rehoboam, II Chronicles 12:1-2; Asa, II Chronicles 16:7-9; etc. Scripture tells us that "...when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God...And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice" (I Kings 11:4,9; cp. vv. 4-40; Nehemiah 13:26).

Backsliding is as the word implies, a sliding backward, not a jump off a cliff, but coasting downhill. We cannot travel the highway of holiness in neutral. Spiritual growth requires a conscious effort, or it will be only "natural" that we succumb to the ways of the flesh.

CHAMPION OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

ROGER WILLIAMS

Americans are so blessed to be able to practice their religion without government regulations. Those who won the religious freedom Americans enjoy today were of rare courage and faith. One of them, who often is forgotten, was a man named Roger Williams.

In the early days of the Seventeenth Century, a group of Protestant Christians called Puritans were seeking religious freedom for themselves and their families. Persecuted in England and throughout Europe, they emigrated to a New World. There they found the freedom they were seeking. It was freedom from oppressive governments and freedom from the tyranny and trouble which they had experienced in the Old World.

But they were not willing to extend to others the freedom which they had found for themselves in the New World. This was a problem for those who believed that God is true but disagreed with the manner in which the Puritans were administering in the church. It is recorded that in 1636, the Puritan representative of what they called a "Christian Commonwealth" threw Roger Williams out of their civilized Massachusetts Colony and into the rugged forests of New England. It was the dead of winter! For fourteen weeks, Roger Williams wandered about, not knowing what bread or bed did mean. He was rescued by the Narragansett Indians. He later purchased land from them to found the city of Providence. Two years later a church there was accepting members. Thus, Rhode Island became the first colony for religious liberty in America.

Rhode Island became a sanctuary for, what the Puritans in Massachusetts called, religious fanatics, Holy Rollers, and assorted theological perverts. The "moral majority" in Massachusetts was glad to see them go. One Puritan preacher declared, "All Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and other enthusiasts, shall have free liberty to keep away from us...the sooner the better."

Roger Williams was a pain to the Puritans of Massachusetts early on. Just after he disembarked from the boat, he began to assimilate certain "erroneous and dangerous" opinions. He said that the Indians, not the English King,

were the rightful owner of the American soil and that they should be justly compensated. This was an unpopular idea! He also declared that the authority of the state extended only to "bodies and goods," not to "souls and salvation," that the civil government had "no access to divinity." This was not a popular idea among the civil magistrates of Massachusetts. Roger Williams, speaking from a sincere conscience, was not to be silenced. His belief that civil government had no authority over religion or churches was a radical shift in political and religious thinking. Years later, this shift became the foundation of our American government. However, in this time, it was a new idea, and not acceptable.

Most Puritans believed that without Christian magistrates imposing definite religious beliefs and practices—their own, of course—theological chaos and moral anarchy would prevail. John Cotton was one of those Puritan magistrates who believed in state protection for religion. He said, "If civil weapons be debarred from defending (religion), upon pretense that church weapons are sufficient, ... then let all seducers to apostasy, idolaters, and heretics, ... rejoice in an open door to liberty and safety." However, Williams was unperturbed and unchanged. He said that there were some heretics, idolaters, and apostates in the early church, but the church grew without state protection.

The New England Puritan hierarchy justified the exiling of Roger Williams and the Baptists, as well as the executing of certain Quakers, as being "proper protection for the true gospel." Williams maintained that if New England churches were truly Christian churches, they would neither need nor desire political protection. Williams dared to express his mind on behalf of religious freedom. Roger Williams believed that religion could take care of itself and need not be defended except by the spiritual life of its people.

Roger Williams believed that belief cannot be compelled. The sword of the state might compel a nation to

be baptized, but it could not make them Christians. "Christening," he said, "no Christians make." He declared that the church was to preach the Word of God; preach it, not enforce it. In that idea of uncoerced faith was born the doctrine of true religious freedom-that faith is personal, not political; that each individual is responsible to God and God alone for his or her faith; that it was not the duty of the state to coerce the heretic or the atheist; that God alone is sovereign Judge for the conscience of believer and nonbeliever alike.

Roger Williams' ideas stuck fast. Years passed and the Revolution came and went. The Constitution was written, and at the persistence of a determined few, there was soon added a Bill of Rights securing religious freedom and liberty of conscience to all citizens. Even Massachusetts had to relinquish a state church!

In closing, let us quote from a book by Cyclone Covey called *The Gentle Radical: Roger Williams*. This quote is found in *GODDARD'S JOURNAL - Roger Williams Champion of Liberty* by Ian Williams Goddard who is the eighth great-grandson of Roger Williams. It is from the internet.

"The most fascinating figure of America's formative seventeenth century, Roger Williams has now gained general acceptance as a symbol of a critical turning point in American thought and institutions. He was the first Ameri-

can to advocate and activate complete freedom of conscience, dissociation of church and state, and genuine political democracy. From his first few weeks in America, he openly raised the banner of 'rigid Separatism.' In one year in Salem, he converted the town into a stronghold of radical Separatism and threw the entire Bay Colony into an uproar. Banished for his views, after being declared guilty of "a frontal assault on the foundations of the Bay system," he escaped just as he was to be deported to England.

He settled in Providence with thirteen other households and in one year formed the first genuine democracy, as well as the first church - divorced and conscience-free community in modern history. Williams felt that government is the natural way provided by God to cope with the corrupt nature of man. But since government could not be trusted to know which religion is true, he considered the best hope for true religion. The protection of the freedom of all religions, along with the nonreligious, from the state.

NOTE: The Church of God is thankful that there were such men with strong convictions as Roger Williams who fought for religious freedom when this country began. Without this religious freedom, we could not proclaim the truth without the fear of persecution.



FOUR GREAT POWERS

By Bond Tennant

There are many great powers. Some of them are spiritual, and some of them are physical. There are four great powers prominent in the Word of God. They are for our own good if we will only appropriate them.

First, the Word of God is powerful itself. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

"Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29).

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

Christ spoke with power. "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power" (Luke 4:32).

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but

also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake" (I Thessalonians 1:5).

Philip's preaching is an example of power of the Word of God. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:5-8).

Someone has said that the Bible lives in spite of men. It has well-tested the law of "the survival of the fittest."

"The Deathless Book has survived three great dangers; the negligence of its friends, the false systems built upon it, and the warfare of those who have hated it." - Anon.

Second, there is power in the name of Jesus. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:15-18).

"If ye shall ask anything my name, I will do it" (John 14:14).

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Philippians 2:9-10).

Third, there is power in the blood of Jesus. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and

without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

What can wash away my sins?

What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus!

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18-19).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5).

Fourth, there is the power of the Holy Spirit. "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (I Corinthians 2:4).

"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19).

The Word of God, the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are mighty powers! Those who keep the commandments of God and trust these powers will enter the new Jerusalem.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Revelation 22:14).

INSPIRATION COMES FROM FAR AND WIDE

by Donna Riley-Gordon
Daily News



Sometimes it's tough love we need from our parents when we go through our rebellious stages. Or perhaps, it's a shoulder to cry on when relationships don't work out. Maybe it's that disapproving look that keeps us walking a straight and narrow path.

Few of us get through life without someone influencing us along the way. Most of us have several people who inspire us to do and be better as we move through the stages of life, but there are always those few who stand out.

Whether it is a parent who is our main support and guiding hand, or the teacher who seemed ridiculously tough while in school but seemed to have triggered something inside us without us even knowing it, or perhaps it is the friend who supports us regardless of what we have done or what we think.

Sometimes it's tough love we need from our parents when we go through our rebellious stages. Or perhaps, it's a shoulder to cry on when relationships don't work out. Maybe it's that disapproving look that keeps us walking a straight and narrow path. Or maybe, it's just knowing they will be there to offer a hand when we fail.

Sometimes it's a teacher who delivers words of encouragement that make us believe we can accomplish anything or maybe it's a teacher who delivers stern words to keep us from wandering off the path. Sometimes, it's a teacher who never would get off our backs. When we grow up, we understand why.

Maybe it's a mentor at work who gives us guidance and keeps pushing us forward.

Maybe the persons who had the greatest influence on

our lives are personal friends, those persons who accept us no matter what, who see our flaws, but still love us all the same. The persons we call in the middle of the night when our lives seem to be falling apart.

Perhaps, it's our minister or other church leaders who impart wisdom and remind us we are never alone even when we are by ourselves.

Or maybe it's a husband, wife or children who see things in us we sometimes fail to see in ourselves.

Maybe it's a neighbor, community member, or acquaintance who leads a life we admire from afar. Maybe it's just the person who never forgets to say "hello" at the beginning of the day and "see you tomorrow" at the end of the day. Perhaps it's a coworker who makes us smile or laugh through the day.

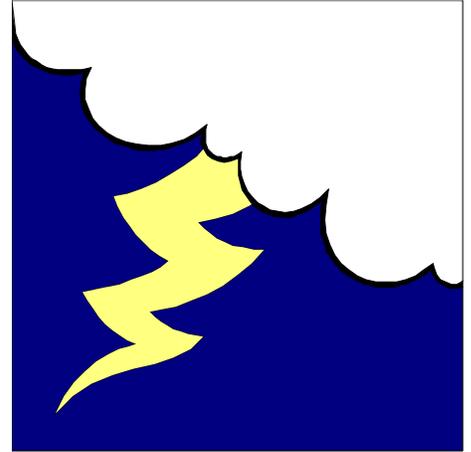
The possibilities are endless, but the end result is the same - the people who toughen our lives make us better people.

These are the people who shape our lives, and we will be forever grateful for that. But perhaps most importantly, when we follow Jesus and His way for our life - these are the traits we try to pass on to our own children and the people we come into contact with.

From the Effingham Daily News
Effingham, Pennsylvania

THE VOICE OF THE LORD

BY DAVID DELONG



Many people today are looking for a word from the Lord to direct their lives. These folks may be perplexed as to what path to take concerning some decision that they face, or they may be puzzled about receiving an answer from the Lord to a very important question that they have. No Christian, however, needs to be in doubt about God's will for his or her life. Jesus said in John 10:1-4, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." This passage makes it plain that Christ's sheep hear His voice, know His voice, and follow His leading. Listed below are some of the many ways that the Lord makes His will known.

(1.) Creation: Perhaps the most basic way that the Lord speaks to people is through His creation. Romans 1:20 says, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." God's creation speaks to mankind. Psalm 19:1 tells us, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Often, the Lord uses His creations as an object lesson to teach people. For instance, in the Book of Proverbs He admonishes the lazy person to observe the hard-working ant (Proverbs 6:6-8). And He teaches us that the ant, the cony, the locust, and the spider act in ways which are very wise (Proverbs 30:25-28). Even house pets can teach us unconditional love, loyalty, and

devotion.

(2.) The lot: The casting of lots has been sometimes used to determine God's will when various choices are under consideration. Proverbs 16:33 reads, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." The Israelites used this method for dividing up the land of Canaan among the twelve Tribes. And in the New Testament, the vacancy in the Apostleship of the Twelve left by the death of Judas Iscariot was filled by Matthias, through the casting of lots.

(3.) Circumstances: Proverbs 16:9 says, "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." Many times, the Lord will place opportunities in a person's way that he or she cannot ignore. Or, sometimes the Lord will close all doors, except one, making the person's choice obvious. To the Church in Philadelphia the Lord said, "...behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it..." (Revelation 3:8). These folks just had to walk through that door. The circumstance of suffering is often allowed for the lessons it will teach us. And then, sometimes God will work through the circumstances of other people to help us, as He did for the Apostle Paul when certain brethren supplied his needs (I Corinthians 16:17-18).

(4.) Conscience: Paul said that he had lived in all good conscience before God (Acts 23:1). This is an extremely important point. Never, under any circumstances, are we to defile our conscience or anyone else's, See I Corinthians 10:28-29. This simple fact alone will help us to do what is right.

(5.) Promptings of the Holy Spirit: Closely associated with the topic of conscience, are the promptings of the Holy Spirit which work in our minds and consciences. Many times we will hear an "inner voice" speaking to us,

or urging us to do a particular thing. We read in Isaiah 30:21, "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Though this was written to ancient Israel, I believe the principle still applies to us today.

(6.) Angels: Though perhaps a rare thing, and something we need to be wary of (because there are demons impersonating as angels of light), God sometimes sends these messengers of heaven to assist us in a time of great need. Moses, Balaam, Daniel, Peter, Paul, John, and Mary were only some of the people in the Bible to whom angels of God were sent. Hebrews 13:2 instructs us, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

(7.) Counsel of people: God has given the gift of wisdom to a number of godly people. Therefore, we should make use of this storehouse of wisdom by seeking out the righteous counsel that such persons have to give. Some people don't like to ask the advice of others, but God's will can often be discerned when we humble ourselves and seek out the counsel of pastors, teachers, and godly brothers and sisters in Christ. Proverbs 11:14 says, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

(8.) Signs: Jesus said in Matthew 12:39, "...An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas." We shouldn't "seek" for signs, but we should rather live by faith. However, the Bible says that God accompanies His work by various signs. For instance, we must be able to discern the "signs of the time" (Matthew 16:3); the proper use of tongues is a sign to unbelievers (I Corinthians 14:22); there will be in the last days signs in the heaven and in the earth (Luke 21:25; Acts 2:19); Jesus worked miracles, wonders, and signs (Acts 2:22); the early Apostles worked wonders and signs (Acts 2:43); various "...signs shall follow them that believe..." (Mark 16:17,18). God does not leave one in doubt about what He is doing in the world today. However, as we said earlier, we must be able to discern the signs of the times, so that we don't fall a prey to Satan's counterfeit devices. We do this "discerning" by a careful study of the Word of God.

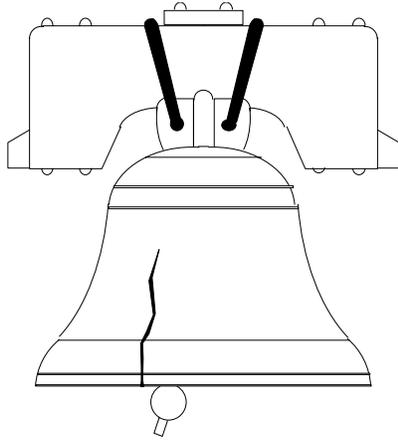
(9.) Prophecy/Dreams/Visions: Acts 2:17,18 reads, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I

will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophecy." We know that this was at least partly fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. However, God's Spirit was not poured out on "all flesh" at that time. That was the beginning of the outpouring of the Spirit. Also notice what Elihu has to say about dreams in Job 33:15-16, "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he (God) openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." I believe that the Lord uses prophecy, dreams, and visions to speak to his people today.

(10.) The Scriptures: All things, including the message to mankind that may come by way of creation, the lot, circumstances, one's conscience, promptings, angels, counsel, signs, prophecy, dreams and visions, must be supported and proven by the Word of God. The Bible is God's main way of communicating His will to mankind. Therefore, a careful, continuous study of His Word is essential to knowing His will. First Thessalonians 5:21 reads, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

(11.) Jesus Christ, The Living Word: Hebrews 1:1,2 says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." Jesus is the Final Authority on the interpretation of the Word of God. Some people form doctrines by going to the Old Testament or to the Book of Acts, or to the Epistle section, or to Revelation first. I believe we should hear what Jesus has to say on a subject first (from the Gospels, etc.), and then compare His teachings with the rest of the Bible. Then, we can come to an accurate meaning of God's Word and will for us today.

To understand God's will, we have to ask, seek, and knock (Matthew 7:7-8); search as if for hidden treasures (Proverbs 2:4); and ask in unwavering faith (James 1:5-7). But, God will make His will known to us. On Judgment Day, no Christian will have the excuse of not knowing God's will for his or her life. That excuse, most likely, will be used to mask the real reason of knowing God's will, but not doing it (Luke 12:47). The Lord is speaking to you and me today. Are we listening to His Voice?



FREEDOM

By Bond Tennant

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). The Declaration of Independence was adopted July 4, 1776. The circumstances leading to the Declaration were taxation without representation and slavery. Spiritual slavery is even worse. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servant to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:16-18). All men and women who are outside of our Lord Jesus Christ are in spiritual slavery and are not free!

There are several things from which man needs freedom. Let us list a few:

1. Man needs freedom from the bondage of corruption. "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).

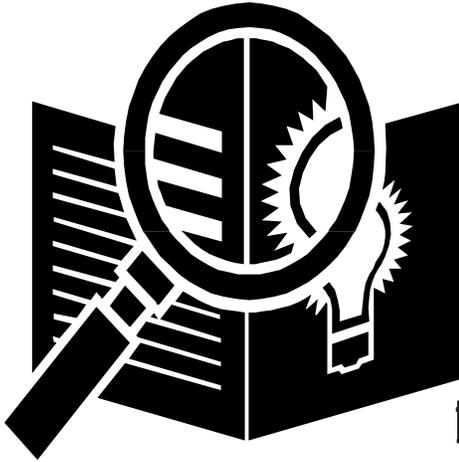
2. Man needs freedom from the bondage of fear. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

3. Man needs freedom from the bondage of deception. "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into bond-

age" (Galatians 2:4).

4. Man needs freedom from bondage to the world. "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:3-5).

Yes, there is potential for freedom. The truth will "set you free" is a statement of potential. This potential is found only in Christ. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). In order for all men to call upon Christ, who is the truth, they must first hear of Him. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:13-14). Then they must understand. "And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear and understand" (Matthew 15:10). The third thing in order to be free in Christ is for them to believe what they have heard and understood. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13).



Revelation: Is This a Book of Mysteries?

Part Two - The Seven Sealed Book

By Del DeLong

The last time we looked into the Book of Revelations, we saw the beauty of God's throne in chapter four. We now venture into the beginning of Chapter 5. *"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof" (Revelation 5:1-2)?*

We see a depiction of God holding up a very important book in his right hand. This book was sealed with seven seals and could not be opened until the seals were remove. Who could remove these seals was the questioned asked. Who was worthy? *"And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon" (Revelation 5:3-4).*

This book was so important, and yet no one could open it except for one man. That man was the Son of God who died for the sins of the world. He was the only man who could bring salvation to mankind. If He had not died for our sins, the book containing salvation could never be opened. Let us read the description of this man, Jesus, as told to us here. *"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which*

are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:5-10).

The elders around the throne rejoice. Tens of thousands of angels rejoiced, because now that book could be open. Jesus would remove the seals.

Jesus became worthy at the time of His death. He will give salvation to His children at the time of the resurrection. So far, 2000 years have elapsed, and we now await His return.

Each of the seals is removed one by one consecutively. The time of His return ticks down as the years pass consecutively. There has been much speculation about the meaning of each of the seals. I believe they represent time periods that have occurred and will occur as the time of the end draws near. Do the events of the seals correspond to events that have taken place and will take place on the earth?

Each seal is described in detail, and here again, much speculation has been attributed to its meaning. Let us look at the description of the first seal.

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:1-2). If this represent a time in history, then what time period is it?

Could this be the time right after Jesus' death when the Roman empire and later the Holy Roman empire ruled the earth? Warfare was done with swords, and this was a very hard time for the church. We notice that a rumble of thunder ushered in this period. The church was persecuted greatly during these years. It was a very stormy time for God's people.

A different horse is observed when the second seal is removed. *"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (Revelation 6:3-4). After the Roman empire lost its world power, much fighting went on throughout what we call the dark ages. These wars continued right up through our own Revolutionary War. Toward the end of these fightings a great sword was given called gun powder, rifles, and cannons.*

Upon the removal of the third seal, a third horse, black in color, is observed as follows: *"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny; and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Revelation 6:5-6).*

The steam engine along with railroads and the industrial revolution promoted great trade and commerce through out the world. The "black horse" replaced the conventional horse as a mode of travel, and this helped promote commerce and trade.

Horse number four representing the removal of the fourth seal is very different as we can see in the following description: *"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed*

with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger; and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Revelation 6:7-8). The first and second world wars were a time of great slaughter, death and destruction. The type of warfare was done with tanks, airplanes, ships, and other war machinery. These "beasts" were made from the earthly materials of iron, oil, and other elements.

The time of the fifth seal is where we are now. It is a time of waiting and fulfillment of prophecy. *"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Revelation 6:9-11).*

The Lord returns and then is seen in the sixth seal. People try to hide from his presence and His face. They ask rocks and mountains to fall upon them. *"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand" (Revelation 6:12-17)? Jesus will catch up his saints and resurrect those who have died and are His. The remaining people will go through this devastating time period called the sixth seal There is more to come. Don't miss the next episode.*

TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

BY BIBI SHIMOON ALLICOCK

"Trust in the Lord with all thy heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones" (Proverbs 3:5-8).

We must realize that God is all-powerful. He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. When we think that we're indulging in activities where we are not seen, we are just fooling ourselves because "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).

When we put our trust and confidence in the Lord, we will never lack, and we will always be content. "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing" (Psalm 34:8-10).

We must not lust after worldly things or pleasures because they are only for a moment. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17).

Daniel had great confidence in Almighty God because, although he knew that a decree was made and signed by the king himself that no one could "ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days," except of the king, he prayed and continued to ask his petitions from his God. "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10).

God was able to deliver Daniel from the fierce lions.

Even the king had confidence in the God whom Daniel served! "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel; and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then the king was exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den" (Daniel 6:16-24).

When we put our trust and confidence in God, He is always able and capable to give us the desires of our hearts. "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:1-4). Amen.



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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

Personalizing 'truth' makes it less divisive

Radio host believes those who differ on religious issues can have a dialogue

**by Barbara Karkabi
Houston Chronicle**

For all the talk of a "God gap" in the last presidential elections, a majority of Americans - both Republicans and Democrats - consider religion important in their lives.

More than 90 percent say they pray, according to Krista Tippett, host of *Speaking of Faith*, public radio's weekly conversation about religion and ethics.

"We ignore this spiritual aspect of human life at our peril," Tippett said at a recent Rothko Chapel lecture. "It deserves the same curiosity, intelligence and seriousness with which we treat all together fundamental aspects of life."

While she believes most Americans want to hear religious voices, they prefer them to be constructive and reflect what Tippett describes as the positive side of religion, one that gives meaning to lives and communities.

"Since the attacks of 9/11, it's been easier to discuss the importance of religion in daily life," Tippett said. But it's also easier for people to make the case that "religion is at the root of the world's worst problems."

Part of an ongoing discussion sponsored by the Rothko Chapel, Tippett focused on the question "Must

Religion Divide Us? The Problem and Promises of Speaking of Faith in America today."

Tippett believes she has found a different format for discussing religion on her show, which is heard on 150 stations around the country and over the Internet in Houston.

Guests express their personal faith and beliefs and tell their own stories. Tippett said she has very few religious authorities on the show because she believes they would feel compelled to speak for their denomination or faith.

"There is a profound difference between hearing someone say: 'This is the truth, and hearing someone say, this is my truth.' The more we can put human voices and stories to our religious claims, the better we will be able to stay in conversations."

During a recent show on gay marriage, Tippett interviewed two evangelical Christians, Richard L. Mouw and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott. Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, said he was willing to think about civil union for gays but could not reconcile himself to church marriages.

Mollenkott, an author and a lesbian, was pro gay marriage.

The pair had different "theologies" about sexuality and did not agree on public policy. But they insisted that "the take of being Christian and moral on the issue is about more than the policies or advocates. It's also about how we treat each other, even when we disagree," Tippett said.

Reaction to the show indicated that people had lis-

tened to it with family and that they could finally talk about the issue of gay marriage.

Tipett grew up as a southern Baptist, went through a period of agnosticism and is now a member of the Episcopal Church. The former diplomat has a Master's of Divinity degree from Yale University.

One of the great questions of the day, Tippet believes, is what the three monotheistic religions - Christianity, Judaism, and Islam - can find in common with the divisions between their people.

She asked that question in an interview with Miroslav Volf, a theologian from Yale Divinity School who grew up with the shared virtue of hospitality.

Another element she has discovered through her guests is spiritual humility.

"It's not about debasing oneself, it is about approaching everything and everyone with a sense of curiosity and wonder," she said. Spiritual humility makes room for mystery, and a sense of mystery is at the crux of every religion, she believes.

"I find that mystery is a word people of every tradition love," she said. "Introduce mystery into any conversation and the conversation gentles. Reality doesn't lose its sharp edges, but we remember that the sharpest edges are not the whole story."

Comment

Truth is truth no matter whether we personalize it or not. There is no point in saying, "this is my truth" because there is only one truth for everyone. Anything else claiming to be the truth is a lie. Truth does divide!

A POINT TO PONDER

While surfing the internet, I came across a letter of some comments made by a pastor of a large denomination. Here are those comments:

I think in my opinion that many evangelicals today, including a vast amount of our Beloved (denomination), has drifted away from the safe moorings of God's Holy Word.

Moreover, I have watched for the past forty years and heard, "the incessant call for change in our Churches, so we changed". Into what?

We have all been seduced into politics in church, and mystical teachings, (charismatic extremism), and hundreds of Bible translations until the Word of God is diluted and ineffective. We are all very off base. We should all "repent and renounce our willingness to compromise." I have friends who are very high ranking SBC folks who are now attending Desert Father's Mystical Retreats, Roman Catholic teachings, and learning Transcendental Meditation, mantras, and other Zen and Buddhist teachings.

The things that I say may surprise you some, but you know this is hitting the bull's eye where many of our Churches are stagnated in the slough of despond, and are stuck in this morbid mode of religious apostasy. God forbid!

Beloved, we are in a pickle. In fact, our very own people are like termites eating away the once solid foundation built by men and women of integrity.

Beloved Ones, it is imperative that we repent and return to the Lord, lest we continue in the deceptions and delusions of our current leadership and trends today.

Comment

The thoughts expressed by this pastor are very true. Jude 3 records, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

The faith once delivered to the saints does not include transcendental meditation or any other practice or teaching adopted from other religions as these are deceptions of Satan, and Satan may get an advantage over us. See II Corinthians 2:11.

Let the Church of God be free from allowing these worldly influences and continue, like the Apostle Paul, to proclaim only the counsel of God. See Acts 20:27.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

Question: How can I resist sinful temptations?

Answer: The child of God resists sinful temptations by saying "No" to the flesh, or old nature, and nourishing the new mind that is within. Following are a few suggestions as to how this may be done.

1. Read and study the Bible! Memorize selected chapters and verses. Meditate on it, and obey it. Psalm 119:9-11 tells us that the Word of God helps to keep us from sinning. Set aside a definite time each day to read God's Word.
2. Pray without ceasing! Whenever you are faced with sinful temptations, ask for God's help. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). If you try to resist by yourself, you will surely fail.
3. Seek the companionship of fellow believers and not of the ungodly. (Read Proverbs 1:10-16 and Hebrews 10:24-25). It is often necessary to work and live with unbelievers, and in such cases we should witness to them with our lips and by our lives. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11).
4. Confess your sins immediately. As soon as you are conscious that you have grieved your Father by a sinful thought, word, or deed, ask His forgiveness immediately. Do not wait unto evening or until the end of the week. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso

confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

5. Keep busy for the Lord. Someone has said that idle hands are the devil's workshop. Give your body to the Lord to use it as He desires. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). There is plenty of work to be done, and you will be serving the Master.
6. Starve the old nature! Be careful what you read, what you watch, where you go, and what you listen to. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:5-10).
7. Feed the new nature! Be occupied with Christ. When you are thinking about Him, you cannot be thinking about sin. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any:

even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3:12-14).

Question: Into how many categories can we associate the works of the flesh as found in Galatians 5:19-21, and will you comment on them?

Answer: The works of the flesh listed in Galatians can be put into four categories:

1. Those dealing with sensuality-adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and licentiousness.
2. Those associated with heathen religions-idolatry, and sorcery.
3. Those that conflict with others, or infractions of the law of love-hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissension, heresies, envy, and murders.
4. Those that deal with intemperance-drunkenness and revelries.

The sins of the flesh cause spiritual infections. These infections will bring one down and make one crawl in weakness and submission to Satan. The infection of hatred, or enmity, conveys the idea of one who is characteristically hostile to others. It is the opposite of the virtue of love for the brethren and for all men.

Contentions is another word for debate and discord. The word here means the rivalry which finds its outcome in quarreling and wrangling.

Jealousy is the degenerated desire to attain nobility. It has come to mean the desire to have what someone else has. It is an unfriendly feeling excited by another person's possessions.

Wrath can also be understood as uncontrolled temper or outbursts of temper. It describes an anger which flames out and dies, not an ongoing anger.

Selfish ambition means to be self-seeking. The original meaning of ambition, however, is one who works as a hired laborer. Then it came to mean work done for pay. Eventually it meant canvassing for political or public office for personal, selfish motives, not from any desire to serve.

Dissension literally means "a standing apart" not a band of brothers. Dissension describes a society in which the members fly apart instead of coming together. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have

learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

Heresies, or factions, can be described as crystallized dissension. It issues from people who separate themselves from true doctrine and follow their own tenets. It is the feeling that everyone else is wrong except those in your own little group.

Envy has been called "the greatest of all diseases among men." It goes beyond the desire to have one of what someone else has. It describes instead the spirit that begrudges the fact that the other person has these things at all. It does not so much want things for itself. It merely wants to take them from the other. It is a grief of someone else's good. It is the quality not of the jealous but rather of the embittered mind.

Question: What does the last part of Haggai 1:6 mean?

Answer: First, let us quote the last part of Haggai 1:6, "... and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."

God commanded the children of Israel to repair the Temple, and they disobeyed Him. They could earn more money in other kinds of work. Perhaps they said to each other, "There is no hurry about repairing the Temple. It can wait for awhile without doing any harm. Our families need more and more, and we have a good chance to earn wages just now. It is truly our duty to look after our families first, to do our best for them."

Let us quote all of Haggai 1:3-8: "Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord."

We see the same situation everywhere today. Church work is neglected, and some work and earn more money on the Sabbath. Does it ever occur to them that all that extra money may fall through holes. Unless we pay our debt to God first, we are apt to remain in debt to others.



India





Lessons

LESSON I

OUR CONDUCT IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

Scripture Reading: Psalm 95:1-11.

Golden Text: Psalm 122:1.

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

NOTE: The more we worship the Lord God, the less attraction the world will have for us and the less opportunity the Devil has to deceive us. Let us worship God in spirit and in truth.

1. How are we to come to church? Ecclesiastes 5:1; Psalm 100:4.
2. How must we worship God? John 4:23-24.
3. Is it possible that some types of worship may be in vain? Matthew 15:7-9.
4. Can we worship God fully and not be holy? I Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2.
5. How should we serve God? Hebrews 12:28.
6. What should prompt worship to God within us? Romans 5:6-11; John 3:16.

LESSON II

OBEDIENCE

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 6:1-11.

Golden Text: Ephesians 6:1.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."

NOTE: We should begin to serve the Lord while we are young. We must be obedient to our Heavenly Father as well as to our parents here on earth.

1. What is promised to all who honor their father and mother? Exodus 20:12.

2. Should parents teach their children the Word of God? Deuteronomy 6:7.

3. How are children to be brought up? Ephesians 6:4.

4. Sometimes we think our parents do not love us because they chasten us or correct us for things which we do that are not right. Is this true? Proverbs 13:24.

NOTE: The parent who really loves his child will chasten him so that he will not do things which are displeasing to him and to the Lord.

5. When we do wrong in the sight of God we will be chastened by Him also. Hebrews 12:9.

6. When should we begin to serve the Lord? Ecclesiastes 12:1.

NOTE: If we are not obedient to our parents, we certainly will not be acceptable to God. Remember that your parents love you and want to see you saved in the Kingdom of God. And that is why they correct you when you do wrong.

LESSON III

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

Scripture Reading: James 3:1-18.

Golden Text: Proverbs 18:21.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

NOTE: In considering some of the hindrances to a holy life, there is none so dangerous as an unbridled tongue. Not only have people lost their own spiritual power through wrong use of the tongue, but often poisoned arrows have been sent to many hearts through an untamed tongue. Let us study how we can try to control our words.

Lessons

1. What is said of the person who bridles his tongue? James 3:2.
2. What blessing is promised for properly governed conversation? Psalm 50:23.
3. Is it possible for man to tame the tongue through his own power? James 3:8.
4. If we do not bridle our tongue, does our religion amount to nothing in the sight of God? James 1:26.
5. What shall be given to the false tongue? Psalm 120:3-4.
6. Can our words be called a true index of our heart? Matthew 12:34-35.

- conversation? I Timothy 4:12; I Peter 1:15-16.
4. Would God be pleased with just any kind of conversation that we might use? Philippians 1:27.
 5. How must our conversations be among other people? I Peter 2:12; 3:16.
 6. If we use the right conversation, what promise is made to us? Psalm 50:23.
 7. When the Lord comes, what manner of persons ought we to be? II Peter 3:10-14; James 3:13.

LESSON IV

OUR CONVERSATION

Scripture Reading: I Peter 1:3-16.

Golden Text: Psalm 50:23.

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation a right will I shew the salvation of God."

NOTE: This lesson is a continuation of our last lesson. Just as we are to bridle our tongue, we are to watch all our conversations. There is one who hears all the unkind criticisms and harsh judgments we often whisper behind the backs of those who are attacked. Let us all remember that what we say and even what we think is known by the Father in Heaven.

1. To become a Child of God, what must be done concerning our former conversation? Ephesians 4:22-23,25.
2. What is it that should not proceed out of our mouths? Ephesians 4:29,31.
3. Should not we (the people of God) be examples in our

Below are some Bible verses about love, with a word missing. Finish the verses by adding the missing words. Use the Bible verse to help you.

1. Love the Lord thy God with all thy _____. Mark 12:30.
2. We _____ him because he first loved us. I John 4:19.
3. The love of _____ is the root of all evil. I Timothy 6:10.
4. His _____ over me was love. Song of Solomon 2:4.
5. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his _____ for his friends. John 15:13.
6. Love not the _____. I John 2:15.
7. Love is of _____. I John 4:7.
8. Love your _____, do good to them which hate you. Luke 6:27.
9. Love thy _____. Mark 12:31.
10. For God so loved the _____ that he gave his only begotten _____, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting _____. John 3:16.

Story



**HOW THE BLOCKS
WERE PUT AWAY**

"Bedtime!" called Mamma. "Put the blocks away dears."

"No! No! No!" cried the children in a chorus of disapproval.

"Do not want to go to bed," said Jimmie, the youngest.

"It is so early," said Gerald, "I am not tired."

"And I am not going to put the blocks away," said Sheila, "because I did not put them out."

"And I did not," repeated Jimmie.

"But you cannot leave the dining room looking like this," said Mamma. "Daddy will be home soon and he always likes to see the place tidy."

"Well, I am not going to put the things away," said Gerald. "That is Sheila's job."

"It is not my job, Mamma, I think Gerald's mean; he should do it himself."

"I can not do it," said Jimmie with a sigh, "for I am too tired."

"Well," said Mamma, "somebody must do it, and I will give you just five minutes to decide. If the blocks are not away then - well, you know what will happen."

So Mamma went into the kitchen and closed the door behind her. The three children sat on the floor and looked at the pile of blocks. Then they scowled at each other.

"You should put them away," said Sheila to Gerald. "You are mean."

"So are you. I will not do it, so there," and Gerald

pulled his feet up under him and locked his hands over his knees in an attitude of grim obstinacy.

Slowly the minutes ticked away.

"Mamma will be here in two minutes, and then you will catch it," said Sheila.

"So will you."

"But it is your job," insisted Sheila.

"It is not; it is yours," replied Gerald. Sheila looked at the clock.

"There is only another minute," she said, "and you know Mamma always does what she says."

"Well, put things away then."

"I will not; it is your job."

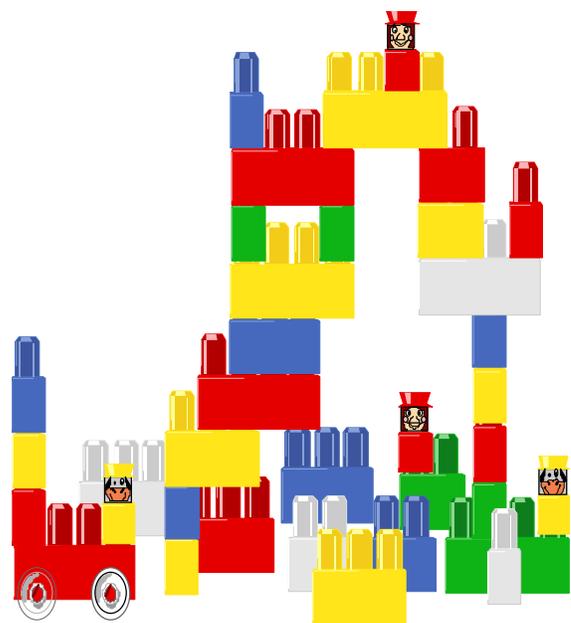
"It is not; it is yours."

"I will tell you what," interrupted little Jimmie. "Let us each put one away, one after the other; and I will start."

"Not a bad idea, Jimmie," said Gerald.

So Jimmie brought the box and put in the first block. Sheila followed with another, and then Gerald. Soon they were trying to see who could pick up the blocks quickest. Before the last minute had gone, all blocks were put away.

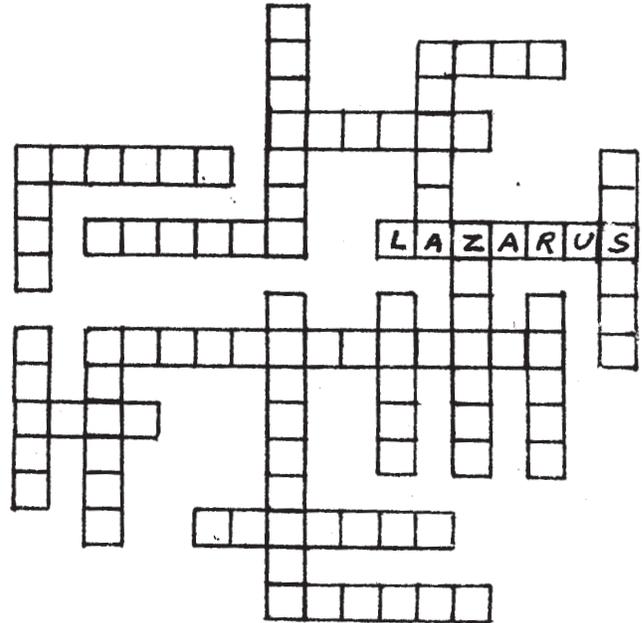
When Mamma came in, they were all smiling and happy, and when they saw the slipper that Mama held in her right hand, they were glad they had taken Jimmie's suggestion.



JESUS' FRIENDS

The Bible tells us of many people who were friends of Jesus or who loved Him. Below are names of nineteen of His friends. Fill in the blanks with their names by counting the number of letters.

- Paul Mary John James
- Peter Simon Joanna Joseph
- Andrew Mary Magdalene Martha
- Philip Thomas Simeon Matthew
- Lazarus Stephen Zebedee Zacchaeus

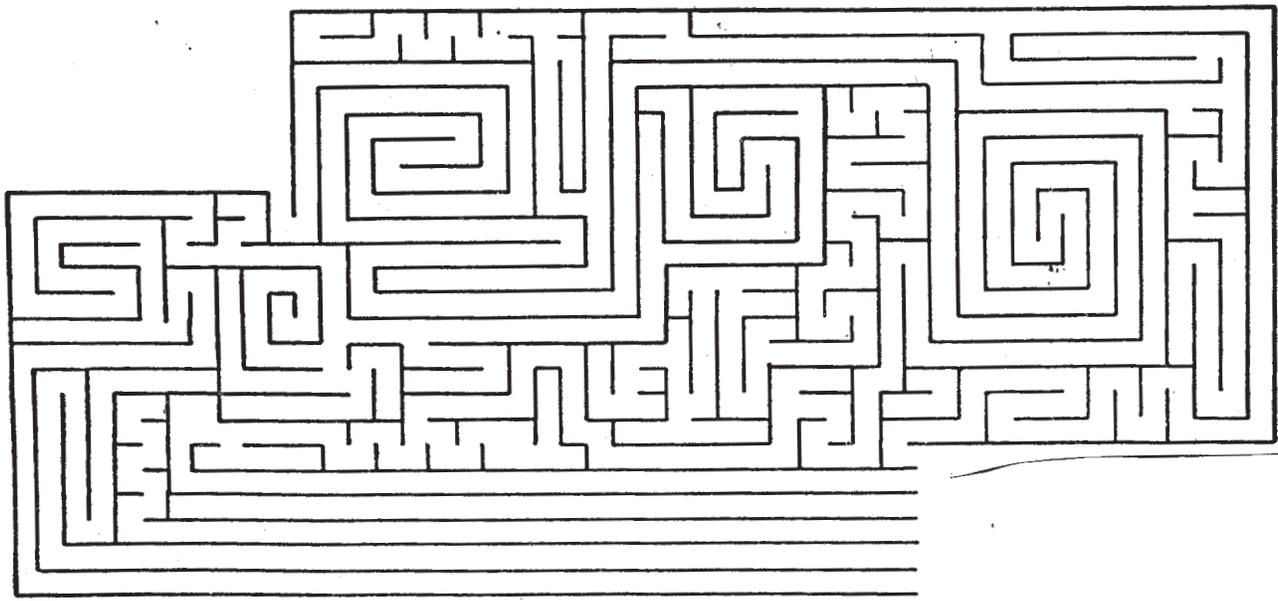


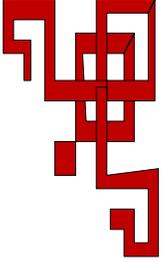
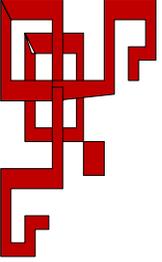
THE SHEEPFOLD

The little lamb would like to get into the sheepfold. He must get to it without crossing any line. Can you help him out?

A VERSE TO REMEMBER -

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." John 10:14.





Will Of God

By David DeLong

**O, will of God, a refuge sweet,
Where we, from troubled times may rest;
A dwelling-place, a safe retreat,
Which leaves our wearied souls refreshed.**

**A will so pure, which gives such peace,
There is no other place on Earth
Where sinful man can find release
From all that's woe, to all that's Worth.**

**That will, may sometimes seem a road,
Which leads through sand and desert heat;
And sometimes seems to be a load,
The weight of which could bring defeat.**

**But, in the end, that blessed will,
Though hard at times, will give such joy;
A joy, which is more joyful still,
For it's The Master's to employ.**

**For God, in His great strategy,
Will never spare us pain or ill;
If through this great adversity,
We come to rest within His will.**

