

Psm. 11:3

# Baptists For Liberty

Prov. 29:2

*"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1*

## NEWS LETTER

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### ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

By Curtis Pugh

Often zeal is a good thing. Zeal or enthusiasm for good things is to be commended. Being a "deadhead" on the job or as a parent or in service for the Lord makes life a burden. In the matter of our relationship with Him Christ said: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent," (Revelation 3:19). Not only do lost sinners need to repent, Christians also are guilty of sins daily. Walking with God is a matter of daily repentance.

But zeal or enthusiasm is a bad thing when it is coupled with ignorance. Two very young boys wanted to please their father. While he was at work they busied themselves in the garage with house paint, coating the family car a new color. They had zeal for a thing, but in their ignorance their enthusiasm caused them to do something harmful and costly. In religious matters zeal, coupled with ignorance, does much harm. We are well aware that there are religious zealots in this world who in their zeal beat their wives, mutilate their daughters and murder those who do not convert. The thief also may be zealous when he comes to steal and to destroy.

In Paul's day the Jews had great enthusiasm for the Old Testament Law. They had so much zeal for the Law that they missed Christ. Paul wrote of them: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth," (Romans 10:2-4). Paul said that the righteousness which makes one acceptable to God is in Christ. He is the end of the Law for righteousness. Christ taught that the Old Testament Law-system was done away with when John the Baptist began to preach. He said, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man [individual people] presseth into it," (Luke 16:16).

And yet a great many people, some of them claiming to be following Christ, are busy trying to establish their own righteousness by their attempt at keeping the Law. (Usually they pick and choose what parts of the Old Testament Law they want to keep.) But no man ever kept the Law. It was decided by the apostles and elders long ago that converts to Christ should not have the Law imposed upon them. Peter said regarding the Gentile converts and the Law, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they," (Acts 15:10-11). "...By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," (Galatians 2:16). Be zealous, but according to truth!

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### 'You Can Be Sure He Knows!'

'When' Your Just not sure 'Why' Its Happening or 'What' to do about it, Remember 'Who' Knows Both!

Philippians 4:6-7; "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Proverbs 3:5-6; "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

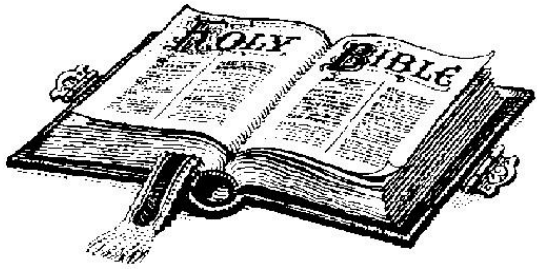
James 1:5; "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Romans 8:28; "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

~Bro. Donnie Burford

# Sermon

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. II Timothy 4:2



## *“All Scripture”* by Bro. Timothy Works

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

*“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.”*

II Timothy 3:16-17, & 4:1-2

This includes all 66 books, Old & New Testaments.

*“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, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”* Hebrews 1:1-2  
“in times” O.T. “in these last days” N.T.

### **I. It is Given**, vs 3:16

Not found, discovered, lost & recovered, not the work of men or any private interpretation.

*“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.”*

*“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”* II Peter 1:16, 20

An ability to understand is also given

(Matthew 13:11, I Corinthians 2:14, John 16:13)

Three things we need to take note of

A.) There is a Giver: God

From our text “- given by inspiration of God,-” II Tim. 3:16 also read Exodus 31:18

Its origin is in God who is eternal. (Psalm 119:89, 160)

B.) A Recipient: Man

Deuteronomy 9:29, Romans 1:18-20, 10:16 “-who hath believed”, John 12:37-41, II Corinthians 4:34

C.) A Means: Inspirational II Timothy 3:16

II Peter 1:21, II Samuel 23:2

Plenary Verbal Inspiration (word for word inspiration)

Matthew 5:17-18, Isaiah 46:9-11 “-I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass;-”

### **II. It Is Profitable**, v 3:16 “edify”

*“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”* Ephesians 4:12-16

A.) For Doctrine (teaching)

“What to believe”

Sound doctrine is truth

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17

B.) For Reproof (to tell a fault-give evidence- proof)

“What you should stop doing”

*“Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”* James 4:13-14 (quoting Job)

C.) For Correction (to make straight again)

“What you should have done”

*“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”* James 4:15

D.) For Instruction (training-tutor) in righteousness

*“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”*

Ephesians 6:4

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye

should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;" I Thessalonians 4:3-4

**III. It Is To Be Preached,** vs 4:1-2 sound forth, declare Again Ephesians 4:15 says *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"* Instruct in season, out of season. Scripture is always appropriate at all times and all occasions (used appropriately)!

The Word of God

- A.) Reprove- admonish, tell a fault
- B.) Rebuke – censure, forbid, charge (Romans 6:1-2, 15)
- C.) Exhort- invite, beseech, implore (Romans 12:1, II Corinthians 5:20)
- D.) With all long suffering (patience) and doctrine

The alternative is to turn to and accept fables rather than the truth of God's Word; *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* II Timothy 4:3-4

*"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen."* I Timothy 6:20-21

*"Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth."* Titus 1:14

*"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son."* I John 5:9 We are to put our trust & confidence in God and His Word which He has **given** to us, rather than in Man!



Mr. Practical 

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. ||| John 1:4



with Bro. Todd Bryant

## Knowledge, Understanding & Wisdom

*"And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."* – **Colossians 1:9-10**

There is no final exam at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul clearly told the Corinthians saints, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil"* (2 **Corinthians 5:10**). Yet, if I'm not careful, I find myself merely wanting to know the truth – to intelligently understand what the Word of God says. And certainly, I'm not discounting the importance of Biblical knowledge. Our text verse clearly stresses both knowledge and understanding. Yet, we must always keep in mind the words of James – *"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin"* (**James 4:17**). So, to have the knowledge without producing good works is faulty and inadequate. In fact, I think we can and should admit that such knowledge is a flawed knowledge.

Today we seek to point out the practicality in our text passage. This ought always to be our ultimate goal when studying God's Word – "what does it mean to me?" or even, "what does it instruct me to do?" and definitely "how does this impact my service to God?" Our approach to God's Word must be much like approaching a set of instructions to put together a grill or a bicycle. *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work"* (2 **Timothy 3:16-17**). The Bible alone can enable the child of God to be *"complete, equipped for every good work"*. Though we may glean some truth from other books or articles, nothing is on par with the Scripture. Our duty is to read



the Word of God...completely and methodically...and pray for spiritual wisdom to daily improve our service to God. Having understood that, let us look to our text passage and pursue just such an application.

Paul's prayer for these saints was that they would *"be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding"*. Before a person can understand the Word of God, he must know it. This may sound simple – and I suppose it is. But it's important. You cannot understand spiritual truths by simply listening to other people. You cannot fully grasp Biblical doctrine by listening to preaching alone or reading an article alone. You must know the Bible – you must read the Bible – you must have knowledge of the Bible. Far too many believers in Christendom today are trying to serve God without any knowledge of His Word. This is common in all types of churches including Baptist churches. I'm not discounting the importance of solid, Biblical preaching. But even if your pastor is the most scholarly, Biblically adept minister in the world today, you will struggle to grow if you are not reading God's Word personally on a regular basis. Without knowledge (of the Bible), you cannot understand it.

Understanding God's Word takes us a step past simply knowing what it says. Reading the Bible gives you the knowledge of what it says. However, understanding the words on the page don't often come at the first, second or third reading. Though, some passages are clear and straightforward the first time. *"Flee from sexual immorality"* is rather plain (**1 Corinthians 6:18**). *"Pray without ceasing"* is not hard to decipher (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**). However, when one commits to being a student of the Word of God, one soon discovers that not every verse...not every passage...is so easy to understand. We may know what a passage says without completely understanding what it means. One must commit to giving their best effort to understanding the meaning of the Bible (**2 Timothy 2:15**). Studying is more than reading. One must read God's Word. I'm an advocate of every child of God reading the Bible through annually. It's a doable task and a necessary one, in my opinion. However, study takes more effort. After we gain knowledge of what God's Word says, we must do our best to determine what the Bible means to us – how it should impact us – how it should change us. We must add understanding to our basic knowledge. Paul prays for the Colossian saints to be built up in understanding.

Yet, mere understanding is not the end. It is a necessary step. But it is not the goal. Once we have read the Word of God and come to some understanding of what it means, we need wisdom to apply it in our lives. "Wisdom" can be defined as "The right use or exercise of knowledge; the choice of laudable ends, and of the best means to accomplish them. This is *wisdom* in act, effect, or practice. If *wisdom* is to be considered as a faculty of the mind, it is the faculty of discerning or judging what is most just, proper and useful, and if it is to be considered as an acquirement, it is the knowledge and use of what is best, most just, most proper, most conducive to prosperity or happiness" (Webster's 1828 Dictionary of the English Language). So, wisdom takes knowledge and understanding and uses it properly. Every facet of our lives may not have a clear *"thus says the Lord"* written in the Bible. But, we can and should seek to apply our knowledge

and understanding in every facet of our lives. It is here that wisdom must play a factor.

Many people possess knowledge and understanding of God's Word. Yet, many do not properly apply this knowledge and understanding to their lives. How often do people with Biblical learning end up in a bad place in life? This is often due to a lack of wisdom. And certainly, we all lack wisdom in some ways. But, wisdom must be the end goal. We read God's Word to know what it says. We seek to understand what it means. And finally, we seek to learn to use our knowledge and understanding properly. This is wisdom. This is why we open God's Word. The Book of Proverbs refers to wisdom 46 times – more than any other book. Certainly, the Book of Proverbs is full of practicality. Wisdom is practical. That is, wisdom seeks to apply knowledge and understanding to our lives. Wisdom produces works. Wisdom produces fruit. Wisdom causes one to endure for the cause of Christ. **Proverbs 2:6** says, *"For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding"*. God's Word gives us knowledge and understanding. Wisdom is something God works in us through these things.

God's people must seek wisdom. James wrote, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him"* (**James 1:5**). As we gain knowledge and understanding of God's Word, let us pray to God that He would give us wisdom to apply it in our lives. To know God's Word without understanding is inadequate. But also to have understanding without wisdom is inadequate. Yet, lest we find ourselves thinking we gained wisdom on our own, James reminds us that wisdom comes from God. We must seek it from His hand. We must pray for it with regularity.

James later describes the fruits of wisdom in more detail. He says, *"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace"* (**James 3:13-18**). What we may describe as wisdom may not be God's description. Godly wisdom granted by the Spirit of God through His Word is *"first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere"*. That's a heavy list. Yet, unless these are our fruits, we needn't be deceived into thinking we have Biblical wisdom. Let us be reminded that *"the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God"* (**James 1:20**). I've often seen folks mad in sharing their understanding of God's Word. And their understanding may have been correct. But they lacked wisdom according to the authority of the Bible.

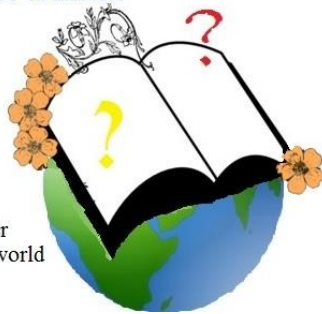
Are these things important? Does it matter if the child of God gains knowledge and understanding and wisdom? Let us notice our text – *"so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully*

*pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”* This is rather plain. If you seek to serve God, you must increase in these things. There are far too many believers in churches today that are seeking to serve God without any knowledge, understanding or wisdom. This leads to every man doing that which is right in his own eyes. This was catastrophic in the days of the judges (**Judges 17:6, 21:25**) and it is just as catastrophic today. You cannot serve God without knowing and understanding His Word with wisdom. Read your Bible. Dig into your Bible. Ask God for the ability to use what you learn. This was Paul’s desire for the Colossian saints. It should be our desire for ourselves. And know this, when you stand before the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ, you will be judged on your use of knowledge and understanding. Our service to God will be judged there. It’s not merely the ones that were the most doctrinally correct that are rewarded. It’s the ones who took and used that good Biblical doctrine rightly in their lives that will be rewarded.

## The Forum

**A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:**

~ Proverbs 1:5



Questions and Answers to help the believer make sense of our sin filled & confusing world

## Human Reasoning & Secret Knowledge

***How can you distinguish human reasoning from the leading of the Holy Spirit?***

**Bro. Todd Bryant (Pastor of Sovereign Grace Baptist church Northport, AL):** This is not an easy question to answer. Many times I have prayed about a matter and felt I had the leadership of the Spirit. Yet, in looking back, I know I’ve been wrong about it before. There simply is no red light that flashes on to alert us that it’s the Spirit leading us and not our own thoughts.

The key thing to remember is that the Spirit never leads contrary to the Word of God. Whatever you believe you are being led to do, it will never...EVER...conflict with the clear teaching of God’s Word. If you ever believe the Spirit is leading you to do something that is in direct opposition to God’s Word, I can assure you that it’s not the Spirit.

Sometimes, we obviously pray about things like a relationship,

job opportunity or familial need. We pray for open doors by God. I have found that if I spend more time waiting for God to open a clear door, I more often find the leadership of God in my life. **Psalms 37:7** says, *“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!”* Oftentimes, when we get ahead of the Lord, that’s when we follow human reasoning and not His Spirit.

**Bro. Nilo del Mundo (Baptist Church Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia):** A. Human reasoning leads to vanity (Psalms 39:5) The leading of the Spirit leads to holiness (Eph. 4:24)

B. Human reasoning works within the heart bound by sin, The Spirit of the Lord brings liberty, it removes the blindness to see clearly what is the will of the Lord. II Corinthians 3:17 says *“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”*

C. Human reasoning leads to strife and envying, the leading of the Spirit gives the good qualities stated in James 3:17 *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”*

D. Human reasoning sounds good in the ears of the unbelievers; the leading of the Spirit does not conform with them but leads to the glory of Christ.

John 12:43 *“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”*

Romans 2:29 *“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”*

E. Human reasoning is humanistic though sometimes biblical; the Leading of the Holy Spirit is always in harmony with the Bible (I Peter 4:10-11)

**Bro. Jeff Short (Pastor of Charleston Baptist Congregation in Charleston, WV)** Two words—The Bible. I am actually not being snide. The church at Corinth had many problems, including strife and division where members opposed one another. Paul wrote much to them about the Spirit in chapter 12. He wrote:

*“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit”* (1 Corinthians 12:3-4 emphasis mine). The gifts of the Spirit were being abused in the Corinthian church and being used in divisiveness and strife. Paul said this could not be of the Spirit because the Spirit is not divided. If the same Spirit has given gifts as he wills, then those gifts cannot be contrary one to another. In like manner, the Spirit has inspired the Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16; 28:25; Hebrews 3:7; 9:8; 10:15). Therefore, no leading of the Spirit can be contrary to the Word.

The other aspect I would mention in consideration of the leading of the Spirit is what our expectation should be. How should we expect to be guided daily in life? I hear some talk as though the Spirit is giving them turn-by-turn directions all day long like some sort of spiritual GPS. I don't find anything in Scripture that gives us that type of expectation. Jesus told his disciples the Spirit would "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13), and he prayed in the next chapter for the Father to "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Our expectation for guidance is through the Bible (Psalm 119:9, 105; Proverbs 6:23). We are to "prove all things" (1 Thessalonians 5:28) and "try the spirits" (1 John 4:1). How? By the Word of God. If we think we have leading from the Spirit, we should test ourselves by the Word of God.

**Bro. Clint Keith (Pastor of Grace Baptist church Monticello, KY):**

To begin we must understand that human reasoning will always be contradictory to the leadership of the Spirit. How then can we know the leadership of the Spirit in our lives? We are promised by the Lord that the Spirit would lead us and guide us in all truth (John 16:13). Therefore, the first place we find the leadership of the Spirit is in the word of God. If we desire to know God's direction for our lives most every answer will be found in His word. The Spirit will never lead contrary to the Word of God. So if my dilemma that I seek understanding for is against the scripture then the answer is clear concerning the leadership of the Spirit. However, there are those times that the dilemma we need guidance in is not so clear, it is not specifically addressed in the scripture. In these moments, and in life there are many of these times, discerning the direction of the Spirit may require a little more effort. Now we are promised He would direct our lives, and we recognize His leadership is essential for a restful, peaceful soul (Romans 8:14). It is then incumbent upon us to "walk after the Spirit" (vs. 4), and mind "the things of the Spirit" (vs. 5), and "by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh" (vs. 13). Therefore He leads to only those things that are sanctifying.

Solomon gives wisdom in this as well in Proverbs 3: 5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Notice the promise to direct is conditional upon these three requirements. First, we are to trust in the Lord, meaning, we must lean upon Him completely. Secondly, we are to shun our own understanding. We must disown our own sufficiency and wisdom, and bow before the wisdom of God. Thirdly, we must acknowledge Him in every part of our lives, in prayer (Phil 4:6), in everything (1 Cor. 10:31). Meeting these three requirements, the Lord makes clear for us the direction He would have us go, at least that is the promise.

Therefore, when we do not know which way to go we must remember not to act on impulse or in our own strength, remembering first Lam. 3:25-26. Second, we must ask the Lord to empty our hearts of every lust and desire and wish that we

may have hidden in us that we would not misinterpret God's wisdom for our desires (Psalms 81:12). If we find there is still a struggle between the flesh and the Spirit, this is then a time for fasting until we can honestly say "have thine own way Lord" as Ezra 8:21 reminds us. Next, we must acknowledge to the Lord our own ignorance, and request Him not to leave us to ourselves, (James 1:5-6), and commit our way to Him, and wait on His answer. Finally, when He gives clear answer, remember we not only need His direction we also need His presence as we follow Him (Exodus 33:15).

For further study and clarification on this subject I would recommend The Nature of God, formerly titled Gleanings in the Godhead, by Arthur Pink. He writes a very good chapter on this subject called "The Guidance of God", and it is well worth the read for further insight.

***Cults, and even some religious sects calling themselves Christians, have teachings on enlightenment & secret knowledge. What does the scriptures teach?***

**Bro. Todd Bryant:** The Bible is a closed book. If this "knowledge" from these sects actually comes from God, then it's as good as Genesis – it is God's Word. But it isn't. The Bible is complete. There needs not anything be added to it. It is enough.

*"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We don't need additional enlightenment. In fact, God's Word should verify any new "revelation". If God's Word verifies it, why do we need the "new" revelation? If God's Word doesn't verify it, it should be tossed.

Again, the Canon is closed. It is through the Bible that God speaks to us today.

**Bro. Nilo del Mundo:** "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20

Sometimes lying spirits will speak truth with error. We discern the truth and agree, we reject error and use the word of God to disagree, but always reject the false prophet or lying spirit which pretends to be speaking all truth.

**Bro. Jeff Short:** This is actually a truth that separates true Christianity from false religions, including those who claim to be Christian but are not. Even the term Christian is founded upon the reality of God revealing himself, particularly in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, and not concealing himself in secret. Throughout the Old Testament God spoke of doing things in such way that he would make himself known through his actions, e.g. delivering Israel from Egypt (Exodus 6:7; 7:5). In Isaiah chapters 40-48, God issued a number of challenges to the idols



the nations worshiped to prove they were God. One of the chief tests was for the idols to declare plainly beforehand what they were going to do and then do it. Yahweh had a long record of doing just that but he calls on the idolaters to do the same. One of the distinctions that he made between himself and the false religions was, “*I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth*” (Isaiah 45:19) and “*I have not spoken in secret from the beginning*” (Isaiah 48:16). When God spoke of what he was going to do, he spoke plainly and not in the veiled, ambiguous terms of the idolaters whose predictions were so vague practically anything could be said to be a fulfillment.

God told Israel he had spoken openly and plainly to them (Deuteronomy 30:11-14). While there are secret things, they belong to God and he does not reveal them. What he reveals openly, in his Word, is what we are responsible for (Deuteronomy 29:29). Divine wisdom is portrayed not as hiding and speaking in secret ways, but openly in the streets, markets, and housetops (Proverbs 1:21; 8:1-4). Likewise, Jesus spoke this way as fulfillment and confirmation of his messiahship (John 18:20).

The preaching of the apostles continued in the same vein. Paul commended the Bereans who “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). His preaching was plain, open, and verifiable by the written Word of God. Finally, Paul warned the Colossians against any philosophy or teaching that was “after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8). The plain word of Christ is our standard of measure for all truth claims.

**Bro. Clint Keith:** One of the first major heresies to enter Christianity was the sect called the Gnostics. They begin to come to some notoriety around the time of Paul’s death. Their very name is a form of the Greek word “to know”. They claimed to have a higher or elevated knowledge about Christ that others did not have, but their so-called higher knowledge was nothing but doctrine contrary to the scripture and to the person of Christ. But what we find is this idea of one having a hidden wisdom or special enlightenment, goes back basically to the beginning of Christianity.

Peter begins to describe the knowledge of Christ in II Peter 1:3-4 when he states; “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”. Notice Peter tells us that the knowledge was given to him that he might report it to us that we also might have that knowledge. Now we understand the knowledge of Christ is exclusive, and only revealed in grace, but the revelation of His knowledge nor the revelation of His grace does not come by some sect or order, it comes directly from the Spirit of God to the

children of God. God gave us his word for the intention that all His children would know Him fully.

The knowledge of Christ is that knowledge that is revealed for us in the word of God. No more of Christ will be revealed to any other person or group but what is revealed to all in the Word. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:3 “For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received...” John said in 1 John 1:3 “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you...” John would go on throughout this particular book, in contradiction to the Gnostics, declaring that he was writing these things for us to know. Peter would declare in 11 Peter 1:20, “...Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” God’s word is written for His people to know it and Him. The Lord declares to Israel that He had not spoken in secret, (Isaiah 45:19; 48:16). The Lord said in John 18:20, “I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.” He has revealed all He is going to in His word. It is, therefore, necessary for us to study it, learn it and apply it that it might be profitable unto us (II Timothy 2:15; 3:15-17).



## The Knowledge Of The Holy Ones

by Bro. Curtis Pugh

Our primary text is Proverbs 9:10 where it is written: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.” One thing about Hebrew poetry needs to be remembered. Ancient Hebrew poetry such as our text probably did not rhyme even when originally written. It most certainly does not rhyme in sound when translated into English, but presents instead the beauty of corresponding and sometimes expanding thoughts. Any rhythm, cadence, or rhyming of sound is lost in the translation. However, the “rhyming” of thoughts shines through to those who read their Bibles looking for it. Often a truth is stated first in one way and then the same or a kindred truth is stated in different words. So the beauty is not in similar sounds, but in parallel thoughts. The truth is established by building upon or modifying a previous statement. When next you read the Psalms or other Old Testament poetry look for this kind of construction.

Our aim is to understand and appreciate the phrase “the knowledge of the holy” which is found in the second part of this

couplet - our text. This exact phrase is found in our Bibles only here and one other place which we will examine a little later. But before we examine the second part let us look at the first of this verse. First, remember that the word "LORD" in all capital letters is the English word we know as Jehovah. This is the name of God which carries the idea of the "I AM" - the eternally living One. In the Masoretic text (the authoritative text for the Hebrew Old Testament) this word appears well over six-thousand-five-hundred times, but the King James translators only translated it as JEHOVAH four times. James Strong says our King James Bible has it as "LORD" 6510 times, as "God" 4 times, as "JEHOVAH" 4 times, and as a "variant" 1 time, thus making the total translations of the Hebrew word 6519 times. I have used the term "word," but as you may remember, the Hebrew is actually the tetragrammaton written as "YHWH" or "JHVH" or "YHVH," or "JHWH." (Tetragrammaton means "four letters"). The King James translators used the word "Jehovah" for the tetragrammaton. "Jehovah" is the vulgar (common) pronunciation that was used in England in A.D. 1611. And so it has passed down to us today. In order to arrive at an English pronunciation vowels must be supplied among the four letters and so the word "Jehovah" came into being. Exactly how the ancient Hebrews pronounced this word is unknown as far as this preacher has been able to learn. We cannot see that this matters inasmuch as the spellings of names of persons, and places and their pronunciations have often changed down through the centuries.

The thing to remember is that Jehovah is the proper name of God. The Hebrew Elohim or Eloheim when used with singular adjectives is translated as "God" and when used with plural adjectives is translated as "gods" in our King James Bibles. (Jehovah is not a title such as the word "Lord" when printed in our Bibles in mixed upper and lower case letters). Jehovah is the name by which God revealed Himself as the self-existing one: the Redeemer, the source of life: the "I AM." God revealed Himself thus to Moses, saying, "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you," (Exodus 3:14). So it is in our text (Proverbs 9:10) which we quoted at the first of this article, we need to understand that the first part of this poetic statement can be translated thus: **"The fear of JEHOVAH is the beginning of wisdom."** And so we are brought "face to face" as it were, with Jehovah: not just God, but the fear of the **"I AM THAT I AM."** Such a respect, awe, and trembling at His Word can only be the work of God within an individual. Such a "fear of JEHOVAH" prompts "godly sorrow" which initiates and perpetuates not only a first time experience of repentance, but a lifetime of repentance, (see 2 Corinthians 7:10).

Now the second part of this couplet appears in our Bibles as, "and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." However, as several commentators note, the word "holy" is plural in the original. It means "the holies" or "the Holy Ones." John Gill notes that the same plural Hebrew word appears in Joshua 24:19; Proverbs 30:3; and Hosea 11:9. Thus far in my research I have not learned why the King James translators chose to render this plural Hebrew word as a singular English one. Perhaps this term "the holy" is another of those old Catholic church words that

King James instructed them to keep. Perhaps there was another reason, but we cannot think of a good one that would excuse such a misstep. So let us understand that the second part of our couplet says, "and the knowledge of the Holy Ones is understanding."

The teaching of this verse stated negatively is this: no one has wisdom or understanding apart from the "fear" and "knowledge" of JEHOVAH, the Triune God. Those who do not "tremble at his word" (Isaiah 66:5) and who do not "know him that is true," (1 John 5:20), do not have true wisdom or understanding. Let us hasten to add that it is not wisdom or understanding that enables people to know God. God cannot be put under a microscope or any modern scientific device and examined in that way. He must reveal Himself. In creation, by means of human consciences, and in the Word of God He has revealed Himself. In the first two of these ways, creation and conscience, the revelation is a general one so that all men are without excuse. The Bible is a special revelation and in a different class than the first two. By it salvation is made known to God's elect people. Those not spiritually enabled to understand the Bible only see religion in that Book. That is the limit of their experience. But there is a further revelation (if we may use that term) or perhaps a better word is enlightenment. John Gill called it "spiritual and evangelical wisdom." For when God calls a person to Himself, the Spirit of God enables the spiritually dead sinner to live and understand. He does not just improve on human wisdom, but is Light within the regenerate. God does not call wise men to salvation for the most part, and if He did, their natural wisdom would not help them to understand the things of God. In 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 God's Word specifies the kind of people God calls to salvation: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence." The world's nobodies are called to be God's somebodies. Better stated, the world's nobodies are called with a call that makes them God's somebodies. A few "wise men after the flesh" are called, but "not many." This enlightenment or "spiritual and evangelical wisdom" is seen when Paul exhorted the congregation in Ephesus to live holy lives saying, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light," (Ephesians 5:8). In Ephesians 1:17-19 Paul wrote to that same ekklesia concerning his prayer for them saying: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." So it is that those whom God regenerates are "light in the Lord." They may be uneducated men and women, but they are enabled to have understanding and wisdom. And those so enlightened are told to "walk as children of light."



Another place where this same plural Hebrew word is translated as a singular word is Proverbs 30:3 where the writer penned the words, "I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy." At first glance the penman may seem to be writing words of disapproval or criticism of himself and his lack of knowledge. Since we have a couplet again here, as in our first text, let us examine it piece by piece. The first phrase is: "I neither learned wisdom." He does not say that he does not have wisdom, but that he did not learn it nor discover it for or by himself. John Gill in commenting upon the phrase "I neither learned wisdom" says the word "wisdom" means, "... spiritual and evangelical wisdom; that is, not of himself through the mere strength and force of his genius and natural capacity, or of others; he was not the son of a prophet, nor brought up in the schools of the prophets; he did not learn it, nor was he taught it by men; for this is not acquired by human teaching; it is what comes from above, from heaven, and by the revelation of God." We think Gill is correct. The writer is saying that this "spiritual and evangelical wisdom" is not of a man himself as a source. So it is with all of God's true children. The religious world may promote its pride-filled little ditty at Christmas time, saying, "Wise men still seek Him," but the true children of God should know better – or surely will learn better. We seek Him each and every day, and have since the day of our regeneration, but it is not our wisdom that causes us to desire Him and regard Him far above the price of rubies and diamonds.

The second part of this couplet says, "**nor have the knowledge of the holy.**" Again we point out the meaning of the plural phrase, "of the holies," and think the meaning is actually "of the Holy Ones." Again we quote the long departed and highly educated John Gill who wrote, "...or rather of the holy Persons in the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit; their nature modes of subsisting, perfections, purposes, and the like; at least not a full and comprehensive one: or of holy things, of the holy Scriptures, and the holy doctrines of them; however, not what is perfect and complete." It was true of the penman of Proverbs as it is true of all of God's regenerated ones: our wisdom is not something that we obtained from any source other than God. And we did nothing to qualify for it nor to instigate our receiving it. It is all of grace. The kind of wisdom spoken of here cannot be imparted by parents however hard they try, nor from schools or even seminaries. Nor can the "school of hard knocks" as we say, impart this kind of wisdom. We, like the first of this couplet must say, "I neither learned wisdom." That is, I claim a supernatural enlightenment: I do not claim any effort on my part enabled me to have this knowledge nor did my own natural ability cause me to know Him - as if such things could aid me in knowing God. In fact, the writer means what we all who know God must say: had God not supernaturally intervened in me and my life, the Word of God – the "things of the Spirit of God" would still be "foolishness" to me. Had He not given me the ability to know the things that are "spiritually discerned" I would have no real wisdom at all, (1 Corinthians 2:14). Today we may say with Paul, that to us what he called, "Christ crucified" would still be "foolishness" as it is to all Gentiles left to themselves. Had God not supernaturally intervened and done His regenerating work in our innermost being, we would be unenlightened and Christ-less, (1 Corinthians 1:23).

As to the second part of this last couplet, "nor have the knowledge of the holy," we say this: while we claim to know the Holy Ones, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we do not have complete knowledge of Him. We think we shall continue to be enthralled with learning of Him throughout the infinity of eternity. Even when in glorified bodies, how can we finite beings ever comprehend the Three-In-One who is infinite and "his ways past finding out?" (Romans 11:33). Nevertheless, as our first couplet says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy [Holy Ones] is understanding." And as our second couplet teaches, such knowledge is "too wonderful" for us. God-given "wisdom" is jarring to that which the world calls wisdom, but harmonizes with the Psalmist who wrote: "**O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well," (Psalm 139:1-14). And so we, like Spurgeon, ascribe all our change to God! It is God who has given us life and immortality and brought those things to light to us through the gospel (see 2 Timothy 1:10). The blessing of knowledge, wisdom and understanding of God within us are all attributable to God. Be of good cheer, Brethren, look up! God has begun a good work in us. Part of that good work is causing us to have a bit of His wisdom and understanding and knowledge. And He shall perform that good work in us until the return of Christ, (see Philippians 1:6). For now is our final salvation – the redemption of our bodies – "nearer than when we [first] believed," (Romans 13:11). Rejoice that you know what the most intelligent of natural men cannot know. Let them call us fools, bigots, fanatics, narrow minded and whatever other epithets they can invent. We care not for the epithets of men: we are concerned with what epitaphs God might compose about us. We stand in a long line: a remnant of people down through the ages to whom God has made Himself known. And this in itself makes us different. Let us not rejoice in being different, but let us rejoice in Christ and be willing to be different in and because of our knowledge and understanding. Old John wrote, "**And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life," (1 John 5:19-20). Selah.****

# Letters From Ireland

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Proverbs 3:5&6

with Sis. Sarah Doherty



## Which One First?

When I was sitting in church the other day, Pastor read out Ephesians 4:31-32. *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

And then it hit me. Have you ever read a verse that you may have read **many** times before; but suddenly it just jumps right out of the pages at you?! Many people just read the part about being kind, tenderhearted and forgiving but many forget to read the first part which is as follows: *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:"*. The verses are only separate by a colon meaning that they are meant to be together. Not read separately as many Christians do.

As Christians we try to live for the Lord and to love and serve Him *"with the whole heart"* (Matthew 22:37). We work on forgiving others and loving each other which is exactly what the Lord wants us to do.....but what about the first verse? What were the first things that Paul mentioned? Was it about being tenderhearted and kind? No, it wasn't.

The first things that Paul mentioned were that we should put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and evil speaking. We must do that first or it simply will not work! What kind of a witness, to the lost, would we be if we were praising the Lord's name in one breath; but curse, hold grudges against other and losing our tempers in the very next breath! (I do know, however, that as sinful creatures we do mess up at times and for that we need God's forgiveness but what I am talking about here is different. I'm talking about sinning without remorse as some Christians are not being taught that those things are a sin) I have heard and seen many truly saved individuals do this. While I do not doubt their salvation, I merely question how they are being taught and what exactly they are gleaned from the Bible. For if

they read the same words that I do, they would clearly see what I see....what is right in front of us in plain English. Paul did not only say be kind etc.; but before he wrote that he told us what Christ wants us to do first. For how can we be kind, when we have anger in our hearts? How can we be tenderhearted when bitterness and wrath is within us? And how can we forgive, just as Christ has forgiven us for our sins on the cross of Calvary, when our evil words clearly contradict that?

So my prayer to God is that he will help me to "put away" those actions; and help me to become the kind of Christian woman that He want me to be. That He may *"Keep the door of my lips"* (Psalms 141:3) and guard my temper (Ephesians 4:26-27). The Devil would only love to see us falter in our walk with Christ...lets not let him get the victory!!! *"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings."* (1 Peter 2:1)

## A Heart That Yearns for Souls

by Bro. M. J. Seymour, Sr.

It is written: "But when he (Jesus) saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." (Matt. 9:36)

It is a rare thing indeed to find anyone who is moved by that holy grace of compassion for lost souls. History speaks of few men and women who in days gone by were moved with such a divine passion for the salvation of souls. Multitudes have come and gone throughout the fifty generations since the Redeemer of souls walked upon the face of the earth, but the numbers of those who have felt heaven's heart beating within their bosom have been relatively few and far be-tween. Lamentably, the numbers are dwindling at an alarming rate. Few are moved at the preaching of the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and even fewer are moved with heaven's compassion for the lost. Lust for material security has replaced sweet rest in the security of the Father's hand. Rare indeed it is to find one moved by holy grace and divine passion for the lost sheep with little to no thought of the personal cost. It is a heart that yearns for souls by His grace.

The psalmist David wrote: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." (Ps. 142:4) Wrongful understanding of the Doctrines of Grace leads to Pharisee-ism. Rightful understanding humbles the heart and stirs divine passions with a relentless craving to speak of God's grace to the lost. It does not self indulge in the selection of the elect; rather it is moved by a heaven wrought yearning for all whom the eyes behold. Heaven's compassion is not reasonable by human



standards; it is merciful by heaven's decree. It is a sad journey indeed that does not experience God's saving grace in others.

It is written: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed..." (Ps. 126:6) What do you suppose causes one to be moved and go forth into the fields? What moves one to that passionate desire to seek the salvation of the lost? When looking upon the masses, what causes the heart to flood with holy tears? What causes one to say, "Here am I, Father, send me"? It is that special holy work of grace upon the heart! It is the divine gift of seeing what Jesus saw and feel-ing the heartbeat of His compassion. It is the gift of heaven's LOVE.

## Missions Report

Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but

the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Matthew 9:37&38



with Bro. Wesley Massey

## First Log

Greetings in the name that is above every name, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a blessed name it is! For there is no other name given among men, whereby we must be saved.

I have been asked if I would share some things about mission works in view of recent visits to a couple of the Lord's outreaching's through His servants. I am very humbled to comply with this request, and in no way do I think myself anything at all, much less an authority in these matters.

Thus saith our risen Lord Jesus unto His disciples, "**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature**", in Mark 16:15.

This is a command that He gave to His Churches. This is what His Churches will be found doing in faith, hope, and love, when He returns for her. It is easy for us, me included, to say that we believe God's Word.

It is also easy for us to convince our conscience that we are doing enough of what He told us to do.

God help us if we are ever satisfied with our efforts to remain obedient to His commands.

I could stop right there, and perhaps I should. This text deals out a very man sized portion of conviction to every reader that is a "hearer" of His Word.

That is a very small dose of the conviction that our loving and gracious Lord has brought me under with just a couple of visits to foreign Nations.

It would be very difficult for me to overestimate the value to my soul, of these visits. I trust that it will not be a waste of your time for me to also say here, that it would be absolutely impossible to overestimate the value of the spreading of the Gospel into these places, to the soul that the Lord delivers from death unto life through these efforts.



(Worship service in a remote village in Mexico)

The amount of self-denial and sacrifice that I witnessed not only convicted me, but also edified and encouraged me by seeing God's Word come to life. It is always a heart stirring event for this poor, wretched sinner, that has been saved by grace for about 21 years now, to see the faith of God's people by their works.

Now I would love to paint a rosy picture of some wonderful and leisurely places to take a vacation for your fleshly enjoyment, but

the truth of the matter is, my flesh found little pleasure in these ventures, as compared to the vacations that I had grown used to.

Though my flesh was somewhat deprived, my soul fed lavishly upon the rich fellowship in Christ around the Word of God, beautiful worship, and working in labors of love toward our neighbors.



(Bro. Narciso Martinez preaching)

My prayer is that this little article will be some encouragement to you. I want to encourage each and every one of you, my dear brothers and sisters, to support the mission works of your church



in three ways.

Support them: financially, prayerfully, and physically. All three stemming from your heart.

**Financial support** is of necessity, the workers cannot progress without food and supplies, don't muzzle the ox and don't ask the laborers to make bricks without straw. All should understand this.

**Pray for your missionaries** and the work that they do. Pray that the Lord will be pleased to give the increase! Pray that the plowing, sowing, and watering they do will reap a great harvest! Pray for the protection of these dear saints and their families from all evil and elements! Pray that the Lord will keep them encouraged and be the help and the health of their countenance! These prayers should be fervent and without ceasing. Prayer effects everything y'all. I believe true prayer to be the most powerful force in the universe. Effectual fervent prayer can move mountains. It will not change God, or the smallest detail in His plan, but the scriptures teach us of the impossible things made possible by prayer.



(Working at the future Bible Institute, Mexico)

**Physically support** your missionaries with your physical appearing whenever possible. Make the time to visit your missionaries and the disciples that are made through their labors. If there is one thing I learned on my visits, it's that the Lord will use you to spread the Gospel of Christ and demonstrate His love for His people by the very simple act of you sacrificing your time to visit them, even when you cannot communicate directly with them in speech. Our God is an awesome God! I heard many statements along the lines of how hardly no one comes to visit them. This was heartbreaking to me. My beloved reader, I beg you to consider how effectual even a brief visit from you can bless and encourage these dear struggling saints of God. I told myself for many years that there was nothing I could do or was qualified to do. I went on these visits very sure that I was unqualified and unable to even be the least help, and I was right.

But God is able to use the very least and basest of all men to bless, encourage, provoke unto love and good works.

I would advise you to sell yourself short by all means, but be very careful to never sell God short. Put no confidence in the flesh but have all faith in God.

I realize that this is a very tall order and that it would be very difficult if not impossible for every member of every assembly to travel abroad or out of the country to visit these mission fields.

But we should be able to send at least one member as a representative. We who are citizens here in the U.S. have the liberty to travel to most every Nation in the world. The saints in most of these countries are not afforded this liberty or the means, and cannot visit us.



(Bro. Narciso Martinez, his family & Bro. Massey)



(Bro. Massey, Sis. Mariza Villazor, Bro. Hansel Villazor, & Bro. Johnny Coburn)

I mentioned that all three ways of support must stem from the heart. A heart filled with love for Jesus. A strange thing happens



though, as you pour out this love from your heart, it will increase. This is a supernatural effect, as I mentioned before, our God is an awesome God! As you pour out your love through financial support, your love for them will grow. Likewise, through prayer. As you lift up your brethren in prayer, your love and consideration for them grows stronger. Even more so after you have met face to face with a dear brother or sister in Christ and shared your heart, through laboring side by side to reach the Lord's lost sheep, enjoying a smile and a laugh together, sitting in their home and letting them be a blessing to you by feeding you with their best dish of food (one that they seldom indulge in because of the expense), your love will grow.



(Ice cream after church fellowship, Negros Occidental, Philippines)

I believe that there is a great benefit to maintaining all three of these avenues of support. The Word teaches us that a three stranded cord is not easily broken. If we only support financially, this cord is very easily broken by the enemy. How many missionaries have been dropped through the years because this was the case? How much of their labors were dried up and the zeal dwindled because they were not carried by prayer? How easy is it to stop both of these, when there is no face to face heart connection between you?

***“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

The only actual missionary that I've visited is Bro. Bert Craft and his lovely family. I have an endearing love for Bro. Bert and his

family. I cannot fathom why they would love me, but I'm convinced that they do nonetheless.

I was very blessed to be granted this visit of 15 days with them this past September. I cannot say that I have ever experienced a more godly, Christ centered, Word of God saturated family in my lifetime. This dear brother, a very humble man, would shrink back from any of my praises, believes the Word of God. He lives out his faith. The level of self-sacrifice that I have witnessed in his life since we first met in 2006, far exceeds any that I have witnessed in any other brother. The Lord has given him a heart, mind, and soul full of zeal for Christ and His lost sheep. The Lord knows what He is doing and has equipped His servant well for the task. His lovely wife, Sis. Heather, is not any less worthy and has my utmost respect. If I have ever met a sister that comes close to fitting the virtuous woman described in Prov. 31, It is this dear sister. Their family works like a well-trained army for the Lord. It's a very beautiful thing to witness. I truly love and appreciate each and every member of this family.

I did not write this article to praise the Craft family, I feel it is unnecessary to praise them because their work's praise them, but I could not let these words go unspoken. The amount of work that they do as a family is mind blowing. Our God is an awesome God! The Lord has trained this brother in the field of battle and the knowledge that has been given him is noteworthy as a great treasure, a valuable asset to the furtherance of the Gospel.



(Evening fellowship with Bro. Martinez)

The Lord's church there in Chetumal, Mexico that I visited, the Congregacion Bautista Gracia Abundante, is full of lovely saints and is Pastored by Bro. Narciso Martinez. They received me with open arms and hearts filled with joy at my appearing. (Another incredible mystery to me). Even though I had to converse with them through an interpreter, we were able to have great

fellowship and I very quickly fell in love with them. I never thought that I could have such a strong desire to speak and understand Spanish! I feel like I'm a horrible brother for not mentioning each and every one of our beloved brothers and sisters that are members there, but I fear that I'm rambling a bit and I could go on forever talking of the lovely experiences I was blessed with while there, so I'll stop. But before I do, I must mention that it is hot there! I understand that it is always hot there. They have different shades of hot, but it is still hot. I don't think you could get the humidity any higher if you were standing in hot water that was over your head. It's that tough! There is pretty much no air conditioning anywhere you go, so you need to know that you will be hot and sticky with sweat all the time, day and night.



*(Bro. Hansel Villasar, Bro. Johnny Coburn, & Bro. Massey)*

In April of this year, when I visited the Providence Baptist Church in Brgy. Quezon, San Carlos City, Negros Occidental, Philippines, where Pastor Hansel Villasar guards over the Lord's precious flock, I found a very similar experience to my visit to Mexico. Bro. Johnny Coburn and I travelled there together so that we could meet face to face with our already dearly loved Bro. Hansel. Again not knowing just how the Lord would use us to be a blessing to our brother and the church there, just knowing that there was a need for encouragement, and trusting that the Lord would provide. We were received with open arms and hearts overflowing with joy that we had come. In short, I will say, that we fell in love with all of these sweet saints over there, we had a marvelous time in the Lord, there we did not have near as great a need of an interpreter as most spoke and understood English (even my Texan version), God gave us a great witness for His grace, we made friends that I'm convinced we will have throughout eternity, we were told that we would never be forgotten and that our visit meant so much to them that they could not tell it, and had a tearful parting when it was time for us to return home. Bro. Johnny and I were pretty much at a loss for words to describe how our hearts were affected by this experience. Our God is an awesome God!  
Your fellow servant in Christ, By God's amazing grace alone,  
Wesley Massey

## Views From Canada

Of old hast thou  
laid the foundation  
of the earth: and  
the heavens are the  
work of thy hands.

Psalms 102:25

with Sis. Grace Brooks



## Canadian v.s. U.S. Parliamentary Procedures

### How Are the two procedures Different?

We all know through our school days' history lessons that Canada and the United States share a common British rule.

Now Canada is a CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY with a sovereign being, presently Queen Elizabeth the second of England, at its head and a prime minister. Currently, Prime Minister Justine Trudeau, heads the Canadian government.

Canada is supposed to be governed by the people for the people. This is called a democratic system.

The United States is a republic; governed by a constitution, a president (President Obama presently), and congress.





### Heads of State and government

Canada's Head Of State is a British monarch, represented in Canada by another official known as the governor general. The head of state chooses the Canadian head of government known as the Prime Minister. The Head Of State has the power to restrain the prime minister's power.

America's government has no division head of state and government. The Head Of State is the president. He is elected for a four-year term by the people.

### Parliament and Congress

The two countries have similar structures, but operate differently. In Canada Congress is made up of two bodies:

- 1.) The house of Representatives, which are voted in every two years.
- 2.) The Senate members are voted in every six years.

Parliament is also divided.

The House of Commons and the Senate Only members of the House of Commons is publicly elected. Canadian Senate members are appointed by the Governor General and remain in office until he/she steps down or reaches the retirement age of 75.

Both Canada and the United States elect their governments by districts. the number of representatives are determined by population and location.

Canada The House Of Commons

United States House of Representatives

### Citizen rights

We enjoy rights and freedoms guaranteed to the citizens by the constitution of the respective country.

The first ten Amendments to the U.S. CONSTITUTION MAKE UP THE BILL OF RIGHTS.

Canada's Charter of Rights and freedoms, which include freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, the right to vote and to petition our government.

### Constitution

Canada and the United States have an executive, legislative, and judicial branch. These constitutions are the highest laws in the countries. Binding documents lay out governing principals to



which the joining bodies agree. In Canada these bodies are the provinces. In the United States, States.

The Canadian and American countries have the power to levy taxes to raise the money coming in. Spending powers are outlined in the constitutions and other acts.

Services for us citizens through taxes collected is one of many. Upkeep of the infrastructure, such as safe highways is included in services to the citizens.

(read my previous article on Road Safety in Canada "[Concern Or greed](#)" in the February/March issue of this year.)

In all this reading of parlmental appointments by heads of state and being delegated by the countries involved, this is not true.

God appoints who is to be the next prime minister, president, heads of local government and yes, kings, queens and princes. God tears down one and puts another in his/her place to fulfill His plan for the world to play out in His time

Let me direct you to a wonderful daily [devotion by Jimmy De Young on this matter](#).

### **Source article**

[What Is a Common System of Democracy Between the US & Canada?](#)

Academia.edu's "[Canada's Parliamentary System vs. U.S.'s Presidential system](#)"

### **More links to study**

[Government of Canada official website](#)

[Our Prime Minister](#)



# Biblical Economics

And let us not be weary  
in well doing: for in due  
season we shall reap, if  
we faint not.

Gal. 6:9



with Bro. Blaine Conzatti



## Reconsidering Government Debt

In God's covenant with Israel, he commanded the ancient nation to abstain from incurring debt. "For the Lord your God will bless you just as He promised you; **you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow**; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you" (Deuteronomy 15:6, NKJV). If Israel obeyed the law of God, they would be blessed. Conversely, if they diverged from the path revealed to them, they would face judgments, among which included the loss of sovereignty that results from the burden and obligations of indebtedness: "The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail" (Deuteronomy 28:43-44, NKJV).

Over 3,400 years after the covenant renewal recorded by Moses in Deuteronomy, the United States of America faces one of the greatest threats to its future. America's national debt currently exceeds \$19,000,000,000,000. Since President Obama assumed office in 2009, the national debt has nearly doubled. Not counting state and local debts, interest payments, and the estimated \$120 trillion in unfunded liabilities – namely, Social Security, Medicare, and federal employee and veterans' benefits – every American family of four owes approximately \$250,000 to America's creditors.

Proverbs 22:7 says, "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant [other translations use 'slave'] to the lender" (KJV). Writing about this verse, the renowned seventeenth century biblical commentator Matthew Henry astutely observed, "Some sell their liberty to gratify their luxury." Creditors, using their liberality as leverage, often place onerous demands on their debtors. Additionally, those who are laden with debt must repay their loans before they can provide for their own needs. Nations that become burdened with debt lose their financial freedom and self-determination.

Our nation's founding fathers held a deep understanding of this biblical truth. Thomas Jefferson, believing that "the laws of the Creator" prohibited every generation from leaving its debt to be repaid by the next, wrote to his friend John Taylor, "[T]he

principle of spending money to be paid by posterity, under the name of funding, is but swindling futurity on a large scale."

We are, in effect, borrowing money on behalf of future generations, thereby robbing them of their future earnings. No loving, reasonable parents would open a credit card in their son or daughter's name, spend until they hit the credit limit, and then stick their child with the bill. Yet that is precisely the generational theft that Americans are perpetrating against their posterity. To finance their unprecedented appetite for government services, the American public is stealing from the prosperity of future generations.

Every American child is born into this world already owing \$60,000 to our nation's creditors. These children never consented to the bill we are leaving them. Nevertheless, they will be metaphorical slaves, laboring not for their own needs, but rather to repay the debts of their ancestors.

Instead of raising taxes when the people's appetite for government services exceeds tax revenue, governments incur debt. At some point in the future, taxpayers must repay the debt plus interest. There are only two means of reducing debt: raise taxes or significantly cut spending and use the savings to pay down the debt.

Which is the most effective method of reducing debt? The Laffer Curve, which refers to an economic phenomenon popularized by economist Arthur Laffer, explains the relationship between tax rates and tax revenues. Most people falsely assume that governments raise more tax revenue by increasing tax rates. However, the opposite is often true. Governments often obtain higher tax revenues by lowering tax rates. When taxes are high, there is less incentive to work and invest; people either decide to work less, or they engage in tax avoidance or evasion, to avoid paying confiscatory tax rates. The Laffer Curve explains why tax revenues soared following each of the Kennedy, Reagan, and Bush tax cuts. Increasing taxes will not bring about the desired result. Therefore, it is clear that we must make considerable cuts to the national budget, implement meaningful reforms to reduce unfunded liabilities, and get serious about paying off the national debt.

Experience shows us that we embark on the road to poverty and ruin when we disregard the biblical principles of economics. Worse yet, we doom our children to a lower standard of living than we enjoyed. It is time for us to elect leaders that will begin to reverse our country's decades-long unbiblical practice of incurring increasingly more debt.

**PRAY FOR THOSE EFFECTED BY THE  
FLOODING IN TX & WV!**



# The Horns of the Bathroom Dilemma

by Bro. Jeff Short

**A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. ~ [James 1:8](#)**

*No such thing as a slow news day these days.*

When we got on board this train in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2006, no one could have envisioned that ten years later the potty break would be as controversial as the photographs, cakes, and flowers. Of course, many thought the destination was Washington D.C. in 2015, but that was only a stop for fresh supplies and a bigger engine. What began with the picture taker, the baker, and the arrangement maker was just that, only a beginning.

## **Where we are right now**

It's difficult for commentary to keep up with news developments today. We hardly have time to think about something that has happened before the next thing happens. The fire of the moment is the battle over bathrooms. The City of Charlotte passed an ordinance then the state of North Carolina passed a law. Target announced a policy. The courts are hearing cases on bathrooms and locker rooms in schools. Other state governments are debating the issue, and it does go on.

On April 19, 2016, Target posted a [statement](#) in explanation of their policy concerning the use of changing rooms and bathroom facilities in their stores. The statement consisted of 226 words in which the corporation spoke of their "beliefs" four times and referred to their stance/commitment/position four times as well. Seven times in the statement, they referred to how they act on, or exercise, their core beliefs.

Let me start by saying I agree with Target. Their statement is not as much an explanation of their policy as it is a defense of their policy. They are explaining why they have the right to make such a policy and I agree with their reasons completely. They refer to "our stores," which asserts that they are a private company and have legal right to set their own policy for use of the facilities they own and the services they provide. But they go further than that. When they speak of their "core belief" as a business they are acknowledging they have a conscience and deeply held convictions that govern the running of their business. They also go further by clearly acknowledging the free exercise of their beliefs in setting a policy which denies men and women, both

employees and customers, access to privacy, dignity, and security in exclusive changing and bathroom facilities.

Target is 100% correct in the reasons they clearly state to their right to make such policy. I agree completely that they have that right as they have stated and I will defend the right that private businesses have to run their business according to their own convictions of conscience, which includes the choice of services consistent with those convictions. I couldn't possibly agree more.

## **But now to those pesky horns**

Being hung on the horns of a dilemma refers to a logical fallacy where a person's logic has been demonstrated to be internally inconsistent by showing the logical conclusion of their argument contradicts their premise. Target is hung on the horns of the dilemma in their own policy and statement. Their statement is internally inconsistent. They claim their actions are based on an effort to "oppose ... discrimination" and make "Everyone" feel "accepted, respected and welcomed." However, to accomplish their goal they have discriminated against the largest portion of the population and denied them respect and welcoming.

The Obama administration is hung on the horns of the dilemma as they flex the Justice Department against the state of North Carolina. They are straining language beyond the breaking point and accusing the state, when North Carolina has not broken any existing law. Of course, to punish the state for their phony accusation of discrimination, the administration is threatening discrimination against North Carolina with federal funds. The statements made by the Attorney General in this case are internally inconsistent and nonsensical if words have meaning.

The logic of the agenda of this whole ten year train wreck is internally inconsistent. When a major American corporation adopts a policy in line with the agenda, they are defended as a private business with the right to set their own policies of doing business. When a very small family business, e.g. photographer, baker, or florist, declines an order based on conviction, suddenly they are a public business with no right to choose how to do business based on their core beliefs. When an aging rocker denies service to thousands of senior citizens in a state due to his convictions, he is celebrated. When a grandmother declines a flower order due to her convictions, she is punished and must have everything taken away from her.

The bathroom logic has been demonstrated to be inconsistent. Everyone that adopts it will be hung on the horns of the dilemma like [Seattle Parks and Recreation](#) in February of this year. A man walks into the women's locker room of the pool and begins changing. Workers there told him to leave but he refused citing the new rules gave him a right to be there. He stayed and they did nothing. A representative for the Parks department stated that they had no protocol for determining gender at that time. We have to admit, that's a tough one.

There they are on the horns of the dilemma. At some point somebody is going to have to draft that protocol and implement



it, but as soon as they put any restriction whatsoever on access, they have contradicted themselves in a most embarrassing way. [Stories](#) are already coming out about the practical problems of such policies, but yet the train rolls on.

The inconsistencies of this agenda are obvious and so numerous they are hard to keep track of. Some people are beside themselves wondering why they can't see their own inconsistency.

### How can they not see the inconsistency?

Of course, they can see it. They just don't care. This whole thing is not really about access or discrimination. If the bathroom problem were really a problem, it's easily solved. Many businesses have single-toilet, lockable unisex bathrooms. No one is being denied access to a bathroom just like no one is being denied a cake, or flowers, or a photograph. In the original New Mexico case, the party of the first part had already secured a different photographer, at a better price, before they even filed their complaint. That's the free market for you. Everyone has options.

What is this about then? It's all about authority and lordship. They want what Eve wanted when she ate the fruit in the garden ([Genesis 3:6](#)). They want to be their own god. They want to determine good and evil for themselves as their own god. They want what Pharaoh wanted ([Exodus 5:2](#)). They want to go their own way and not obey the word of the Lord. They want what Nebuchadnezzar wanted ([Daniel 4:30](#)). They want to be glorified and not share their glory with any others. They want what the fool wanted ([Psalm 14:1](#)). They want there to be no God so they can go their own way without any responsibility or accountability to another.

They are so determined to have their way, they are trying to pull down everything that points to God. That's why they are trying to destroy the most fundamental objective reality of humanness—being male or female. Why? Because God made it so ([Genesis 1:27](#)). Of course, they can't actually undo what God has made so they're just kicking dust and chucking rocks and playing games with words.

So the postmoderns keeping pulling down their house brick by brick. Eventually, though, you run out of bricks and then you have no house. This train will derail but there's no telling how crazy the ride will get till then. Looking at this current election cycle it is safe to say it will get crazier still.



## Vaccines & My Family

by Sis. Carol Huffman

I love to look back on my life and see how the workings of God are woven through.

I taught preschool for seven years and during that time, I was a part of "the system". The system that says that parents have no idea how to raise their children and that the teachers, politicians, doctors, etc. know best. If children had a bruise, it was because they had suffered some form of abuse, it wasn't because they were out playing and fell down, that would be absurd!

We were conditioned and trained to look at parents as not having any real knowledge of their own children.

WOW, did the Lord change me!

I was pregnant with our third child while working and decided to stay home after he was born. While pregnant, I received the flu shot. I had never had the flu shot before that and I can honestly say that I will never get another one.



(Sis. Carol and her beloved Mike)

I'm not saying that all vaccines are harmful, you can believe whatever you choose to believe but the Lord has led me to my decision of staying away from them.

While still in the hospital after having him, the nurses decided that he was way too big and needed to supplement with formula. While they were trying to give it to him, he stopped breathing and began to vomit violently. They dismissed it and continued giving it to him. We went home from the hospital and for days he screamed in pain, would not nurse and eventually spiked a fever of 105. When he was four days old, we went to Children's Hospital in Dayton. I hadn't slept, I hadn't healed from delivering a 10 lb. 5 Oz. baby and I was an emotional wreck. They did several tests and even a spinal tap. They couldn't find anything wrong. A nurse that was there (whose son I had taught in preschool) that gave me wonderful help with nursing and he

began to eat and thrive, but still would have have trouble breathing and would vomit violently after eating at times. I t just began to be our way of life, eat- puke- sleep and repeat every two hours.

As he got bigger, we started trying some baby food and formula and of course there are those kind hearted people that always think it's cute to give babies bites of pie and ice cream and things like that at parties. (Please don't ever be one of those people)



*(Sis. Carol's younger 6 children)*

After five horrible experiences with this, I asked the doctor if he could possibly have a food allergy because I figured out that when I ate certain foods, he would be worse. The doctor said "absolutely not! Children cannot be diagnosed with food allergies until after turning one."

Of course I believed her, she was one of those that knew more than the parents! (even though she had no children of her own)

I began researching and taking away foods until we were having no issues. It was wonderful! What a blessing to finally know what was wrong with our child! We got him in for allergy testing and he did indeed have food allergies, several actually.

Life was difficult, reading every label in the grocery store and never being able to go to restaurants but at least my little boy was finally healthy and strong.

Then he was diagnosed with asthma, again by the hospital and never by our pediatrician.

I was just so glad to know have an answer!

So, back to this pediatrician, when he was three, she said with his asthma, he needed the flu shot. I asked point blank, "isn't he supposed to avoid the flu shot because of his egg allergy?" She looked at me like I was stupid and said that there was no reason to think that (even though one of the listed ingredients is albumin).

He received the shot and was terribly ill for six weeks. He coughed and vomited and was a mess. When they called to tell me he needed to come back for his second dose I kindly told them "no thank you."

**PROFESSIONALS  
ARE FALLIBLE, AS A  
PARENT YOU ARE  
RESPONSIBLE FOR  
YOUR CHILD'S  
HEALTH DECISIONS**



**PRAY FOR  
GOD'S  
LEADERSHIP AND  
WISDOM**

We have learned so much about food and its effect on the body. Since, we have figured out how food dyes and chemicals in processed foods trigger neurological issues in another one of our children and how wheat and gluten trigger digestive issues in another one. We have also, through another bad experience, have seen the harmful effects of vaccines but I will save that for another time.

I am constantly learning and growing in knowledge of these things and the more I learn, the more I realize how harmful our diets are.

Please be considerate of your body, it is God's temple and we are commanded to take care of it. Nourish it, heal it and protect it.

So, my story continues as each day passes and each day I think of how many times my child could have died at the hand of health care workers and people who are trusted to take care of us. I'm not trying to belittle anyone in health care, I am just begging you as parents, Ask Questions! Follow your Gut Feelings! And Guard your child's health.





# In Health

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. ~ III John 1:2

with Bro. John Fry D.C.



## Waist Size & Health

Of all the things you do to consider how healthy you are, it turns out one of the most effective things to consider is your waist size. I'm sure to many this seems obvious, but science now confirms human observation. The bigger your waist, the more likely you are to be unhealthy.

For a long time doctors and weight loss clinics have tried to get people to fit an ideal body mass index. I myself have pushed my patients towards the "magic number" of 24.9 for several years. True, this is a good goal for the average person to fit into, however, these charts cannot take into account the ultra fit 40-year-old 6-foot athlete weighing 240 lbs of muscle and the 40-year-old 6-foot couch potato weighing the same. One is obviously fit and the other is not. Therefore, we must look at other indicators towards health as well.

We've long made the reference to body shape consciously and subconsciously. A person's shape can tell us a lot about a person. For example, we can see that people with a pear shape, that is, where weight is deposited in the hips and thighs are healthier than those with an apple shape where weight is deposited in the abdomen.

It is these types of observations that have led scientists to look more specifically at waist size and health. What they've discovered is that waist size is a good predictor of both heart disease and diabetes. These results seem to be true regardless of age and height. So no complicated formulas, scales, or calipers. All you need is a tape measure.

So now you are probably wondering what that ideal waist size is for optimum health. It turns out the number is different for men and women. Women in general with a waist size over 35 inches tend to have an increased risk of disease. Likewise, for men an increase in waist size over 36 inches increases the likelihood of disease. Waist circumference in both sexes of 36-40 inches is considered overweight and over 40 inches is considered obese.

Does all this mean we should skip the scales? Probably not, they make for a quick reality check, but take some time and measure that waist line. If you're larger than the standard above, then work on taking off a little bit of that belly fat.

If you have any questions you would like answered, I would love to hear from you. You can contact me at [pastorjohnfry@att.net](mailto:pastorjohnfry@att.net). Until next time I pray that you might be in health.

John Fry is the pastor of Grace Missionary Baptist Church in Ceredo, West Virginia and a licensed chiropractor at Lavalette Chiropractic.

## Bible Jocks

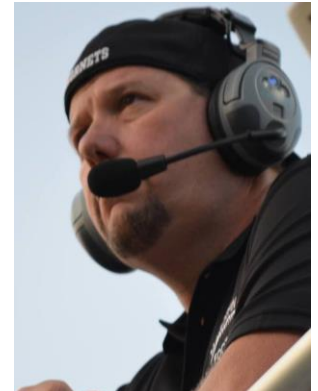
Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

I Corinthians 9:24



## Wisdom, Knowledge & Understanding Can you find them in the world of sports?

by Bro. Mark Campbell



The question was posed; can you write an article concerning what sports has taught you? I can write about what sports has taught me. I can also write about what sports continues to teach me.

The lessons which one learns from sports are many and varied. Sports teaches lessons both in a positive and negative manner. For example, in sports, you can learn things which have great value. Also, you can learn things which are of little value. In this article, I want to speak concerning things which have a positive value. The lessons we will focus on in this article are: discipline, dedication and desire.

Very early in one's sports career, an athlete will learn the value of discipline. Every coach has a set of team rules. A young athlete will learn to listen to the coaches' instruction. Also, he will learn to discipline himself to work hard in practice. The athlete will learn about being disciplined if he does not follow the rules or work hard in practice.



An athlete also needs to learn self-discipline. An exceptional athlete will understand organized practice is not sufficient training. He will need to practice on his own if he desires to succeed. Also, in many cases, an exceptional athlete will need to practice self-discipline in lifestyle. Whether he is getting the rest necessary for his body to perform at its peak, or if he is disciplining himself in the way he fuels his body through the types and amounts of food he eats; self-discipline is very important for an athlete.

Dedication, how does an athlete learn dedication in sports? Sports can be very demanding on one's time and energy. The practice schedules vary in start times, length and demands upon one's body. Some athletes begin practice early in the morning. Other practice late into the night. Some teams practice for hours, while others only one or two. Additionally, some practices are grueling, while others may be only a video session. No matter what the demands are upon the athlete, he needs to be dedicated.

A team needs to be able to depend upon each of its members. A coach needs to know that a team member knows the plays which he has designed. If a team member does not attend practice, the coach cannot be sure if the player understands the team's playbook. Also, each of the team members needs to be able to rely upon each other to be in the right place at the right time, if a play is going to be successful. If a player is not dedicated, he will not be dependable. This is another lesson which is learned through participating in sports, dependability.

Finally, an athlete will learn the value of desire. If one does not possess a great desire to succeed, most likely, he will not. Very few athletes are born with exceptional talent. Even the greatest athletes discuss how they work hard every day to develop their skills. As has already been discussed, the demands placed upon an athlete are many. Every day, an athlete will face demands upon his body, mind, and spirit. If he is not dedicated, he will not be able to achieve a great level of success. Learning how to be dedicated is a valuable lesson which athletes learn as they participate in sports.

As we begin this new section of articles by the "Bible Jocks", we hope to be able to share with you the joy which sports can bring to one's life. It is impossible in the scope of one article to tell you all that can be learned in the field of sports. It is our desire through this series of articles, that we can encourage you, entertain you, and maybe even share how God works in our life through sports.

In closing, another area of wisdom which is used in sports, is the use of slogans. Many times, coaches will have a theme for his team. A thought around which they can rally. Let me share one with you which I have used often. "A man is not defeated when

he is knocked down. A man is defeated when he refuses to get up."



## Lessons I learned from Sports

by Bro. Troy McGahan

My family and I love Sports. It's something we enjoy doing together. Terra is the ultimate sports mom, she is always there cheering on Zechariah and his team mates. If it's football I am on the sidelines Coaching the kids up and getting them in position to do better for their team. So as you can see we enjoy sports.

This love affair with sports goes back to my childhood. I played Basketball, Baseball and football until I was in 7th grade, after that I stuck with football and then threw shot put and Discus in high school. There's a lot of things I could talk about when it comes to sports. I could talk about all the lifelong friends I made. Most would think my greatest memories and lessons would be from the victories. However, from my sophomore through Senior Year we won 5 varsity games. I learned more in losses than I ever learned in victory. Oh don't get me wrong I would rather win than lose but, that didn't happen for me.

Here are 3 things I learned from my losses in sports.

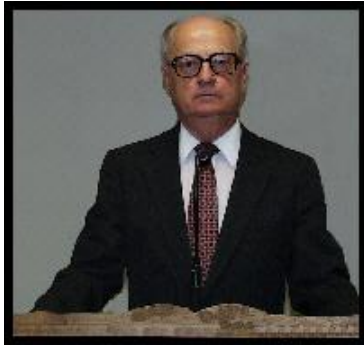
1) Don't give up. In High School we played against St Xavier High School out of Louisville, KY and they were ranked top 20 in the country. As a Sophomore who never got in the game I fully expected us to win. It didn't matter who we played I expected us to win. Still yet I carry that same attitude. I don't care what is going I am not going to quit. I keep plugging away, now my reasons why I don't quit is different. Before I was saved I didn't quit because I wanted the glory. Now I don't quit because I want to glorify God in all that I do.

2) Hard work.

During the off season my team mates and I would lift weights, run, jump rope, dot drills whatever we could do to get better. However, it never paid off in wins. During two a days, we would run, work on fundamentals and block and tackle until we literally fell over. Fast forward 25 years. My fellow Sr football players are good productive citizens. To give you an example we have 3 Independent Baptist Preachers, 2 EMT's, 2 sales reps, Lt Col in Air force and 4 factory workers. To my knowledge all are good family men (not all saved but, decent citizens). Those work habits have carried over into life. No one is going to give you anything, put in the work and do your best.

### 3) Be a team player.

When you play a team sport you learned the world doesn't revolve around you. I had to have my team mates back and they had my back as well. That carried over to jobs, ministry, and family. It is not all about me!!! We have to work together to carry out the task at hand. The generation coming up could learn that lesson. Put others in front of you and work for the betterment of those around you.



## Who Is God

by Bro. Wm.

Doyal Thomas

*(This article first published in The Baptist Herald - January, 1990)*

It seems sad that such a question would ever be asked. Yet, there are multiplied millions of people who do not know who God is. And they make no pretense about knowing, and seem to be unconcerned and uncaring.

There are other millions who imagine a god, and then seek to be identified with their imagined god. The number of these imagined gods is unknown, for it seems that everywhere you look there is a new god who suddenly appears on the scene to lead the unknowing into another false way.

#### But Who IS God?

Is God the imagined god of man? And if so, which of the many is the authentic? It is obvious that all the many cannot be the real - for there are many, and each is thought to be the real by someone. Everyone most surely is thinking that his is the real.

The imagined god of man cannot be God. Whichever god comes into man's depraved and darkened mind cannot be God. All the gods of man's imagination cannot be God, for they all are weak and deficient. Weak in ability and deficient in wisdom. They cannot be God.

The One God has this complaint against man, "... thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself ..." (**Psalms 50:21**). Of course, God is here speaking to Israel as representative people. And here is God's assessment of the situation: "Thou thoughtest". That is awesome. That man thought (imagined) that the true God was just another like himself states the case correctly. But regardless of man's rationalizations about God and about himself, God has plainly declared the truth. Let man therefore take note, and quibble not at God's evaluation.

Man imagines a god. And man's god is like himself - initially. And then this imagined god takes on other forms in descending order until this god becomes in the mind of man something to hold in utter contempt. Not at all to be feared or held in high

esteem. Laughable in weakness and scorned for lack of knowledge and wisdom.

Is it any wonder that man acts as he does? His god can do nothing for him, nor hold him in any way accountable. His god is not to be worshiped and praised. His god is to be ruled over and put to open shame. Is it any wonder that man continues on in his sin?

Have you ever heard someone refer to God as "the man upstairs"? Have you? Have you ever referred to God as "the man upstairs"? Have you? Come now - haven't you? Shame upon you, and upon I, for our blasphemous thoughts and declarations concerning God and His Being.

Please turn to the book of **Romans** and read chapters 1, 2, and 3. Here, you will find a sweeping indictment that God has pronounced against sinful, fallen man. Read it in awe. Read it in great fear and trembling. Read again and again chapter **1** verses **21** thru **23**. "*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful: but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*"

How awful are the imaginations of sinful man. How dark is the darkness of the foolish heart of fallen man. How degrading and dishonoring are the evil thoughts of the totally depraved mind and heart against the Very God. "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" (**Jeremiah 17:9**).

An examination of **Romans 1:21-23** will reveal the wickedness of the thoughts of fallen man toward and about God.

First, sinful man changes (in his own mind) the glory of the uncorruptible God, and begins to make images of what he thinks God to be. And his first effort produces an image of his supposed god to be "like himself".

Man places his god on a level with himself so that he can now deal with his god on the basis of their equality. Eyeball to eyeball, using human language. And that is bad! That is awful! That is, to be sure, exceeding sinful!

Next, not being satisfied with such a god, man makes an image of his god like the fowl of the air. The fowl of the air being a level of created being lower than man, man now ascends to a position above his god. Here, as before, his god is just another creature, like himself, and not the Creator at all. And the case worsens. There is an increasing contempt on the part of man toward God.

Then, man sinks lower in his imaginations and makes unto himself an image of his god like the four footed beasts. Lower than man. Lower than the fowl of the air. Now man's god is more and more disregarded. Man now has less reason in his depraved mind to heed his god than before. And he loves to have it so. He gloats of his position of supremacy over his god. He is now

superior to his god. And who serves whom in this case?

Finally, man makes unto himself an image of his god like the creeping things. The creeping things are less honorable than the created beings above their level. The creeping things are generally held in utter contempt and are to be trodden under the foot of man at will. To be shunned without shame and disregarded in entirety. This is depravity at work! For now, the god of man is walked over with no thought whatsoever.

As you read again **Romans**, chapters 1, 2, and 3, you will find in chapter 3 a detailed account of God's indictment against the descendants of Adam. Read chapter 3, verses **10-23**. Take note of this pronouncement - "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*"

Who IS God?

Let us look to Holy Writ. Let us hear God as He declares Himself to be God Alone.

*"Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God."* (**Psalms 50:1**).

*"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else."* (**Isaiah 45:5,6**).

*"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"* (**Isaiah. 46:9,10**).

*"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."* (**Exodus 3:14**).

Now, after all these clear declarations, by God Himself as to who He is, how can anyone fail in knowing Him?

The answer: Except God "open the heart", none can find out God. He reveals Himself to whomsoever He pleases, as in the case of Lydia. (**Acts 16:14**)

Because his heart is darkened by sin, man cannot know God, nor can he discern spiritual things. Man's "*foolish heart was darkened*" (**Romans 1:21**), so that he cannot know God. Sin has ruined man so that he cannot know the God who created him. He is separated from his Creator. Thus a state of spiritual death exists. "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" (**1 Corinthians. 2:14**)

Who IS God?

He is the Maker and Creator of all things, and by Him all things consist. There is nothing that is made that was not made by Him. Think of it. Consider the implications.

And when He Created, who was there to counsel with Him as to "reasonable procedure to follow"? Who was there to counsel with Him as to the advisability of even making a vast creation? Of celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial? Of the vast gradations of

created beings? Of man? Who was there?

*"Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare if thou has understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who has stretched the line upon it? whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?"* (**Job 38:4-6**) Please read all of **Job 38**, and pay particular attention to the times when God challenges His creatures to "declare if thou knowest".

In this vast creation that God has fashioned, is it not evident that He has determined all things that ever shall be? Is it not evident? Is it not? Do the celestial orbs follow random wanderings? Or do they not traverse the vast reaches of unknown space in precise, exact, and predictable movements? Is there chaotic and senseless turmoil in their revolutions about other bodies that collectively form the universe? Does each follow its own will or purpose, apart from the exactness of Omniscient Wisdom's prescription? Does not the path of each meld into the perfectness of the whole? Declare -- if thou knowest!

And what about those creatures that God has placed upon this one celestial body, His created earth?

Are all His creatures the same as all others? Is there not here also the clearly manifested evidence that God has purposed and willed to bring into existence multiplied millions of creatures, each species being created uniquely different from the others?

Cats there are many. Variations abound as to breeds, colors, sizes, etc., within the species. Yet, cats are not rats, nor are they dogs, nor are they fowl of the air, nor fish of the sea. They are cats, and they will continue to be cats according to God's promise, each producing "after his own kind", and it will not change by evolutionary process, regardless of the lies of Satan and man. "*And GOD SAID, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beasts of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that is was good."* (**Genesis 1:24,25**)

And what about the times and season? Are they not all under the direct supervision of the Absolute Sovereign? Does day follow night? Are there seed times and times of harvest? Is there a time to be born and a time to die? Is there?

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: {2} A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; {3} A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; {4} A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; {5} A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; {6} A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; {7} A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; {8} A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. (**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**)



Surely, there must be an Originator of all these times. And just as surely, there must be a Regulator of these same times.

Can a mere creature presume to be in control of events and times? Can collective creatureship regulate any or all things? Is man the master of his own destiny? Is man wielding the scepter of rulership? If so, please state one Biblical declaration of such. Where is example? Where is proof? Where is the evidence? Does history give an example? Name one such case that does. *"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD."* (**Proverbs 16:33**) *"There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."* (**Proverbs 19:21**)

Did the Creator see fit to create all men equal? To claim that He did is to state clearly the position of utter ignorance that all of Adam's race must take before Infinite Omniscience. If you imagine that all men are created equal, then you are in a state of ignorance on this matter.

Are all men of equal height? weight? strength? intelligence? talent? temperament? color? comeliness? modesty? ability? standing before God?

In some ways men are alike. They are all sinners (Christ Jesus alone excepted). They are all destitute of means to alter their position, the position of a guilty sinner before a Holy and offended God. They all stand in desperate need. They all are unworthy of the least of His mercies. They are all undeserving and undesiring of God and the things of God. They are all unwilling to come to God, for they are unwilling to forsake their sins. They are all dead in trespasses and in sins. They are all under the wrath of God. And there is much more.

All men are not the same, for He has said, to some men, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." (**Jeremiah 31:3**) And to some others, He said, "... I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (**Matthew 7:21**) What did God mean by these two expressions? What He said, or something else? What else?

Some of mankind are permitted to live out long and eventful lives. Others are taken out at an earlier age. In fact, I believe that the history of man during these approximate 6000 literal years of man's existence will verify that a majority of those born pass into eternity in the time of their infancy.

Why is this? Is it because some are more worthy of immediate ushering into God's presence than others? Is it because some are deemed more suitable to mortal life than others? Why is this? Answer: It is the sovereign prerogative of God alone to do with His own as seemeth Him good!

God is sovereign. He is sovereign in all His many appointments and in all His Divine operations. He does as He will. In all circumstances that He sovereignly brings about, He rules and overrules according to His own wise counsel and choice.

It was God who confronted Pharaoh with such circumstances that he hardened his heart and refused to let God's people go. God

had commanded, by Moses' utterance to Pharaoh, *"Let my people go."* But God had also told Moses, *"I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall not let my people go."* (**Exodus 4:21**)

God hardened Pharaoh's heart by forcing upon him the requirement that he accept the word of God whom Pharaoh DID NOT KNOW. And Pharaoh, being a sinner, acted according to his own nature and rebelled. Pharaoh is responsible because he was a sinner who refused to bow before God in obedience. He is a sinner and totally responsible for his own actions. He is responsible.

*"And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go. I KNOW NOT THE LORD, neither will I let Israel go."* (**Exodus 5:1,2**)

"I KNOW NOT THE LORD" is Pharaoh's truthful acknowledgment. Had he known God, he would have obeyed the command of God. Had he KNOWN God, he would have OBEYED God! But, he knew not God. He is a sinner, and he knows not God. The same for all sinners. They know not God!

But read further into this case. Read *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared through all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* (**Romans 9:14-18**)

Pharaoh is a fallen sinner. His heart is deceitful above all things and is desperately wicked. He is in a state of total depravity and all his faculties are impotent to do anything acceptable and pleasing to God, who he KNOWS NOT. Depravity cannot search out God even if it wanted to.

Dear reader, when Scripture speaks of God, He is seen on His Throne, and at the Helm, steering according to His own good pleasure. Please read **Ephesians. 1:11; Proverbs. 21:1; Dan. 4:35.**

The Doctrine of God is the foundation doctrine. And upon this doctrine all other doctrines must be built. Any doctrine, whatever it may be, must stand or fall upon its relation to the foundation doctrine. And that doctrine is hereby stated: God IS God!

The imagined god of so-called "modern man" is completely lacking in power. Men imagine their god to be filled with the best of good intentions toward them, but somehow Satan and the "free will" of man is preventing him making good on his intentions. This imagined god is very puny indeed isn't he. And who among us can rest assured in these good intentions when there is no power to execute?

# The Humiliation of Christ

by Bro. Todd Bryant

*“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” – Hebrews 2:9*

The “humiliation of Christ” is one of the most mind-boggling things in the entire world. It is no wonder that those who are wise in worldly things don’t generally understand it (**1 Corinthians 1:26**). The thought of God becoming man is just foolishness to the natural mind (**1 Corinthians 2:14**). Nevertheless, it is one of the foundations of all truth. Jesus is the Creator (**John 1:1-2**). And yet, He was fully man when He came to this Earth as our text tells us. He was all God and all man – the God man, Jesus Christ.

Jesus willingly became a man. **Philippians 2:7-8** tells us that Jesus “*made of Himself no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*” What amazing love that Christ must have for His own that He willingly set aside the glory He had with the Father before the foundation of the world to suffer for us (**John 17:5**). He wasn’t forced to do this. His will was in harmony with the Father’s will so He willingly laid down His life for His sheep (**John 10:11**).

Paul said, “*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory*” (**1 Timothy 3:16**). Certainly, it’s a great mystery for our minds to consider. Jesus is 100% God. Yet, He came to this Earth as 100% man. He didn’t cease to be God at that time. Yet, He was fully man. One may say, “That is impossible”. Well, had it been anybody else, it certainly would have been impossible. But it happened nonetheless. It is absolute truth. Our ability to understand it doesn’t validate it. God’s Word is the foundation of all truth and it informs us of both Christ’s deity and humanity. So, we must believe it.

So, what’s the point? Why study this? Why consider this? Does it even really matter? Well, first of all it’s in the Bible. So, it’s worthy of consideration on that basis alone. But that certainly isn’t the only reason. In God’s plan, a man had to die for the sins of another man. We, as fallen men, needed a sinless Kinsman Redeemer to die for our sins. But no man is sinless. We all fell in Adam. We are all sinners (**Romans 3:23**). God certainly is not a sinner. Yet, God cannot die! So, there is a huge divide there in our minds. In fact, there is no human remedy here. Yet God, in His wisdom, made a way. His Son would become a man – albeit a sinless man – and suffer the penalty for the sins of His people (**Matthew 1:21**). Our sins cannot now be imputed to us because Christ willingly became our Mediator and paid for them (**1 Timothy 2:5**).

Do you trust this One today? Our prayer is that God has effectually drawn you to Christ as your personal Savior!

We also declare that the imagined god of so-called “modern man” is completely lacking in wisdom and discernment. So-called “modern man” has convinced himself that God loves everybody. Now, were this the case, then God would be lacking in wisdom. Time and eternity makes known that everybody does not come to be saved. Didn’t God know?

The God of the Bible is so very much different from the god of so-called “modern man”. Human enlightenment has not brought man to see and to know God. Rather, human enlightenment has deepened the belief among man that he is a god unto himself. Humanism is steeped within this so-called “modern man”. And he KNOWS NOT GOD!

Who IS God? Let Scripture answer: “*Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*” (**Psalms 100:3**)

I am persuaded that if God’s people are properly and scripturally taught who God is, they will no longer rebel at the grand doctrines of the Bible. Rather, they will relish these precious truths, and rejoice in them. And they will strive to live to please such a God as is their God. “... *but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.*” (**Daniel 11:32**) May God be pleased to reveal Himself in this way to all His people as He uses His men to declare His Word.

I pray that God, in great mercy, will make Himself known more fully to me, and to each of His children everywhere. I want to know Him better so that I will love Him more, so that I will serve Him more, and worship Him more acceptably. I pray that God will bless us with knowledge of Himself.

I want the church that I pastor to be actively seeking to know Him more fully. I want all of us to live close to Him and to have our lives reflect His perfect love in our hearts. I want us, all of us, to put our time and energies and our very lives completely at His disposal. To be used of Him is our grand aim and goal.

God’s people must be taught the truth. They must be indoctrinated and established in the truth. And the truth must be taught in love. Love that is of God leads us to Him and then teaches us of Him. And His love being shed abroad in our hearts leads us to teach His word, faithfully, to those He sends us to.

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