

The Advocate of Truth

God's Grace

Hospitality

*Christ Was
Mislaid*

Fearing God

The Ark



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About the cover: This photo was taken in Alaska at the Knik River.

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God's Grace

By Boyie Hubert Matthew

"Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt."

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever..." (II Peter 3:18).

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).

Although this virtue is free and extends to all who are willing, yet, how sad few are willing to accept of this precious quality to improve or enhance their lives and bring them into harmony with the Father.

Why is this virtue so necessary? It brings one back into a proper relationship with the Father and

His Son.

Who gets more of this favour?

"Surely he scorneth the scornors: but he giveth grace unto the lowly" (Proverbs 3:34). We therefore, must not take this grace in vain.

"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (II Corinthians 6:1).

We should then work diligently for the Master seeing that this grace is freely bestowed upon us.

Freely bestowed on all who believe; you that are longing to see His face, will you this moment His grace receive?



HOSPITALITY

BY RICKY HERRERA

Webster's New World Dictionary defines HOSPITALITY as: the act, or quality of being hospitable: solicitous entertainment of guests.

"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to HOS-

PITALITY" (Romans 12:13). As children of God, this is one of the qualities or gifts that we're commanded to possess.

Being a traveling minister, I have experienced this

wonderful gift from saints throughout the world. They give to me as a child of God, and in return God gives me to bless them. This reminds me of how Abraham was blessed because of his HOSPITALITY toward the Lord in the plains of Mamre. "And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat" (Genesis 18:1-8). We can see here that Abraham gave them of what God had blessed him by telling him that his wife, Sarah, was going to have a son. "And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him" (Genesis 18:9-10). Given to HOSPITALITY is a gift that a man of God must have if he desires the office of a bishop. "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to HOSPITALITY, apt to teach" (I Timothy 3:1-2).

We have another example of a Shunammite woman who cared to show her HOSPITALITY to Elisha before she even knew that he was a man of God. "And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee,

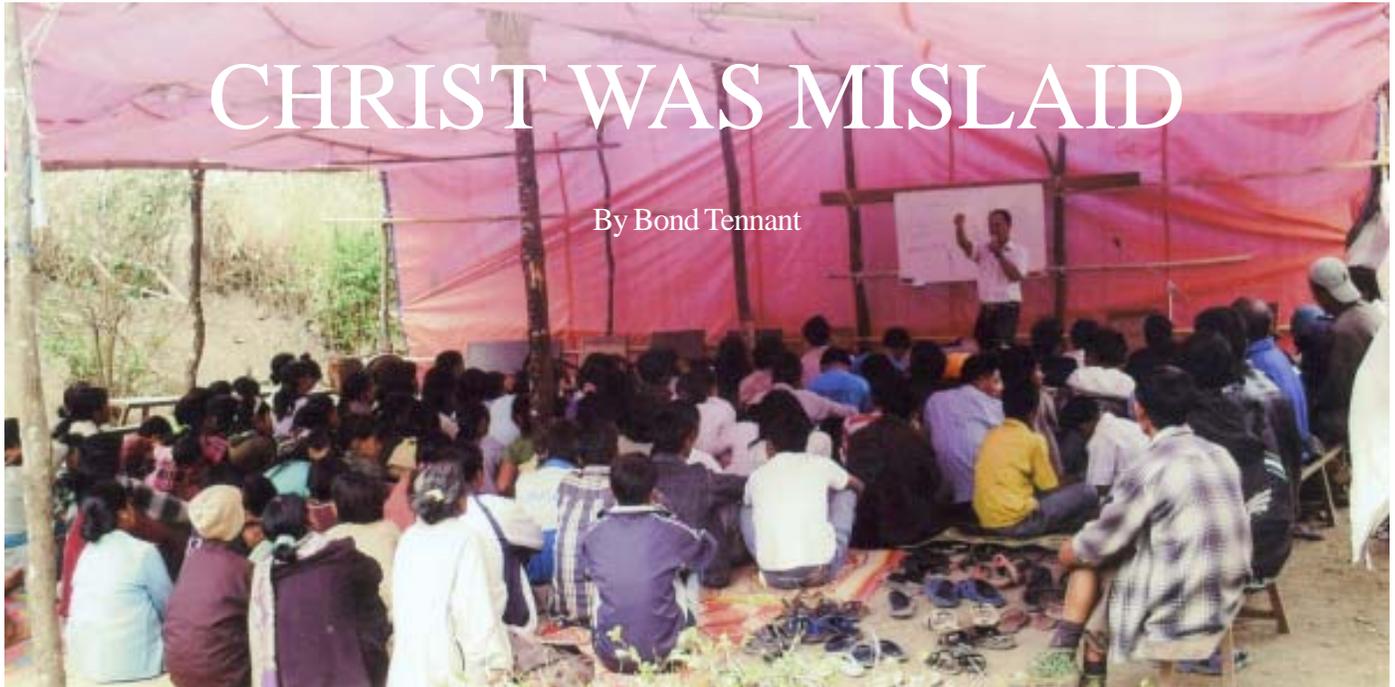
on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captatin of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people. And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life" (II Kings 4:8-17). Elisha was so grateful for what the Shunammite woman had done for him and in return blessed her with a son, even as the Lord blessed Abraham for his goodness. The Apostle Paul instructed Titus to ordain elders who displayed HOSPITALITY among other attributes. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Titus 1:5-8).

We have many examples in the Bible of saints who were blessed with the gift of being HOSPITABLE. We also have many examples today of God's children sharing with others the blessing that God has granted them. I have been blessed to experience this kind act of love, which can be called charity, from brethren in many parts of the world. I can only pray that they are as blessed as I have been. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (I Peter 4:9). We will always be blessed by being HOSPITABLE. It's a good tool to minister unto others and to be ministered to. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good

stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10).

One last thought on HOSPITALITY is that we have to be willing to receive it as well. Many times we can be very warm and welcoming toward others, but not very

willing to receive the same treatment that we are willing to give. Receiving the blessings that God's children want to share with us is as rewarding as the ones that we have received from God, Himself.



"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master" (John 20:11-16).

Someone has said, "We are so concerned about God, we have mislaid Christ." Many people are very much involved in religion. Many are philosophically concerned about the details of God such as the "who," "why," "what," and "how." In trying to understand God and religion, they fail to realize that the real secret is our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the revelation of God, but many have mislaid Him.

Let us consider how even some of Jesus' followers mislaid Him.

First, let us look at Mary Magdalene who is mentioned in our lead Scripture. Christ had delivered her from seven demons. Perhaps she was the most devoted of the female followers. We may say that she came in love but without faith. She came in sorrow and weeping. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre" (John 20:11). Christ asked, "Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" Because she sought a dead Christ, she had mislaid Him.

Let us consider "Mary, the mother of James, and Salome". Please read Mark 16:1-8. "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome" came to do service, but they lacked faith. Their mission was to embalm a dead body. They were not prepared for the miracle of His resurrection. They were affrighted (Mark 16:5). They mislaid Christ.

Let us consider Cleopas and another disciple. Please read Luke 24:13-32. Although they were stirred emotionally, they lacked faith. They testified well, but they were

possessed of doubt. "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:21-25). They mislaid Christ.

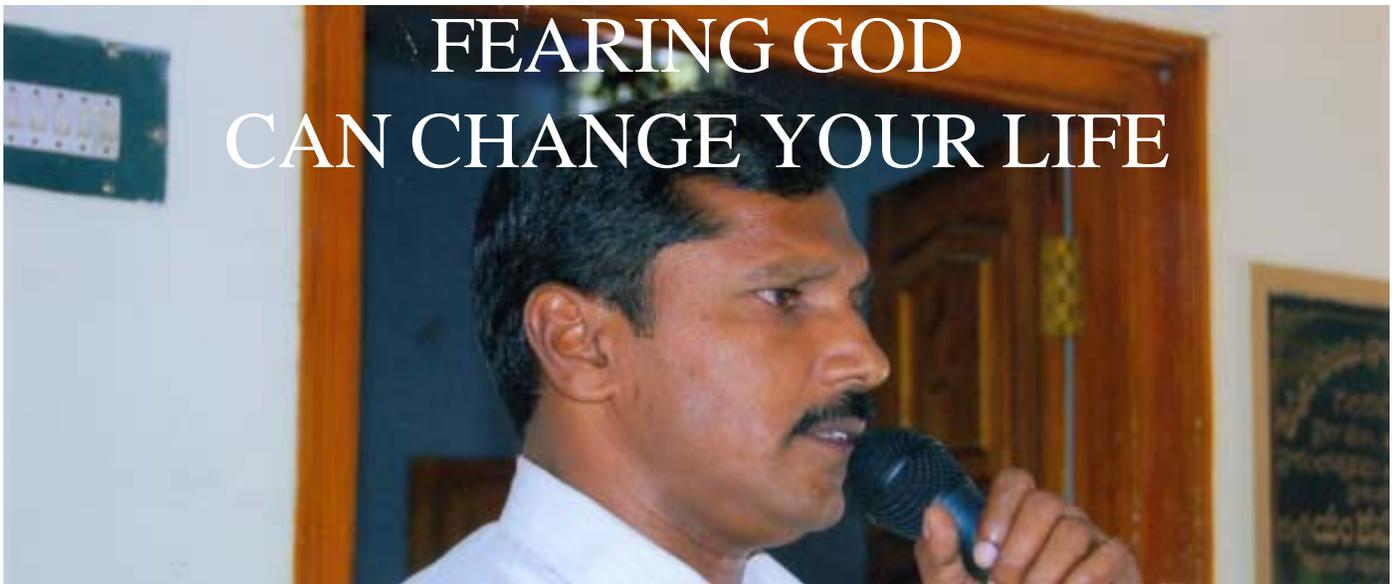
Let us meet Thomas. Please read John 20:24-28. He could not believe the testimony of his brethren. "The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). The miracle had to meet his specifications. Although he belonged to the body of believers, he was faithless. "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (verse 27).

Finally, let us consider the eleven apostles. Please read Mark 16:14 and Luke 24:33-43. They could not believe the testimony of witnesses. "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen" (Mark 16:14). They thought they were seeing a spirit (ghost). They were terrified! "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit" (Luke 24:37).

Lack of knowing the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead and not believing caused these early saints to mislay Christ. "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9). Perhaps they had read it, but they did not understand it. In my Bible, the word *understood* is used in a footnote for the word *knew*.

"And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not" (Mark 16:11). "And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them" (Mark 16:13).

May we know Jesus as the active, resurrected Lord and continue to do His will.



BY CAROL BUECHNER

Challenge your mind for a few minutes to really consider and concentrate on how you think and feel about God. What feelings does His name evoke? How often in the day do you think of Him or pray to Him? Is He fre-

quently on your mind or just occasionally? Is God just someone to run to when something happens to you or you have a need? Do you mainly think of Him just on Sabbath only? What place does He take in your life? How

deep is your relationship with God? Is He like a casual acquaintance or is there a close relationship with Him that makes Him your constant companion? Perhaps you will change your mind about the way you perceive God and feel about Him as you read the following article.

Speak the word "fear" and you possibly think of being afraid, frightened, scared, or being in danger. Perhaps even an incident that caused you to fear may come to your mind. Read carefully the following passage and consider what the word fear might mean in it: "What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant" (Psalm 25:12-14). Do you think that God is stating that you need to be afraid and frightened of Him so that He can then teach you and you can dwell in peace and learn of His covenant? It would seem difficult to learn anything and be at peace when you are afraid, because this would bring about anxiety, uneasiness, and apprehension.

There is a much different meaning for the word "fear" when applied to fearing God as stated in the passage in Psalms. It means to revere or look upon with feelings of deep respect, love, and awe. It is to honor, hold in high esteem, and profound regard. You are actually appreciating the sacredness, holiness, and divine nature of God. You develop such a depth of understanding of the greatness of God as the Almighty, Omnipotent, Omnipresent Creator, I AM THAT I AM, that you are humbled with reverential trust and love for Him. As you continue reading, keep these meanings of "fear" in mind and apply them to what you are reading.

There are definitely some benefits from having the reverential fear of God. Studying the following Scriptures will lead you to the discovery of such benefits. Notice as you read the Scriptures that there have been some words I have interjected in parenthesis. You may want to try using these words in the place of the word "fear" to get a more solid understanding of what fearing God really means.

Deuteronomy 5:29: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear (respectfully honor) me, and keep all my commandments always, that if might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"

Psalm 25:12-14: "What man is he that feareth (re-

veres and worships) the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with them that fear (have a deep, devoted, and profound relationship with) him; and he will shew them his covenant."

Psalm 31:19-20: "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear (have immense regard for) thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."

Psalm 33:18-19: "Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear (humbly obey) him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine."

Psalm 34:9: "O fear (be filled with awe and inspiration of) the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him."

Psalm 145: 19: "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear (love and respect) him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them."

Psalm 147:11: "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear (highly esteem) him, in those that hope in his mercy."

Proverbs 14:26: "In the fear (reverential trust) of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge."

Proverbs 19:23: "The fear (appreciation and regard for the holiness) of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil."

Did you take note of all those wonderful promises to those who fear (reverentially trust, are filled with awe and inspiration, regard His holiness, highly esteem, love and respect, humbly obey, revere and worship, have a deep relationship with) God? It is quite a list and it is only a few out of the myriad of benefits promised to those who truly fear God. Why would you not want to form a deeper relationship with Him and draw near to the Almighty God?

How do you develop this fear or reverential trust or deep regard for the holiness of God and come into a deep satisfying relationship with Him? Does it just come automatically when you accept Jesus as your Savior, are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit? Proverbs 2:1-5 will give

some direction into the process. "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; THEN SHALT THOU UNDERSTAND THE FEAR OF THE LORD, and find the knowledge of God." It is a process that takes time and diligence on your part. It is an ongoing process, as you will see, as a closer examination is taken of the process stated in Proverbs 2:1-5.

First, you have to be willing to receive the Word of God. To be willing is to be favorably disposed to doing it readily and cheerfully in a voluntary and not forced manner. Your heart and mind must be ready to accept what is written in the Word of God as the complete truth. Any preconceived ideas or beliefs learned in the past might need to be changed as you get deeper into the Word of God. Remember the Bible is God's manual for daily living and let it be your guide in every way. Job advises you to "Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart" (22:22). "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (23:12).

Second, treasure God's commandments, which will guide you in doing what is right. Of course, there are the Ten Commandments that you must follow, but there are many other commandments that you will find as you study. For example, God requires you to pay tithes and offerings. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8). The Bible is full of instructions by which you need to live in order to be a faithful servant of God. Therefore it is necessary to spend much time prayerfully reading and meditating on the Scriptures in order to know how God wants you to live. But do not forget the importance of LIVING the Ten Commandments and do not take them lightly. Perhaps you repeat them every Sabbath in church, but have not really given them much thought recently, or you may be ignoring what they say because keeping a particular one may be an inconvenience to you. For example, the fourth commandment states: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any

work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11). This specifically says to keep the Sabbath holy (set apart) as a time to honor God, rest from the world, assemble with others of like faith, and put aside self. The Sabbath starts at sundown on Friday and goes to sundown on Saturday, so this entire time is to be honored as the Sabbath. This does not mean that you are out with friends at a public place doing inappropriate activities on Friday night. Neither does it mean that you go out to a restaurant to eat after Sabbath services. Think carefully about how you spend your Sabbath. Are you keeping it as the Sabbath of the Lord your God or are you using it as a day to go to church for a couple of hours and then do what you please the rest of the time?

Contemplate the second commandment. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: 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; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments" (Exodus 20:4-6). Possibly you are thinking that this is ridiculous that you could not possibly have any idols that you worship. But there are many things that can take the place of God and therefore are idols in your life. For example, your job, home, car, money, recreational vehicle or home, another person, the pursuit of material things, etc. can be idols. These things take the place of your time with God. Your focus is not on God but on something else. God is not first place in your life. He gets what is left over of your attention, time, money, etc.

The third thing in developing a deep satisfying relationship with an awesome God is to "incline thy ear unto wisdom." This has to do with listening to God for the wisdom He can give you and not acting on your own. Wisdom is judging rightly and following the soundest course of action, making right choices and decisions which are based on knowledge, experience and understanding. Wisdom is knowing how to apply the truth and being able to sense when you are drifting away from God's will. It is

understanding God's perspective on your circumstances and responding accordingly. You can have all the knowledge in the world, but without teaming it with wisdom, it can be useless. "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:5-7). "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold" (Proverbs 3:13-14). Wisdom is vital in your working relationship with the Almighty, Glorious, and Loving Heavenly Father. How do you get this wisdom? "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all man liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

As you have been diligently working on the first three steps to building your relationship with the Great and Almighty God, the fourth step is, "apply thine heart to understanding" and "liftest up thy voice for understanding." To apply means to concentrate on and put to use your abilities. To understand is to get, grasp, comprehend, or perceive the meaning of information you are reading. It is vital to read God's Word with your heart to get the full impact of what He is saying to you. You can read something but if you are not attempting to understand it, it will not profit you in the least. You must lift up your voice to God in prayer and ask Him to show you so you will perceive the real meaning and not be led astray. Proverbs 2:11-12 advises: "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things." More advice is given in Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." Truly understanding God's Word is vital to living a christian life. Always check it out to make sure your understanding is from God and not something you have heard from man or dreamed up on your own. Spending time in the Bible is necessary to get the complete understanding and not a partial picture.

"If thou criest after knowledge" is the fifth activity you need to do in developing your relationship with God. To cry would be to pray for and seek God. Knowledge is being well informed, knowing the facts, being able to recognize, having a clear perception or understanding of, having perceived, to have a firm mental grasp of, and hav-

ing secured in the memory of. You are earnestly asking God to give you, as you study His Word, understanding of it so that you can apply it to your life and live the way He would have you to live. What happens when you do not have the knowledge of God through His Word? "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29). You want to fully understand what His Word speaks in the Bible. You need to search it out for yourself. Sometimes a person listens to someone else and accepts what that person tells him rather than searching out the real truth for himself. Go to God and His Word for the truth. Knowing the complete truth is essential. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Of extreme importance in developing your relationship with the Almighty, Holy Sovereign God is that you "...seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures" (Proverbs 2:4). To seek is to try to find, look for and pursue by questioning, requesting and looking for with effort. Searching is exploring, looking for, and examining closely to find something hidden. What are you searching for? It is God's truth, wisdom, knowledge, and spiritual understanding in your heart, mind, soul, and spirit. Look for it as if you are looking for something precious, which it is. When you have lost something valuable, like a very expensive piece of jewelry, you spend much time looking for it. This is what you are to do with God's written Word to you. Little time spent searching means reaping little. Much searching reaps great results. Daily doses of God's word keeps it fresh in your mind and you will want to search for more about Him and build your relationship with God to a higher level.

Think back to the beginning of this article. The fear of God has a possibility to change your life dramatically. As you draw closer to Him through a willing mind, keeping His commandments, becoming more knowledgeable about Him, developing wisdom and understanding and crying out to Him in prayer, you will feel His presence and want to be in His holy presence continually. The understanding of what God really means to you will become clearer and clearer. You will come to the realization that He has chosen you. There are millions of people in the world who have never heard of this true God, yet you have the privilege to know Him and worship Him with all your heart. You will humbly submit to Him in all things

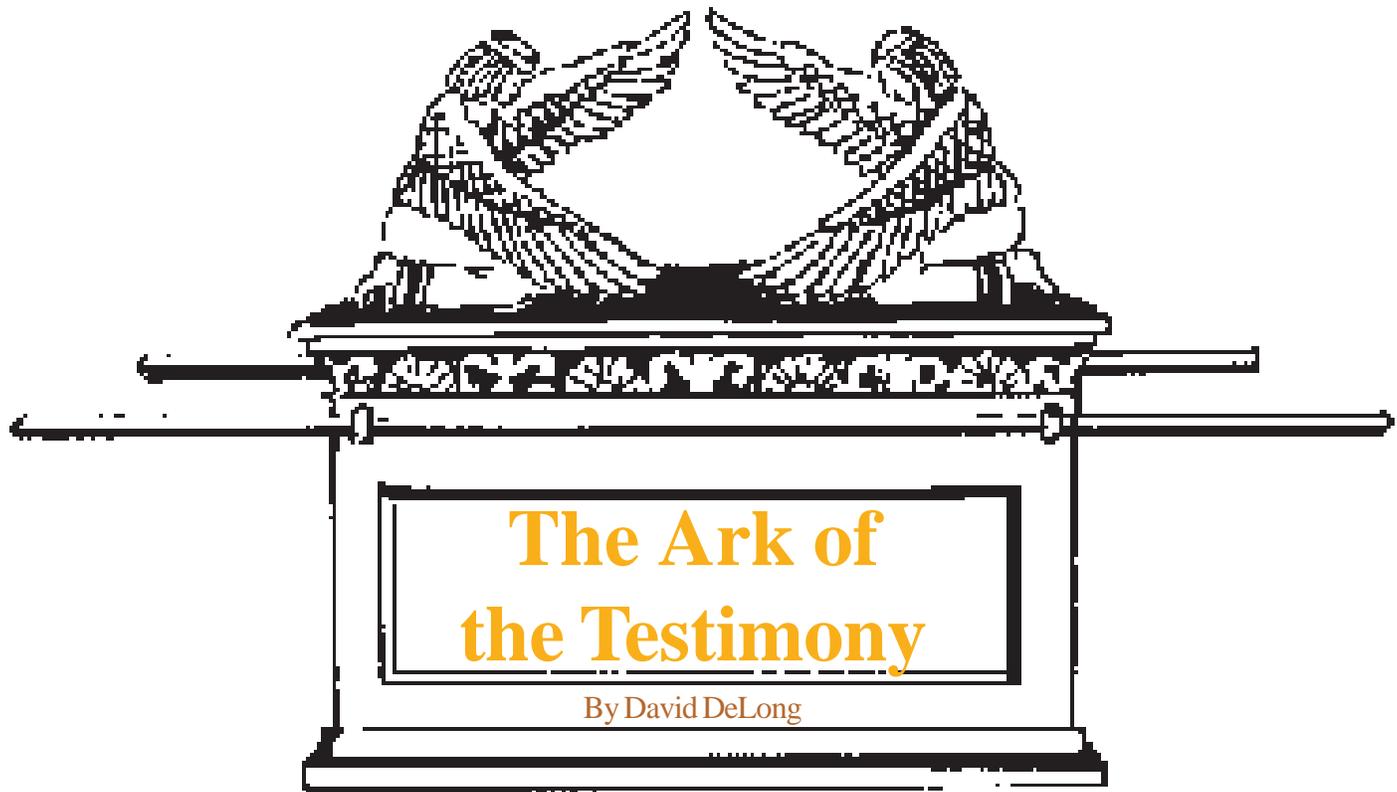
because you have reverential trust in Him, are in awe of Him, regard Him with deep and profound respect, and are inspired by His greatness and majesty. You realize you cannot live without worshipping, praising, thanking and glorifying His holiness and divine nature. Perhaps you will be overwhelmed by God's love for you and you will want to kneel before Him surrendering everything in your life to His care. Your devotion to God is better than anything man or earthly pleasures can give you.

Following is a list of words that you can apply to God and meditate on Him with renewed blessings: INFINITE, MASTER, SUPREME, MOST HIGH, CARETAKER, PROVIDER, GUARDIAN, PROTECTOR, REVENGER, COUNSELOR, CREATOR, DELIVERER, HEALER, REFUGE, ROCK, ETERNAL, ALMIGHTY, GLORY, SOVEREIGN, HOLY, SACRED, MAGNIFICENT, AWESOME, WONDERFUL, INSPIRING, EVER PRESENT, ALL KNOWING, TRUSTWORTHY, LIFE, JOY, PEACE, PURE LOVE,

FAVOR, CONFIDENCE, SECURITY, FORGIVING, KING, TRUTH, JUSTICE, POWER, STRENGTH, IMPOSSIBLE, I AM THAT I AM, KING OF KINGS, LORD OF LORDS...

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

"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. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:16-18).



In Exodus 25:10-22, the Lord instructed Moses, concerning the children of Israel, that they were to make an ark. He said: "And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half

the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and

two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

The ark of the testimony was apparently a rectangular chest made out of shittim (acacia) wood. It was two-and-a-half cubits long, one-and-a-half cubits wide, and one-and-a-half cubits high with a “mercy seat” on the top. A cubit has been reckoned using various sizes. However, about 18 inches per cubit seems to be a standard unit of size. If that was the case, then the ark was about 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high. Or, roughly speaking, it was about 4 feet, by 2 feet, by 2 feet.

The whole ark was overlaid with pure gold, inside and outside. This would be an apt representation of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, as a man on earth, was “overlaid” with God’s holiness. Even the crown of gold on the ark could represent His kingly nature.

We are told in Deuteronomy 31:9 that the priests, who were of the sons of Levi, were the ones to bear the ark. Golden rings were placed in the four corners of the ark, through which were inserted staves of shittim wood overlaid with gold. The priests carried the ark by these staves. Believers are now God’s priests (I Peter 2:9; Revelation

5:10), and as such, they are responsible to “bear” the Lord Jesus to the world, so that God’s presence--His “Shekinah- Glory”--may be made known to others.

The Lord had told Moses, “And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.” This, of course, referred to the Ten Commandments, written with the finger of God on two tables of stone (see Deuteronomy 10:1-5). This law, which is still in force today, and which constitutes the basis for God’s covenant with mankind (see Romans 3:19,20), is the *moral* law of God. It was placed “in”, or “into”, the ark, and is superior to the “book of the law” which was placed “in the side of the ark” (see Galatians 3:10; Deuteronomy 31:24-26).

Two other objects were placed into the ark along with the two tables of the testimony. These were a golden pot filled with manna (see Exodus 16:31-34), and Aaron’s “almond” rod that the Lord caused to bud, blossom, and bear almonds from among the 12 rods presented to Him (see Numbers 17:1-13; Hebrews 9:3,4). These represent Christ as being the Word, the Bread of Life, and the Resurrection and the Life (see John 1:1,14; 6:48-51; 11:25-26).

The “mercy seat” very possibly represented God’s heavenly throne. We are told, referring to the Lord, that “...I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony...” Cherubim, according to the book of Ezekiel, are heavenly beings portrayed with four faces and four wings (see Ezekiel 1:4-20; 10:8-15). They apparently live in close proximity to God’s effulgent glory, which radiates the essence of His love and holiness--the basis of His righteous character--which is summed up by the Ten Commandments.

It is interesting to note that the golden cherubim, on the ark of the testimony, faced each other on the mercy seat and were situated *over* the two tables of God’s Law. It is as if they were “covering” the Law with their outstretched wings in a symbolic attempt to keep it from desecration. At the same time, their faces shone with the brilliance of God’s glory.

It is believed that Satan is a cherub, and that he may have once been in a position, before his fall, to have been in the very presence of God on His throne. In Ezekiel chapter 28, verses 1-10 we are told of the “prince of

Tyrus” who was a “man” (see vs. 9), and a leader over the Phoenician kingdom of Tyre. He claimed to be divine by stating “...I am a God, I sit in the seat of God...” (vs. 2). Therefore, this person may be a type of the “man of sin”, or *may be* the “man of sin” (see II Thessalonians 2:3,4). Though claiming to be God, he is only a man.

In chapter 28, verses 11-19, however, we notice a shift of circumstances. Now the person being discussed is the “king of Tyrus”. He was “...full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty” (vs. 12). He had been in “Eden the garden of God” (vs. 13). Verses 14-17 inform us, “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.”

This person, we are told, was “the anointed cherub that covereth”, and that he had been “upon the holy mountain of God”. He had “walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire”. He was “perfect” from his creation “till iniquity was found in thee”. His end will be by fire as we read from the second part of verse 18, “...therefore will I (God) bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.”

All of these clues point toward the fact that this passage is referring to Satan. He was “king of Tyrus” by being the evil spiritual force behind the “prince of Tyrus”. (For other examples of evil spirits being the forces behind earthly kingdoms, see Daniel 10:12,13, re: “prince of the kingdom of Persia” and, possibly, “kings of Persia”). He had been in Eden (see Genesis 3:1-15); he sinned by lifting up himself with pride (see Isaiah 14:12-14; I Timothy 3:6). He will be destroyed with fire (see Revelation 20:10). And, perhaps most convincingly, this person is a “cherub”--a type of angelic being that we have already mentioned.

But how was Satan, at one time, known as “the anointed cherub that covereth”? To be anointed is to be consecrated to a particular service. In fact, the Lord had said to this cherub, “...and I have set thee so...” But what was he covering? When we look for the Hebrew meaning of the words “covereth” and “covering” in this passage, we find the term “cakak” or “sakak” (pronounced saw-kak) being used. Strong’s Concordance gives the definition of this word as : “to entwine as a screen.” By implication: “to fence in, cover over.” Figuratively: “Protect”: “cover,...defend, hedge in, join together, set, shut up.”

In other words, it appears that the anointed service of this “covering cherub” was to cover, defend, and protect the character of God, Himself! No one, not even the angels in heaven, can possibly know the full nature of God, even as loving as He is. Preachers and teachers of God’s Word have the responsibility of telling believers that, no matter how they perceive things to be, God is always working for their best. So it may be that this highly exalted cherub was to keep assuring the angels that, no matter how unfathomable were the works of God, He was always creating and displaying them for their very best.

In any event, “the anointed cherub that covereth” began misrepresenting God’s character instead of upholding it. He convinced one-third of the angels of heaven that they should no longer serve God, and thus, after warring with God’s loyal angels, they were cast out of heaven (see Revelation 12:3-9). Satan still misrepresents God’s character today. Many people see God as primarily a wrathful, vengeful God Who tortures sinners eternally in the fires of hell, rather than as a loving Father Who wants to save people from destruction.

But that subject brings us back to the ark of the testimony. The ark was a three-dimensional depiction of God’s wonderful mercy. On one day in the year--the Day of Atonement--Aaron the high priest was to go into the tabernacle before the ark. We read about this in Leviticus 16:11-16. “And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: And he shall put

the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.”

The mercy seat, as we have seen, was over the Law of God within the ark. The animals’ blood that Aaron sprinkled upon the mercy seat, and before it, was a type of the blood that the Lord Jesus would later shed for the sins of the world. These sins came about because of the breaking of God’s holy Law by mankind. The cherubim on the mercy seat of the ark covered the holy Law of God, and Christ’s blood must cover our transgressions of that Law (as symbolized by the blood that Aaron sprinkled on, and before, the mercy seat.) This allows God’s mercy to extend to us.

However, as merciful as the Lord is, we should never take His mercy for granted. God’s holiness is an awesome aspect of His character, and therefore, we must not trifle with His holy Law. Even Aaron had been given specific instructions about serving God. When Aaron was to go before the ark on the Day of Atonement, God had previously told Moses regarding him, “And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not” (Leviticus 16:12,13).

One man who apparently took a too casual approach to God’s instructions concerning the ark was Uzzah. He paid for this error with his life. The story is told in II Samuel 6:1-7. David and his servants were taking the ark of God to the city of David. It was being transported on a new cart that was pulled by oxen. We read in verses 6 and 7,

“And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.”

Perhaps it was only a reflex action on the part of Uzzah. Or, maybe he thought that this was a special circumstance in which the Lord would be honored if he saved the ark from possible destruction. But, ultimately, it didn’t matter what Uzzah thought or felt. God’s instructions were (and are) to be obeyed. This is a good example to those who think that God’s holy Law can be trifled with. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12). Even the Philistines, who didn’t know God, were punished by treating the ark with disrespect (see I Samuel 4-6).

So important is the Law of God--the Ten Commandments--that we are informed, that when Solomon put the ark into the Temple he had made, “There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt” (I Kings 8:9).

We may wonder what happened to the ark of the testimony. Some think that the Bible’s last references to it are in II Chronicles 35:3 and Jeremiah 3:16. In any event, a time is coming when the ark won’t be sought after by the children of Israel. Jeremiah 3:17 reads, “At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.” Also, during this time, the Law of God will go forth from Jerusalem (see Isaiah 2:1-3). Until then, may we be a sort of human ark, having the Lord’s Law written within our hearts (see II Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 8:10). Lastly, let’s ponder the words of the Apostle John from Revelation 11:19: “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.” No longer, perhaps, is the ark needed on the earth, as God’s people live out His holy Law, being filled with His glorious Spirit.



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.

U.K. beekeepers demand action on hive decline

Honeybee deaths are below those in U.S., but some say it is getting worse

by Jill Lawless
Associated Press

London - Beekeepers swarmed Parliament and the Prime Minister's office last week, demanding more funds for research after the number of Britain's honeybees dropped by nearly a third in the past year.

The British bee losses have not been as dramatic as those in the United States, but beekeepers say it is getting worse.

In 2006, U.S. beekeepers began reporting losing 30 percent to 90 percent of their hives. Scientists have been unable to determine the cause of the problem, known as Colony Collapse Disorder.

Possible explanations include pesticides, a new parasite or pathogen, or a combination of immune-suppressing stresses.

Several hundred beekeepers, some wearing the protective suits of their trade, marched in London from the House of Parliament to deliver a 140,000-signature petition to Prime Minister Gordon Brown's 10 Downing St. office.

British scientists are uncertain whether the country's

hives have suffered Colony Collapse Disorder.

But the British Beekeepers' Association says almost a third of honeybee colonies, containing almost 2 billion bees, have been lost over the past year, in part because of the varroa mite parasite and an exceptionally wet summer.

"Over the last five or ten years the number of bees dying every winter has increased," said Ivor Davies, a past president of the association. "There is something going on with our bees that we do not understand."

Farmers have warned that the disappearance of bees could devastate food crops and the environment because about three-quarters of flowering plants rely on birds, bees and other pollinators to help them reproduce.

"Honeybees are an underpinning component of the British countryside--whether it's heather moorland, a hedgerow, an orchard or a field of beans," said Paul Temple, vice president of the National Farmers' Union.

The government spends \$2.4 million on beekeeping each year, but only \$320,000 of it goes to research.

The beekeepers' association is now calling for research funding to increase to \$2.6 million a year.

The HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Comment

This is our third article on the loss of honeybees and its possible effect upon our food supply. The solution to this problem continues to elude the experts.

It's not about sex. Really. Just college.

Students who share dorm rooms with other gender insist it's practical

By Michelle R. Smith
Associated Press

Erik Youngdahl and Michelle Garcia share a dorm room at Connecticut's Wesleyan University. But they say there's no funny business going on. They mean it.

They have set up their beds side-by-side like Lucy and Ricky in "I Love Lucy", and avert their eyes when one of them is changing clothes.

"People are shocked to hear that it's happening and even that it's possible," said Youngdahl, a 20-year-old sophomore. But "once you actually live in it, it doesn't actually turn into a big deal."

In the prim 1950s, college dorms were off-limits to members of the opposite sex. Then came the 1970s when male and female students started crossing paths in coed dormitories. Now, to the astonishment of some baby boomer parents, a growing number of colleges are going even further: coed rooms.

At least two dozen schools, including Brown University, the University of Pennsylvania, Oberlin College, Clark University and the California Institute of Technology, allow some or all students to share a room with anyone they choose--including someone of the opposite sex. This spring, as students sign up for next year's rooms, more schools are following suit, including Stanford University.

Quest for compatibility

As shocking as it sounds to some parents, students and schools say it's not about sex.

They say the demand is mostly from heterosexual students who want to live with close friends who happen to be of the opposite sex. Some gay students who feel more comfortable rooming with someone of the opposite sex are also taking advantage of the option.

"It ultimately comes down to finding someone that you feel is compatible with you," said Jeffrey Chang, a

junior at Clark in Worcester, Mass., who co-founded the National Student Genderblind Campaign, a group that is pushing for gender-neutral housing. "Students aren't doing this to make a point. They're not doing this to upset their parents. It's really for practical reasons."

Not all platonic

Couples do sometimes room together, an arrangement known at some schools as "roomcest." Brown explicitly discourages couples from living together on campus, be they gay or straight. But the University of California, Riverside has never had a problem with a room couple breaking up midyear, said James C. Smith, assistant director for residence life.

Most schools introduced the couples option in the past three or four years. So far, relatively few students are taking part. At the University of Pennsylvania, which began offering coed rooms in 2005, about 120 out of 10,400 students took advantage of the option this year.

At UC Riverside, which has approximately 6,000 students in campus housing, about 50 have roommates of the opposite sex. The school has had the option since 2005.

Debbie Feldman's 20-year-old daughter, Samantha, is a sophomore at Oberlin in Ohio and plans to room with her platonic friend Grey Caspro, a straight guy, next year. Feldman said she was shocked when her daughter told her.

"When you have a male and a female sharing such close quarters, I think it's somewhat delusional to think there won't be sexual tension," the 52-year-old Feldman said. "Maybe this generation feels more comfortable walking around in their underwear. I'm not sure that's a good thing."

Comment

A boy and girl of the opposite sex who are not married may have good intentions for sharing a dorm room, but there is real danger in doing so. There is the danger of being overcome by "the lust of the flesh" no matter how they may try to avoid the temptation. Debbie Feldman's mother is correct.

Also many people may think that it is downright evil. God's Word tells us to "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:22).

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

Question: I have heard your ministers mention several times that Israel is blinded. Does this mean that you are against the Jewish people?

Answer: I think that we can best answer this question by reprinting an article which appeared in the December 30, 1963 *Advocate of Truth*. Here it is:

Because we so often mention that Israel is blinded, some folks think we are against the Jewish people. This is far from the truth for we are constantly praying for them and for the "Peace of Jerusalem."

There are many people today that are anti-semitic and that go out of their way to be hateful to the Jewish people. Then there are some people that are simply afraid of the Hebrews. This little article here will deal with the subject of "Why are some people afraid of the Jews?"

"I am afraid of the Jews" (Jeremiah 38:19).

These words of Zedekiah accurately express the attitude of many Christian people today. So many think of them in terms other than those of religion. They think of them commercially and detest them, socially and ostracize them, nationally and persecute them. The only real way is to think of them Scripturally. A little Bible study would prove a wholesome corrective to most people's thinking about the Jews, for in the light of the Bible, they command our profound respect. Those who are informed

know that they have made an unparalleled contribution to religion which has enriched humanity. That is their unique distinction among the peoples of the earth.

One of the most thought-provoking articles we have seen on this subject appeared recently from the pen of Rev. Melville Evans in *Jewish Missionary Herald* (London), and we take the liberty of culling a portion.

"In practically every book in the Old Testament we find them described as 'His people,' chosen for a specific purpose. And it is still true that 'He hath not dealt so with any nation' (Psalm 147:20). It has been said that 'when God gave up the Jews He took up England'. That is a nice bit of sentimental rhetoric, unsupported by any evidence. The Jews still remain the miraculous mystery and the mysterious miracle of history. We can explain England, but, as the sceptical Renan declared, 'The philosophy of history fails utterly to account for the Jew.' Had he been less sceptical he might have added that the Scriptures do account for him. That conviction is essential not only to accomplishing, but to attempting the task of praying for Israel and the peace of Jerusalem.

"When we find instruction in the wilderness journeys, comfort in the thought of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or exaltation through reading Isaiah 53; when we learn courage from Daniel, patience from Job, or when we are inspired to devotion by the Psalms, let us remember that we owe an unpayable debt to the Jews for this manifold revelation.

"But more important still--when we rejoice in our Christian salvation, let us not forget that word of the Master's: 'Salvation is of the Jews' (John 4:22), and let us

recall ungrudgingly, yea gratefully, in the fact that the Lord Jesus, Himself, not only found in the Jewish race a channel for His coming, but was also the fulfillment of their richest prophecies, and the incarnation of their brightest hopes.

"A Christian conception of the Jews carries as its irreducible minimum sincere gratitude for the wonderful dispensation in which they were as a nation the central figure, and through which we have profited to an incalculable extent.

"But Paul (Romans 11) brings before us the Jews, not only as they were, but as they are. Intrinsicly he sees in them a demonstration that provides an illustration. They have not ceased to be of value, even in their fallen condition. They demonstrate the fearful possibility of falling from great heights. The Jewish nation had been exalted above all nations of the earth. They witnessed to the fact of God--one God, mediated the Word of God, and enjoyed the presence, leadership and protection of God. But they fell through their rejection of the Messiah. They had fallen in earlier days--into Egypt and into Babylon--and Jehovah wrought great deliverances for them, but this last fall is the most tremendous and tragic in their history. The former fall involved captivity, but this has resulted in judicial blindness.

"There is something infinitely pathetic in a fall when it is the fall of an outstanding personality who occupied a conspicuous position, exercised a beneficent influence, and in whom great hopes were centered. Such was Israel, the nation among nations, yea, and above the nations, and this realization filled Paul's heart with a surging pity for their state and a consuming passion for their salvation..Moreover, he saw in the Jews as they are, an illustration of the laws proclaimed by Moses and the Prophets. Time and time again they had been warned regarding the penalties of disobedience, the issues of refusal and the results of rebellion, and today, we have no clearer illustration of the truth of God's Word, of the reality of divine law and of the sanctity of God's claim than the Hebrew race.

"Prophetically they have a destination that creates an expectation. An expectation that is as unique as was their dispensation, for there are in the Scriptures prophecies that corroborate Paul's declaration that 'God hath not cast away his people' and promises of restoration regarding the Jewish nation that have the effect of giving an inspira-

tion to us Gentiles that we do not fail as did the Children of Israel. Israel paid dreadfully for their disobedience to God.

"There are many things that possess only a momentary value, but Israel has a place in God's great purpose in days that are yet to be. So we move one step further in analyzing the Christian concept of the Jews, and we add to our gratitude for the past, not only compassion for their present, but hopefulness for their future.

"In the light of the Scriptures, Israel is going to have their blindness removed and have them recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah. It is an inspiration to read the prophecies that await fulfillment, regarding Israel, and one thing seems perfectly clear, namely, that the Jews are to play a very prominent part in the salvation of the world. In the meantime it is our responsibility and privilege, as Christians, to do our part in the praying for the salvation of the Jews during the Millennium."

Question: When did Joseph, the "father" of Jesus, die?

Answer: Scholars do not claim to be able to set the date of Joseph the carpenter's death. Some believe that it must have taken place before Jesus began His public ministry. In support of this, they point to the fact that Joseph is not mentioned in connection with the wedding feast at Cana. Others believe that Joseph must have passed away before the crucifixion, otherwise he would have been at the cross with Mary. Nothing definite can be stated on the matter.

Question: What about angels with their harps?

Answer: Angels are never portrayed with harps in the Bible. Angels do bless God and praise His name, but nowhere are they described using harps to accompany their hymns.

Many times the Psalms refer to humans using harps in their praise of God but not to angels with harps.

Question: From where do the words "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust" come?

Answer: This phrase is not found in Scripture. It comes from the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*.



India

These photos were sent by Elder M. Yehoshuva of the dedication services for a new church building in Balarajugdem.





LESSON I

KINDNESS

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 4:25-32.

Golden Text: Ephesians 4:32.

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

1. Should we be kind and forgiving? Ephesians 4:32.
2. Will we receive more of a blessing from the Lord if we give and do not expect something given to us in return? Acts 20:35.
3. If a boy or girl be found doing something wrong should we correct and help them, in the spirit of kindness? Why? Galatians 6:1.
4. Why should we help someone or bear his burden? Galatians 6:2.
5. Should we always be kind to strangers and care for them? Hebrews 13:1-2.
6. Besides doing good and lending to our enemies, does God expect us to love them? Luke 6:35.

LESSON II

OBEYING GOD

Scripture Reading: James 3:1-10.

Golden Text: Deuteronomy 11:27.

"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day."

1. Can we serve Christ and Satan? Matthew 6:24.
2. Should we obey God rather than men? Acts 5:29.
3. Did the winds and the sea obey Christ? Matthew 8:27.

4. What causes us to sin when we do not use it to the glory of God? James 3:8.

5. If we use our tongue for speaking evil to others, are we obeying God? James 3:9-10.

6. Whom do we obey when we speak evil of others? James 3:15.

7. Is it pleasing to the Lord when children obey their parents? Colossians 3:20.

8. If we obey Christ and follow His way, will we receive a reward from Him? Colossians 3:24.

9. What has God promised us if we obey Him? Deuteronomy 11:27.

LESSON III

FLEEING FROM SATAN

Scripture Reading: James 4:6-16.

Golden Text: James 4:7.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

NOTE: The word "flee" means to run away.

1. Would a child flee from youthful sins? II Timothy 2:22 (first part).

2. Instead of walking in a sinful way, who should you follow? II Timothy 2:22 (last part).

3. Will Children of God follow a stranger, or will they flee from him? John 10:5.

NOTE: In Hebrews 13:2 in Lesson I, we learned to be kind to strangers, but now we are being told to flee a stranger. We need to be aware of what strangers are doing. If we fear the stranger is doing evil, we should avoid this person. If we have God in our lives we can ask Him

to guide and help us in making this decision.

4. Who will deliver us if we flee from Satan? Psalm 143:9.
5. Whose will should we do and why? Psalm 143:10.
6. Does Satan lay snares or nets to try to catch us? Psalm 141:9.
7. If we listen to the Lord, shall we be free from the evil of Satan? Proverbs 1:33.
8. Will we be blessed of the Lord if we keep His way and flee from the evil? Proverbs 8:32.

LESSON IV

REPENTANCE

Scripture Reading: Luke 15:1-10.

Golden Text: Luke 13:5.

"I tell you Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

1. What do we mean by repentance? Acts 14:15; I Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 12:1.

NOTE: According to Webster's Dictionary, "repent" means to feel regret or sorrow on account of something done or felt left undone; to change one's conduct because of regret.

2. Why must every individual repent? Psalm 51:5; Galatians 3:22; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 3:23.
3. When is the proper time to repent of our sins? Psalm 95:7-8; Hebrews 3:7-8; II Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 4:7.
4. Repentance should be accompanied by:
 - (A) Humility, II Chronicles 7:14.
 - (B) Confession, Job 33:27-28.
 - (C) Faith, Mark 1:15.
 - (D) Prayer, Acts 8:22.

NOTE: What is the danger in waiting for "the right time" to repent? Do you think that when we repent and begin to serve the Lord that we leave all pleasure behind, or can joy be had from living a Believer's life? Have you sought the Lord and "repented?"



LITTLE THINGS

The importance of little things cannot be overrated. There are so many little physical and tangible things around us. The air we breathe, the water we drink. A little worm in timber may eat away and sink a wooden ship. A little bacteria may lay the foundation of a continued illness. "A little drip" will do no harm, 'tis said, but the sea of trouble is made up of drops. Duty properly performed is simply well-doing in little things. The acorn will result into a gigantic oak tree. Jesus said the same of the mustard seed which is so much smaller than an acorn. "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed IS THE LEAST of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof" (Matthew 13:31-32). Life is made up, not of the great deeds, duties, and sacrifices, but in little acts of daily duty.

BILLY AND THE THIRTEEN COOKIES



Dear Boys and Girls:

Have you ever done something you know you should not? Did you know that Jesus is looking and sees everything that you do?! I want to tell you a story of Billy and the thirteen cookies.

Billy came into the kitchen as his mother was wiping her hands. "Oh, here you are Billy," she said. "Where were you? I was just about to call you."

"What smells so good Mother?" Billy asked. "Cookies," she told him. "You want me to taste them?" he asked. "No," she said, "what's in the oven will not be ready for another ten minutes. I want you to take these to the school fair for me before it is over. You have got here a baker's dozen." "What is a baker's dozen?" asked Billy.

"A dozen is twelve, right? And a baker's dozen is thirteen. So now hurry before it gets late," said Billy's mother. Billy took the cookies and started off. As he went on, the smell of the cookies tempted him, and he tried very hard to resist it. "Hmmm," he said. "I do wish these cookies

did not smell so good, perhaps if I hurry I will not notice it much," he said as he walked. So he began to walk faster, but the smell of the cookies tempted him more.

"Boy!" said Billy. "Mom makes the best cookies. There are thirteen in here. If I take just one, no one will know; besides there will be twelve left." While saying this, he opened the bag.

On the way, he stopped to watch a group of boys play and farther along the road he stopped again.

As Billy climbed the school steps, he opened the bag and was astonished at what he saw. He cried, "Where are the cookies? I ate them! I did! I ate them! How can I tell this to Mother? Perhaps I should not tell her after all." It was a sulky Billy who turned and went back home.

At supper he did not eat very much! When it was time for bed, he hurried off without asking to stay up late as he always did. But something strange happened.

Sleep did not come easy for Billy that night, he tossed and turned for sometime. A man came with a large paper bag. "Ah, ha!" he said as he opened it. "I knew that one was missing and there he is!" Billy was frightened. "A-A big paper bag--like the one I had the cookies in!" he said.

Poor Billy, what could he do? The man kept on saying, "I had thirteen in here when I started, one's missing and there he is, there he is!"

"Wait a minute," cried Billy, "wait a minute, I am not a cookie, I am a boy! I am not a cookie, I am a boy, I am a boy!"

"Billy, Billy, wake up, wake up Billy," said his mother. She had heard his screams and ran to his room. "You were having a terrible dream!" she said. He broke down in tears, "Oh Mom" he cried. He told her the whole story, cookies, dream and all. Then he asked, "Will you forgive me Mom?" "I forgive you," she told him, "but you have got to ask Jesus to forgive you. Come and I will pray with you!"

They knelt together and prayed and Billy got up refreshed and feeling himself again.

Now Boys and Girls, will you allow yourself to be tempted as Billy did? Whenever you are tempted, why not ask Jesus to help you, and you can always sing along, "Yield not to temptation."

OLD TESTAMENT NAMES THAT BEGIN WITH "A"

Some of the names used in the Old Testament times sound strange to us today.
 Some of the names in this puzzle are well known to Bible readers; others are less familiar.
 All begin with the letter A.

Aaron, Abada, Abednego, Abel, Abiah, Abiathar, Abiel, Abihu, Abijah, Abimelech, Abinadab, Abiram,
 Abishai, Abner, Abraham, Absalom, Achan, Achaiah, Adam, Adonijah, Adriel, Agag, Agur,
 Ahab, Aharah, Ahasuerus, Ahaz, Ahaziah, Ahijah, Ahimelech, Ahithophel, Amalek, Amaziah, Amittai,
 Ammon, Amos, Amoz, Amram, Anak, Aram, Ariel, Artaxerxes, Asa, Asher, Azariah



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Worry Not!

By David DeLong

Worry not for what may be,
The future is not ours to hold;
But go to God on bended knee,
And let your faith be bold.

Don't be anxious of the morrow,
These are words that Jesus said;
Each day comes with its own sorrow,
But saints are clothed and fed.

Do not fret for evil men,
They'll soon be cut like grass;
Commit to the Lord, and trust Him then,
Your way He'll bring to pass.

Be not afraid of sudden fear,
The Lord's your strength and light;
When enemies come, He will appear,
And put the foe to flight.



