

2015 NEWSPAPER DEVOTIONAL ARTICLES by Rev. Mike Jones

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| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| January 7, 2015 | LOSING WHILE WAITING | May 20, 2015 | BETTER BLESSINGS |
| January 13, 2015 | UNSATISFIED HUNGER | May 26, 2015 | PURPOSE |
| January 14, 2015 | SICKNESS | May 27, 2015 | SOME |
| January 20, 2015 | HEALING | June 2, 2015 | PREPARATION |
| January 21, 2015 | REGRET | June 3, 2015 | FAITH'S HOPE |
| January 27, 2015 | SEEING BELIEF | June 9, 2015 | WARNING WORDS |
| January 28, 2015 | DEFENDING FAITH | June 10, 2015 | THE RED DRESS |
| February 3, 2015 | SLOGANS | June 16, 2015 | GUIDANCE |
| February 4, 2015 | HELPING HELPERS | June 17, 2015 | WHAT FAMILIES CRAVE |
| February 10, 2015 | PASSION AND PURPOSE | June 23, 2015 | FAMILY PRIORITIES |
| February 11, 2015 | CHRISTIAN LOVE | June 24, 2015 | HOW CHRISTIANS HURT SOCIETY |
| February 17, 2015 | LOVE IS | June 30, 2015 | TELL MY STORY TEARS |
| February 18, 2015 | MEDIA MONEY | July 1, 2015 | TRANSITIONAL CHRISTIANS |
| February 24, 2015 | WASTE TIME | July 7, 2015 | A MILLION |
| February 25, 2015 | WINNING FAMILY MEMBERS | July 8, 2015 | DUNGEON DAY |
| March 3, 2015 | DEVOTIONAL SOUP | July 14, 2015 | CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE |
| March 4, 2015 | THOUGHTFUL THINKING | July 15, 2015 | SINGLE SAINTS |
| March 10, 2015 | WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? | July 21, 2015 | WORLD CHANGING CHURCH |
| March 11, 2015 | MIXED WITH FAITH | July 22, 2015 | FAR COUNTRY COMPANIONS |
| March 17, 2015 | EVIL INTENT | July 28, 2015 | FINGERS |
| March 18, 2015 | SIN | July 29, 2015 | REAL WORLD CHRISTIANS |
| March 24, 2015 | DILIGENT DISCIPLESHIP | August 4, 2015 | TRANSFORMED |
| March 25, 2015 | BETRAYAL | August 5, 2015 | YOUR APPLE |
| March 31, 2015 | ONE MAN | August 11, 2015 | LAWN MOWER GAS |
| April 1, 2015 | CORNERED CHOICES | August 12, 2015 | PECULIAR PROTECTION |
| April 7, 2015 | WALK | August 18, 2015 | PRECIOUS TO GOD |
| April 8, 2015 | WORSHIP | August 19, 2015 | PREPAID EMERGENCY |
| April 14, 2015 | ARE YOU GROWING? | August 25, 2015 | THE MASTER'S VOICE |
| April 15, 2015 | BETTER TO TRY | August 26, 2015 | SPENT MONEY |
| April 21, 2015 | SIN SNARES | September 1, 2015 | UNIQUE |
| April 22, 2015 | SHEEP SIGNS | September 2, 2015 | PULL THE PLUG |
| April 28, 2015 | REMORSE | September 8, 2015 | USED OF GOD |
| April 29, 2015 | GIVING BIRTH TO GOD | September 9, 2015 | IN HELL NEED IN CHURCH |
| May 5, 2015 | THE GREATEST EVENT | September 15, 2015 | THE DIFFERENT PROPHET |
| May 6, 2015 | CANNOT FORGIVE | September 16, 2015 | SEEK GOD |
| May 12, 2015 | LIFE LENGTH | September 22, 2015 | DESCRIBE GOD |
| May 13, 2015 | God's Morning Musings | September 23, 2015 | END TIME CHARACTERISTICS |
| May 19, 2015 | DAD'S EASY CHAIR | September 29, 2015 | PLACEBO |
| | | September 30, 2015 | GARDEN GUIDELINES |

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| October 6, 2015 | PROBLEM PRAYERS |
| October 7, 2015 | INSPECT YOUR EXPECT |
| October 13, 2015 | CONTROL S-W |
| October 14, 2015 | OVERCOMING |
| October 20, 2015 | SMALL GOD |
| October 21, 2015 | BED MOMENTS TO AVOID BAD |
| October 27, 2015 | GOD'S NEIGHBORS |
| October 28, 2015 | GOD FIRST |
| November 3, 2015 | BEFORE YOU WERE BORN |
| November 4, 2015 | HANDFULS |
| November 10, 2015 | A SPIRITUAL PERSON |
| November 11, 2015 | MANAGING A MIRACLE |
| November 17, 2015 | THE POWER OF PRAISE |
| November 18, 2015 | GOD PRAISING YOU |
| November 24, 2015 | PRAISE FOR PRAISE |
| November 25, 2015 | THE BEST WORD |
| December 1, 2015 | GOD ALLOWED PROBLEMS |
| December 2, 2015 | GIVING LIKE GOD |
| December 8, 2015 | PRESENT PANIC |
| December 9, 2015 | BEING GOD'S DAD |
| December 15, 2015 | WHY HE DID IT |
| December 16, 2015 | THE PERFECT GIFT |
| December 22, 2015 | THE RIGHT GIFT |
| December 23, 2015 | GIFTS FROM GOD |
| December 29, 2015 | KNOWING GOD BETTER |
| December 30, 2015 | GOD IN YOUR LIFE |

January 7, 2015 LOSING WHILE WAITING

[Menu](#)

I wonder how many people fail to live happy productive lives because they are waiting for someone else to “get the ball rolling” - *And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, **Sir, I have no man**, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me* (John 5:5-7). Jesus then tells him to get up and walk and the man is instantly healed.

What (or who) are you waiting on to change your life? For thirty eight years this man had been a loser. Then Jesus came along and told him it was up to him to get up and walk; not wait on someone else to come along and carry him where he thought he needed to be. Waiting on someone else to solve his problem only prolonged his agony.

There is a time to “wait on the Lord” in order to gain strength and wisdom. But sometimes inaction becomes inertia and you end up wasting away while waiting. Your long time “infirmity” will continue to cripple you as long as you blame someone else for your problems. It is up to you to believe God can change you where you are.

January 13, 2015

UNSATISFIED HUNGER

[Menu](#)

I wonder what there is about desire that causes us to desire “desire” even when we find the thing we desire does not satisfy our cravings. Shakespeare expressed it this way in ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA- “Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety. Other women cloy (fulfill) the appetites they feed, but she makes hungry where most she satisfies”.

Wise King Solomon said, “The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing” and goes on to describe how the accumulating of wealth, wisdom, and women led him to describe life as “vanity of vanities” instead of saying, “Thank God for the tremendous blessings which surround me”.

Like a sailor starving of thirst while floating on an ocean of salt water Solomon and Shakespeare realized many things we desire in life only “makes hungry where most she satisfies” instead of quenching the deep thirst of our soul. They finally grasped that unsatisfied hunger is like a killer requiring the person they are going to kill to dig their own grave (How dumb can you get to dig so you can die!).

Jesus was tempted to gain the world by worshipping Satan instead of dying on a cross. Taking Satan’s path would have gained the planet but would have lost the people. In the same way, your “hunger” choices will defeat you or define you. So make sure your choices satisfy instead of make you hungrier.

January 14, 2015

SICKNESS

[Menu](#)

Sickness is always easier to talk about than to endure but I hope this information will help you understand the relationship between sickness and God’s healing. Most people want to just “pray and be healed” but chapter eight of Matthew’s gospel gives us the four ways God normally brings healing to people.

1) A sick person requests healing from God- A leprous man came to Jesus and asked for Christ to make him clean (He was seeking healing in order to once more fellowship with people and attend worship in God’s house not to go back to an “ignore God” lifestyle).

2) A well person requested healing for a sick person- A Centurion came seeking healing for his servant and the Centurion’s faith was used to activate the healing. There is no indication of faith by the sick servant.

3) Jesus simply decided to heal someone- Peter’s mother-in-law was sick when Jesus arrived. He healed her so she could perform her normal duties (minister to Jesus and disciples)

4) Sick people were brought to Jesus by well people so they could seek their own healing- When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: (Matthew 8:16).

All of this healing took place “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” (Matthew 8:17). Jesus knows and cares about your sickness- Glory!

January 20, 2015 HEALING

[Menu](#)

The ability of God to heal is never a question; the plan of God to heal is what gives us a problem. As a long time pastor, I have prayed for hundreds of people on sick beds. Some were cured by a miracle from God, some were cured by medicine from a doctor, and some died. To the best of my knowledge, I prayed with the same faith and fervor for each case.

Doctors know that determining the cause of sickness is the first step toward healing (that is the purpose of questions, examination, and tests). Healing begins with understanding the reason you are sick!

Job's sickness was a satanic attack which God used to bring Job to a greater awareness of God's greatness. Paul had a sickness that God would not cure so Paul could learn "God's grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness".

Some sickness is the result of other people's action (Think flu's spread at school or office) while other sickness is the result of a personal sin problem-Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him... and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him (James 5:14-15). And some sickness is the result of the frailty of the flesh (remember, there is a sickness whereof we die).

The reason for your sickness can determine the results of your healing prayer. Do a "sickness examination" before you pray.

January 21, 2015 REGRET

[Menu](#)

The word "regret" is not found in the Bible but it is a constant companion to many people. The dictionary defines regret as "sorrow or remorse over past actions". This "sorrow or remorse" is a constant painful reminder of misused words or mishandled situations.

Regret, and its best friend, depression, can be life crippling as past botches lead to the "freeze" of future failure or the apathy of "what is the use?" It becomes increasingly easy to hide in the background where you never need to express yourself or expose yourself.

Here are two "rules about regret". First, you have no right to complain about WHO you are (Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? Romans 9:20-21). The building blocks of your personality were given to you at birth; without your choice or input!

Second, thankfully, God has given you the ability to change WHAT YOU BECOME: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). You can be better because, in Christ, you are better.

Reject regret's power over you. God forgives your past and gives you the ability to be better in the present- Wow! What a Great God!

January 27, 2015 SEEING BELIEF

[Menu](#) Adam had no problem believing in God because he walked with God in the cool of the day (Gen 3:8) and his faith was based on sight. But sin separated God and man so now we must “walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7). I like Adam’s version better!

We live in a physical world where sight, sound, and touch are taken for granted reality. Faith in an “invisible God” is a difficult concept; especially when we deal with strong emotions, unbearable pain, or uncertain circumstances. This is why people must understand that Faith is not a “blind leap into the dark”; it is belief in light and rejoicing when we see light’s revelations.

Believing is a part of seeing- And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee (Matt 8:13). The centurion had come to Jesus for healing for his servant. The centurion was willing to believe his servant was healed so he eventually saw his servant healed.

Seeing is a part of believing-“And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe” (John 14:29). Part of my confidence in God’s Promises comes from the fact that I have seen His Promises fulfilled time after time. Seeing my believing lead to seeing leads me to believe even more!

Do not put seeing before believing but expect some seeing with your believing.

January 28, 2015 DEFENDING FAITH

[Menu](#) Defending your Faith is about who is in your heart rather than what is in your head. Paul did not say his persuasion came from WHAT he believed but from WHOM he believed- I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him (2 Timothy 1:12).

Defending Faith has been a vital part of Christianity from the beginning. The Apostle Paul often had to “answer for myself” (Greek word “apologeomai” from which we get Apologetics) and each time he did so by telling his testimony. When the first Christian martyr (Stephen) had to answer for his preaching he presented Christ as Messiah instead of getting lost in the details of doctrine.

Many Christians fear standing for, or witnessing about, their Faith because they doubt their debating abilities or their incomplete knowledge of the Bible. Peter said we should “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:” (1 Peter 3:15). It is not our skill but our Savior which is the “reason for our hope” and we should never be ashamed of Him (Mark 8:38).

A mother may cry in frustration because she does not understand her teenage daughter but if you want to “face fury” then attack that teen in front of that mother! Her defense comes from her heart; not her head. Remember that the next time you have the opportunity to defend your faith.

February 3, 2015 SLOGANS

[Menu](#)

“No Bible, no Breakfast. No Bible, no Bed” (Rev Buddy Seay, Jr). What a great way to make sure your day begins and ends with a focus on God’s word. Almost all Christians will confess to a desire to read the Bible more. Make this motto you mantra and see the difference in your devotional life.

“TV Less Tuesday is my family time” (Rev Mike Jones). Families in America are electronically isolated and TV time entrapped. For years I have cultivated the idea of no TV on Tuesday so families could use that time together talking, playing games, and living in a real world instead of the artificial world of TV Shows.

With people’s increasing captivity to electronic devices I think it would be good to expand this to “No Electronic Tuesday Nights” where all Phones, Pads, and Pods are cut off from seven until ten on Tuesday. Talk would replace text and families would learn that sometimes even quarreling is a way to communicate!

“Surviving is not thriving. Enduring is not enjoying”. Ecclesiastes 9:9 tells us to “Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity” and a Joyful home is a better home! Plan ways to add Joy to romance and relationships in a marriage. Sometimes the anticipation and planning of a special family outing, a husband-wife date night, or a family vacation is as much fun as the actual event. Seek to make your Family Fabulous.

February 4, 2015 HELPING HELPERS

[Menu](#)

Getting ready for a Doctor’s appointment recently when my Doctor called in sick! Sometimes the person you are looking to help you needs help. Have you prayed for your medical providers recently?

Newspaper reported a gay representative in Alabama announced he was going to blackmail the other Alabama representatives by exposing their secret affairs if they continued to talk badly about him. Do not agree with the man’s morals or methods but the Bible declares “Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye” (Matthew 7:5). Sometimes the person inside the professional needs help. Have you prayed for those in authority today? (1Tim 2:1-2)

When I drove into a restaurant parking lot recently a man came up saying he needed money for gas so he and his wife could continue on their trip. I opened my wallet and showed him it was completely empty. I told him my wife and I were eating at this restaurant with a gift card given to us as a Christmas present. Sometimes Helpers need help before they can help others. Do you pray for those around you who may have hidden needs?

Sometimes Helpers need “Physician, heal thyself” before they can help others. Take time today to encourage and up lift those around you that help others but sometimes need help.

February 10, 2015 PASSION AND PURPOSE

Menu

Two driving forces in the lives of people are Passion and Purpose. Note that I used Passion instead of Love because everyone yearns for more than a passive love that sparks fleeting physical feelings. Everyone (including God) wants an all-consuming Passion that commits completely (Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment Mark 12:30).

Passion causes you to leave father and mother, totally commit to this “new” person in your life, and share intimate secret places that no one else should see or experience (Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. Genesis 2:24).

Passion sacrifices the most precious things in life in order to ensure that the “person of your passion” can always be with you- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16). Passion is Passionate!

Purpose is passion for goals instead of people. Purpose is wrong when the passion for your goals does harm to people or replaces people. Purpose is wonderful when it allows you to express or exhibit your passion for others by the things you say and do.

Passion must precede Purpose but Purpose must have Passion (Lukewarm love makes God sick- Rev 3:16). What Passion and Purpose motivates you?

February 11, 2015 CHRISTIAN LOVE

Menu

Love is the basis of faith in Christ- “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Love is the proof of new life in Christ- “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 John 3:14).

Love is the mark of being genuine- “And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing” (1 Cor 13:2).

Love is the motivating power of missions- “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:” (2 Cor 5:14).

Love is the cause of obedience- “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Love is a fruit of the Spirit at work in my life- “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, “(Gal 5:22)

Love is unquenchable, unstoppable (stronger than death- Song 8:6), and unending- “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor 13:13). One day Faith will end in sight and hope will finally be Heaven but Love endures for all eternity.

This is the kind of love I want to Know, and to Show, in my life.

February 17, 2015 LOVE IS

[Menu](#)

Love is the freedom to leave- with the desire to stay. God's loving Grace proclaims, "There will be no chains to bind your hands, not if my love can't win your heart". This loving Grace then stands with open arms that were nailed to a cross inviting all mankind to escape from the horrors of hell into the heart of God. This exalts Christianity into freedom to choose God's love; not obligated slavery to manmade dogma.

Love is a journey to enjoy; not a destination to aim for. It is not a faraway Heaven I hope to obtain; it is daily fellowship with a God who delights because I delight in Him.

Love shows us God and brings us to God (1John 4:7-10). I love Christ. He is a wonderful Savior who proved love on a cross, drew me to His Love by the Spirit's wooing, and shows His love each day by His provision, His protection, and even His punishment (Heb 12: 6).

Love is two becoming one: separate units that are only complete together. Love never fails but people do. Love is not a perfect partner, it is "iron sharpening iron" (Prov 27:27) with the realization two are better than one even though sometimes sparks fly.

Love performs but it is not a performance- You cannot make someone really love you; you can only be someone who can be loved. Offered Love must be accepted to be experienced. Have you?

February 18, 2015 MEDIA MONEY

[Menu](#)

In the early days of our Outreach Ministry we had little equipment, less money, and no experience. Almost the only thing I had was a burdened heart and a vision to do something to build God's kingdom.

I had begun making up Bible Study notes and people were beginning to request them. A preacher wrote requesting some so I put them together and carried them to the Post Office. It cost \$1.20 and left me with a grand total of 60¢.

When I checked the mail I picked up when I mailed these notes I had another request for Bible Study Notes. I did not know anything to do except trust the Lord so I put another set of notes together and headed back to the Post Office.

I sincerely expected to find the extra dollar I needed during my trip to the Post Office, or in the Parking Lot, or from someone meeting me. Finally, I stood before the Mail Clerk and handed him my package.

I began talking to the clerk, killing time, trying desperately to figure out what to do. That is when the Mail Clerk asked what was in the package. I told him it was Bible notes and he said, "Oh that should go at the special media rate of 57¢". Is there a Glory anywhere in the house?

If I would have waited until I had all the money I would have continued to use the wrong rate and wasted hundreds of dollars through the years. Walking by Faith really pays off!

February 24, 2015 WASTE TIME

[Menu](#)

As I prepared to read my Bible chapters recently I heard a voice saying, "No". At first I thought this negative thought was coming from the foe (Satan) or the flesh but as I heard it again I recognized the voice of my Shepherd and my confusion increased.

As I tried to understand this unusual situation my eyes lighted on a devotional book I had purchased but never taken the time to read. Immediately I knew this was what I needed to do. As God greatly ministered to my soul through the devotional messages of that book I understood what God was doing- My Bible reading had become "mind study" and God wanted to speak to my heart in such a way until my daily Bible Study would "come alive" again.

I generally write and mail 3-5 letters each day concerning various ministries I assist. I try to take each completed letter to my mailbox. I could wait until I had written them all before I take them to my roadside mailbox but I have found the experience of leaving my work desk, the exercise of briskly walking to the mailbox, and the excitement of lifting my eyes from a small computer screen to a wonderful God created world helps invigorate my mind and refocus my thoughts.

It is not a waste of time to take the time to refocus. Remember, a rut is a shallow grave and we serve a living God!

February 25, 2015 WINNING FAMILY MEMBERS

[Menu](#)

(Acts 16:30) ... and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

When I became a Christian I believed it was something that should happen to everyone in my family! Thankfully, my mother, father, and brothers (and their wives) all became Christians. Then I married a wife. All of her family are now Christians. Four principles led to this happy conclusion.

1) Determination of Objective- I did not want my family to "be better" and start going to Church. I realized my family was bound for an eternity in hell and I did not want that to happen! I wanted them to repent of sins, trust Jesus Christ as Savior, and know the joy I know as a Christian.

2) Demonstration of Christ- Your life must be consistent and Christ like. You are not perfect but you are the pattern for Christ in your home.

3) Declaration of the Gospel- Reprimanding their wrongs or crying and sighing will not save them. The good news of forgiveness in Christ must be plainly presented.

4) Desire of heart- You must long for their salvation so greatly until it deprives you of food and drives you to your knees. Give God no rest (Is 62:7) until everyone in your family is safely in the ark of Salvation. Make it your main mission.

March 3, 2015

DEVOTIONAL SOUP

[Menu](#)

Here are some recent thoughts from my Bible Reading Time. Remember, Prayer time is for you to talk to God but Bible reading time is for God to speak to you.

Works do not determine your salvation but they demonstrate your relationship (*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*-James 2:17) or deny your relationship (*They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*-Titus 1:16).

Permanent Change does not come from clinching your fist (self-determination) but from opening your heart (Spirit change from the inside). Even the Apostle Paul knew how hard it was to struggle against the depravity of the heart and the lusts of the flesh-“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” (Romans 7:18). Change must be produced by a force greater than “me” working within me to change me (Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new- 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Plant seeds of ideas and inspiration in your conversation. Paul wrote several long dissertations about doctrine but much of his writing was one or two sentence “zingers” that people could easily remember and deeply consider. What can your say to inspire someone today?

March 4, 2015 THOUGHTFUL THINKING

[Menu](#)

As a man thinks in his heart; so is he (Prov. 23:7). Your thoughts help shape who you are and how you act. This means “thoughtful thinking” should be a top priority on your life list.

People who think negatively about themselves tend to live negative lives. People who seek only perfection never really enjoy life because we live in a non-perfect world. Suspicious minds, angry attitudes, and bitter behavior all come from an incorrect thought pattern.

It is important to realize who is developing our thoughts and opinions. Our thoughts can be developed by outside forces who control what the world thinks (media, music, etc), convey what the world thinks (news, social media), consider what the world thinks (people pleasers), or confound what the world thinks (rebel looking to stand out).

What we need, however, is a constant influx of thought patterns correcting what the world thinks (Bible Study and Spiritual devotions) and condemning what the world thinks (Prophets, Preacher). That is why the Bible commands us to “Keep thy heart (thoughts that direct us) with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).

Satan’s battle plan is use the forces that develop our thoughts to cause us to think Christians are crazy fanatics or holy hypocrites while promoting selfish cravings and sensual desires as a way of life. Do not allow your thoughts to be “hijacked” by Satan and the world. You are what you think- think about that!

March 10, 2015 WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

Menu

Have you ever done something and later asked yourself, "What in the world were you thinking?" More times than I like to admit I have done things that made sense when I thought them but which turned out much worse when thinking became doing.

Have you ever had a thought just "pop into your brain" for no logical reason and later realize it was God speaking? Let me give you an example.

Eating Sunday dinner with my lovely wife and my nephew recently the thought suddenly popped into my brain that I needed to pay for the meal of a family at the table beside our table. I live on a fixed income so this did not appear to be an option. Then I remembered that someone had recently given money to our outreach ministry and the tithe from that gift could be used to cover this meal.

I believe God wanted to bless this family (still do not know their names but it appeared to be a mother, her grown daughter, and the daughter's son) and He allowed me the great privilege of being the "blesse". It was not my money and I am not looking for credit. I just got to join God at His work and see happy smiles from what He had done.

Will your thoughts today help those around you or hinder your life? Remember the Bible commands us to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

March 11, 2015 MIXED WITH FAITH

Menu

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it (Hebrews 4:2).

It is not enough to hear a sermon; it must be mixed with faith if it is to profit your life and change your character and circumstances. Atheists who do not believe in church and members who do not attend church both produce empty pews! People who will not listen to a sermon and Christians who do not apply work producing faith as a result of the sermon both end up with a sermon of no value.

Good preaching produces no results if the congregation is "dull of hearing" (Something even Jesus experienced- Mt 13:15). Distracted listening also produces failed fruit- These are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world... entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful (Mark 4:18-19).

Result producing preaching plants seeds of Faith (So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God-Romans 10:17) which motivates the "flowering of Faith" which changes the world because of the power of Faith. But you must actually exercise the Faith produced by the preaching if miraculous results are to be obtained. Do you sit through a sermon or do you mix faith with what you hear and let the sermon work wonders in and through you?

March 17, 2015 EVIL INTENT

[Menu](#)

The pureness of your personality and the purpose of your piety determine how God views your worship- The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind {Evil intent}? (Proverbs 21:27). Because God sees the heart He knows the intent of a person's worship as well as the expression of that worship.

Jesus knew the religious leaders thoughts and said, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Matthew 9:4). It did not impress God that these Scribes sat on the front row during service when the intent of their heart was evil and not good. He also knows when the restaurant you plan to visit after service is more of a priority than His message being presented by that long winded preacher who will not shut up so you can leave early and get to the head of the restaurant line!

Everyone who attends church does not have pure character or motives. That should not prevent your attendance- would you rather worship with a few hypocrites or spent a hot eternity with a host of hypocrites? But it should make you examine the intent of your attendance- And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness (Ezekiel 33:31).

March 18, 2015 SIN

There is something wrong with what is wrong. No one "sins" anymore. Everyone knows that telling a person they have sinned and violated the laws of God might hurt their self-esteem so their wrong actions are called a mistake or an error brought about by incorrect parenting!

Sin is common (All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God-Romans 3:23), costly (The wages of sin is death- Romans 6:23) and very complex. There are Inside sins (In our heart and mind-Lust, covetous) and Outside sins (murder, robbery ...). There are Action sins (wrong activities) and Inaction sins (Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin-James 4:17).

There are Prejudice sins (But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin-James 2:9) and Personal sins (based on your faith maturity- And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin-Romans 14:23). There are revealed sins and waiting to be revealed sins (Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after- 1 Tim 5:24)

Regardless of your excuse or explanation, you can be sure your sin will find you out (Nu 32:23). God paid for our sins but it does not mean we should "continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom 6:1). Christians are not sinless but it does mean we should sin less.

March 24, 2015 DILIGENT DISCIPLESHIP

[Menu](#)

Being a Christian in America is no longer socially accepted or society protected. Passive Christianity is met with apathy and active Christianity is met with anger and accusations of a non-loving attitude. It is no longer cool to be a Diligent Disciple of Christ in America.

Commitment to following Christ and building His Kingdom as a main goal has been replaced by “Every man doing that which is right in his own sight” (Judges 21:25). This self-guided lifestyle is promoted as the main purpose of life through media, music, and the minds being shaped by educational institutions. It is enforced in Christian circles by the establishment of “super churches” built on the personality and principles of a charismatic leader (Who is “rebellious” against “normal” Christianity by doing “church” in a way that is right in his own sight).

If Christianity survived the coliseums and catacombs of Rome they can survive the catcalls and criticisms of modern America. Gone, however, are the days of “floating down the river with the crowd” Christianity. Diligent Discipleship that is willing to stand and be heard; and accept the consequences for being light in the dark, is now the order of the day.

Your relationship with Christ must go beyond simply showing up at Church on Sunday. Denying yourself and taking up your cross daily is a part of believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. It is not easy but it the discipleship God used to change the world.

March 25, 2015 BETRAYAL

Jesus “was in all points tempted as we are” (Heb 4:15) so He experienced the same gut wrenching betrayal by friends and society that we face. He knew what it was to have friends who praise you one day and suddenly betray you the next.

Betrayal is from a Greek word meaning “to surrender”. It expresses the idea of exposing someone to capture by their enemy. Almost all of us have felt betrayed by someone we love or trusted as they have “surrendered” us to emotions or situations which broke our hearts and destroyed our joy. Easter lets us know that Jesus felt the same emotions and pain we feel.

Judas Iscariot was a disciple of Jesus. “Iscariot” means “inhabitant of Kerioth” which was a town in southern Judea. For some reason, Jesus “took to Judas” even though Judas was not from the same area as the other disciples (Most were from the northern state of Galilee). Also, in spite of the fact that Matthew was experienced in finances as a former tax collector, Jesus selected Judas to be treasurer.

Jesus went way out on a limb for Judas but Judas betrays Jesus to the authorities for the price of a slave! How that betrayal must have hurt.

You are not alone with your hurt and pain this week. Christianity is not just about “Heaven one day”; it is about God’s comfort and strength today. Jesus knows and He cares about your betrayals. Let Him comfort and help you.

March 31, 2015 ONE MAN

[Menu](#)

The impact of one man can be impressive. Francis Asbury was part of the great Camp Meetings and Revivals that swept America in the early 1800's and helped define America as it grew from East Coast Colonies into a Continental Nation. In fact, Camp Meetings became so popular until it is estimated that in 1811 as much as one third of the entire American population attended at least one meeting. When Francis Asbury came to the American colonies in 1771 there were only 600 American Methodists. When he died 45 years later, there were 200,000 American Methodists. The number had grown from 1 in 5,000 to 1 in 40 of the total population of the country.

Because of his circuit riding preaching, Francis Asbury became so well known until letters simply addressed to "Bishop Asbury, Unites States of America" were promptly delivered. Bishop Asbury was beleaguered by illness all his life but he continued to visit and preach even when he had to be tied to the saddle to remain upright. (Source- "Christian History" magazine).

In our modern world we need to remember that God is not dead and His power is not diminished. He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

It is not the power but the person that is missing. One man, called and empowered by God, can do nation shaking wonders. Never doubt or forget that.

April 1, 2015 CORNERED CHOICES

I believe he got in too deep, too quickly, and ended up selling out the Son of God in a moment of desperation. Judas was the treasurer for Jesus and His disciples (Feeding and caring for 13 traveling men had to be a challenge) and all the money given to the group was received and distributed by him (Certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance-Luke 8:2-3)

It is revealing that Judas decided to sell Jesus to the Pharisees for thirty pieces of silver immediately after he quarreled at Jesus because a woman anointed Him with a very precious ointment instead of selling that ointment and putting the large amount of money it would have brought into his treasury bag (Mark 14:1-11). I believe Judas desperately needed that money and this "tipped the scales" in favor of betraying Jesus- which provided Judas "personal" money and diverted attention from missing funds.

Easter is the horrible story of the pain and suffering of Jesus and the wonderful story of the glorious resurrection of Jesus. It is also the story of a man who walked with the Son of God and who saw miracles which were incredible; but who allowed choices to corner him and separate him from his walk with God. Wouldn't it be horrible if you did the same thing?

April 7, 2015 WALK

[Menu](#)

The word "Walk" is used in the Bible to describe our daily living for the Lord. Here are seven ways to live that walk.

1. **WALK CONVERTED:** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4). "Dead Men" cannot walk a living life. You must be born again.

2. **WALK CORRECTLY:** And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke 1:6).

3. **WALK CALLED:** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called (Eph 4:1). God's purpose for you should be your life plan.

4. **WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY:** See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise (Eph 5:15). Circumspectly means "looking around" and it implies we need to be careful little feet where we go.

5. **WALK IN COMPANIONSHIP:** Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3)

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

7. **WALK TO BE "CAUGHT UP":** And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him (Gen 5:24).

April 8, 2015 WORSHIP

Church "worship" is a blend of Faith, culture, personal personality, and tradition. Americans normally stand when we sing; in India we normally sit when we sing. Evolving worship in America means the same song is sung in traditional churches using a piano while contemporary churches use guitars, drums, and keyboards. Making a "Joyful Noise" unto the Lord can take many forms.

Thomas Aquinas states that every action of man begins with an end (objective) in mind. We may not consciously realize or recognize the objective but it still determines our actions. The same principle applies to worship.

A knife can be used for healing surgery or mortal harm; the objective in mind determines the difference. My wife and I have worshipped in hundreds of different churches with a multiplicity of worship styles. When we attend Church intending to see God; we almost always find Him somewhere in the service.

The same sun that melts snow hardens concrete. If you are constantly condemning the method or criticizing the minister when you worship then you will seldom find the warming glow from the "Son". What a difference you will enjoy when you look for God and not at people.

I do not go to a Mexican restaurant for their Italian food! When I have a choice I try to pick a worship service that builds my Faith, suits my personality, and brings me closer to God. But I am often astonished at how many different ovens God uses to "bake" the Bread of Life.

April 14, 2015 ARE YOU GROWING?

[Menu](#)

1) Has your thirst for God increased? (As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God Psa 42:1). We are constantly bombarded with unseen radio and TV waves but we need special equipment to receive them. As Christians we should build ourselves to receive God!

2) Do you love people more? (Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God 1 John 4:7). Are you growing in concern for the Physical and Spiritual needs of others?

3) Do you increasingly build your life on the principles of the Word of God (see Ps 1:)? When storms come will your life collapse on Society's shifting sand or be anchored on the Rock (Matt 7)?

4) Do you recognize your failures? Does your awareness of weakness bring you to despair or does it grow your determination to trust God's Grace and increase your willingness to forgive others? (Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? Matthew 18:33).

5) Do you make an effort to Grow (But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ... 2 Peter 3:18) that includes a spiritual strengthening program such as Bible Study (... exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 1 Tim 4:7) and a quiet time with God (They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; Isaiah 40:31)?

April 15, 2015 BETTER TO TRY

A beggar who begs is better than a loafer who loaf. A life driving principle for me has been to "do what I can, where I am, with what I have" instead of watching time pass and dreams dissolve waiting for the perfect situation. I would rather attempt to do something great and fail, than attempt to do nothing and succeed.

Remember, however, that there is a world of difference between activity and progress. An Arctic Explorer had to plot his position each hour to ensure he continued heading in the right direction. At one point a strange phenomenon occurred. As he checked his instruments he found that even though he was moving north his position was farther south each hour. Regardless of the speed at which he walked north he went farther south each hour. Finally, he discovered he was on an enormous iceberg that was drifting in one direction as he was walking in the other. Been "there"; got the t-shirt!

Solomon said "Wisdom is better than strength" (Ecc 9:16) as he reminds us that failing to plan is planning to fail. It is not wrong to "plan a plan" before jumping into a project. Problems develop when we allow fear of beginning to cause us to cower in inactivity instead of picking up pebbles (like David) to go giant killing.

A walk of a thousand miles begins with one step. What do you need to step up and do?

April 21, 2015 SIN SNARES

[Menu](#)

Sin corrupts us, controls us, and captures us. Here are some methods Satan uses to snare and trap us:

1> Wrong Companions (Friends, Spouse, Business)- They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee (Exo 23:33).

2> Peer Pressure- The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe (Prov 29:25).

3> Hasty Words (Anger, Cursing, Gossip)- Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth (Prov 6:2). Hasty Vows- When you vow a vow unto God, pay it; God has no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed (Ecclesiastes 5:4).

4> Fleshly Passions (Adultery, Pornography)- And I find more bitter than death the woman (of loose morals), whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her (Eccl 7:26).

5> Greed for Riches- But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition (1 Tim 6:9).

Paul told Timothy to instruct people in the Word of God and the wisdom of God so “they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil,” (2 Timothy 2:26). A good objective for us this week.

April 22, 2015 SHEEP SIGNS

Many people claim the peace and love found in David’s famous proclamation- “the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want”. In order for the Lord to be your shepherd, however, you must be one of His sheep. How can you be sure He is indeed your shepherd and you are one of His sheep? The answer is found in the three “sheep signs” of John 10:27 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:”

1) Sheep hear the voice of the Shepherd. They hear their Shepherd speak through the Bible and the Spirit so often until they recognize His voice over all the words the world shouts to them. The Shepherd’s voice speaks to their heart as well as their ears in such a way until the character and conduct of the sheep conforms to the leadership voice of the Shepherd.

2) Sheep have a relationship with the Shepherd. The Shepherd “knows” them. The sheep and the Shepherd have a heart relationship that goes beyond simple vocal communication. The Shepherd knows the weakness and strengths of each sheep and He provides care and direction accordingly.

3) Sheep follow the Shepherd. The grass may look greener over the septic tank but Shepherd sheep seek the green pastures and still waters provided by the Shepherd.

If the Lord is your Shepherd then you shall not want. But if you are a goat claiming to be a sheep then Shepherd separation will be a painful ordeal.

April 28, 2015 REMORSE

[Menu](#)

Remorse is often prefaced with, "If I would have known this was my Last Time with them I would have said or done things differently". Words unsaid and feelings unexpressed haunt people's memories and grieve people's hearts long after ground has settled around graves. Knowing the uncertainty of life is there anything you need to say or do for someone that you would want to do if this were your Last Time with them?

My wife and I spend a couple of hours twice a year talking about the end of our life. We talk about how much we mean to each other and what a special joy it has been to share our lives together. We talk about what debts we have and how death should be handled so each will know what to do during grief and after funeral support has faded. We want our care for one another to extend beyond "til death do us part".

We also talk about old age and the things that accompany it. We have friends and family who would supply loving care but we are childless so we have no support system for constant care. Neither one wants the other to feel remorse about medical or nursing home decisions that physical limitations demand.

Remorse is a heart breaking companion. Look at the loved ones around you. Then say it soon and plan it now before "why didn't I?" echoes in your emptiness.

April 29, 2015 GIVING BIRTH TO GOD

Some interesting fact about giving birth to God. Mary was physically just as much a virgin after the conception of Christ as before- "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). When God is at work "un-normal" can become normal.

Mary was afraid (I would have been terrified!) when she found her part in God's plan but long before modern day ultra-sounds she knew the sex and the name of her unborn child- "the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS" (Luke 1:30-31). Following God's plan often provides you with supernatural revelations.

All this information puzzled Mary so she asked, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" It is not doubt to seek to know details about God's work in your life. Just remember you cannot demand details as if you are in charge of the plan.

Jesus' humanness (which included the color of His skin and the structure of His looks) came from the Virgin Mary. When people saw God in the flesh He resembled Mary. And, guess what, they still see Him through us today!

May 5, 2015 THE GREATEST EVENT

[Menu](#)

The greatest event to happen to anyone at any time is when they escape the penalty of Hell for the promise of Heaven through Faith in Christ. This means ALL your sins are forgiven (And you, ... hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Colossians 2:13) and forgotten (And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more- Hebrews 10:17).

Your sins are cast behind God's back (Isaiah 38:17), removed as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12), and buried in the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19); where one preacher said God had erected a "no fishing" sign! You are without condemnation (There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus- Romans 8:1) as you enjoy the peace of God and peace with God (Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Romans 5:1).

You are now a son of God (But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: John 1:12) which makes you a member of the family of God (Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; Ephesians 2:19).

I have walked with Christ for over fifty years; and a million years from now I will still be glad I asked Him into my heart!

May 6, 2015 CANNOT FORGIVE

Who in the world could find themselves outside of God's forgiveness? It seems impossible for such a thing to happen but Scripture shows us two kinds of people that Jesus cannot forgive.

First of all, Jesus cannot forgive someone who does not know about Him and therefore does not ask for His forgiveness- (Romans 10:13-14) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

The reason Christians are missionary minded, testimony talkers, and preaching proclaimers is because they know that everyone needs to hear the good news about Jesus if they are to receive the eternal abundant life that Christ offers. We know the "house is on fire" for these people and being so polite until you stand and watch instead of sounding the alarm will not rescue those perishing in the flames.

Secondly, Jesus cannot forgive someone who knows about Him but refuses to trust Him. He knocks on the door but He never enters until invited. The forgiveness is readily available but it will never be given unless the person is willing to ask for it.

There are two kinds of people in the world today. Those who have already trusted Christ for forgiveness and those who need to trust Christ for forgiveness. Which one are you?

May 12, 2015 LIFE LENGTH

[Menu](#)

Is there anything the living can do about dying? The Bible says we should “number our days (Think about the length of life), that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psalm 90:12). James then tells us that life is brief at best- “For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14).

Realizing that life is brief, our next question is whether we have any input on the length of our life. The Bible declares that wickedness shortens our life: “Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?” (Ecc 7:17) [See also Proverbs 10:27]. Walking in disobedience to God destroys our health, puts us in dangerous situations, and tempts God (See Matt 4:6-7) .

The Bible also points out two ways to lengthen our life. First-Leave wickedness and begin to do right- Ps 34:12-14 “What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.” Second- “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee” (Exodus 20:12).

Life has a length that you can extend or shorten. But it always has an end. So Life’s most important question is not the duration of your life but your destination at death.

May 13, 2015 God’s Morning Musings

When God “gets up” each morning what does He contemplate over coffee? (I am being fanciful here. I know “He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep-Psalms 121:4). What does the Triune God look for in the coming day?

I believe God, the Father, is looking to Bless His children each day- For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him (2 Chronicles 16:9). God is looking for a way to make your day a better day!

Christ, the Son, is seeking people who will believe in the sacrifice He provided so they will accept Him as their Savior- For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

The Holy Spirit is in search of people to worship correctly because He knows this will please the heart of God, the Father- the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him (John 4:23).

God looks each day for ways to bless us, to bring us into His family, and to spend time with us so we will develop a loving joyful relationship that will meet our deepest needs. A good day is joining God in what He is looking for. A bad day is leaving God out of your day and facing the day on your own.

May 19, 2015 DAD'S EASY CHAIR

[Menu](#)

No matter how tired you were you knew that Dad's easy chair was not a place for you to sit! That was a place reserved only for Dad. I cannot remember a time when anyone challenged this because all my brothers were dumb but they were not stupid!

It does not seem like a good illustration but I think of Dad's easy chair when I think about my relationship with God. First of all, I realize there should be a "throne" in my heart where only God is allowed to sit. It is not a place to be occupied by me or by anyone or anything else.

Secondly, Dad had a "candy drawer" in a lamp table beside his chair. It was normally stuffed full of candy (My dad was a candy-holic). Dad would share if you asked him but be less than kind if you went into the drawer without his permission. That makes me remember that God has great blessings for me but many times I "desire to have, and cannot obtain: fight and war, yet have not, because I ask not"(James 4:2).

Finally, when TVs began to have remote controls, Dad's chair was where the remote was permanently housed. Can you relate that to your relationship with God? Dad wanted us to experience the best on TV; just as God controls events so they always work together for our good. I am glad the "remote" resides on His chair.

May 20, 2015 BETTER BLESSINGS

The keyword in the Book of Hebrews is "better". It occurs thirteen times and the idea of Jesus being "better" is the heart of the book. The Lord Jesus is proclaimed as "better" than angels, "better" than Moses, "better" than Joshua, and "better" than Aaron.

Following this we are told that Jesus brings in a "better" covenant, based upon "better" promises, opening up a "better" sanctuary, which is sealed by a "better" sacrifice.

Finally the writer gladly proclaims that Jesus is the foundation of our faith about a "better" substance in heaven, which is a "better" country, which we arrive at by a "better" resurrection, which is when we inherits God's "better" things (Condensed from notes in Sidlow Baxter's "Explore the Book").

There are many "gods" and religions in the world today. Instead of "living in a shell" where everyone believes basically the same thing because everyone is taught to believe the same things we now live in a time when modern communication exposes people to a multiplicity of philosophies and religious beliefs. Gone is the time when Christianity had to be believed simply because a leader stood and proclaimed it to be true.

People are now into "comparison shopping" about the religion which will control their life and occupy their thoughts. God knew this many years ago so He had the book of Hebrews written so we could proclaim Jesus as "better" than anything else in the world. God is so smart!

May 26, 2015 PURPOSE

[Menu](#)

I remember the day someone gave a young "preacher boy" a book by Sidlow Baxter entitled "Explore the Book". It was over four inches thick and it changed my perception of the Bible. I was not raised in Church so I had only a basic rudimentary knowledge of the Bible. All the sermons I heard talked about various "trees" in the Bible. "Explore the Book" finally exposed me to the "forest" as it allowed me to see the continuity and overall purpose of the Bible.

I still remember laboriously working my way through that four inch thick book and coming to the author's information about the First Epistle of John. It was late and I read over a section of sentences before my "heart stopped". As I reread these sentences my Christian life changed-"Why did God create us? Was it just to preserve us alive? Was it merely to govern us, judge us, punish or reward us? No; mysterious as it may seem, He created us for individual fellowship with Himself, a pure fellowship of perfect love. Sin aborted that fellowship and estranged human nature; but the ultimate purpose of both our creation and our redemption is fellowship with God." What a revelation!

I thought Christianity was trying to be good and live respectable but this told me it was about God wanting to fellowship with me as much as I wanted to fellowship with Him- Glory! I will never forget this truth that burst into my heart that day.

May 27, 2015 SOME

Some will not make it. I know most of you are taught that a "prayer of Faith" assures everyone that everyone will have a safe passage but "the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times SOME SHALL DEPART from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" (1 Timothy 4:1). It is this "some" that concerns me.

Some lied about their belief and never actually became believers. Some will "turn aside into vain teaching" (I Tim 1:5-7) and become leaders with no understanding of the truth. Some will leave "faith and a good conscience and made shipwreck concerning faith" (1 Timothy 1:19). Some will abandon family responsibilities and "turn aside after Satan" (I Timothy 5:14-16). Some will desire possessions until they "covet these things so much until they err from the faith" (I Timothy 6:10).

And some will begin believing the media and scientist to such a degree until they "become apostates concerning the faith" (I Timothy 6: 20-21). Think about how people's beliefs concerning marriage and same sex activities have changes under intense media pressure in the past 20 years.

Paul begins his letter to Timothy by commanding him to "charge SOME that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:3). Right Doctrinal beliefs come from Right Scriptural Preaching- "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). Keeping all in the scriptures is the only way to try to save the "some".

June 2, 2015 PREPARATION

[Menu](#)

Many times it is not the work of the work that is the work; it is the work preparing for the work that is the most work! I am the treasurer for several non-profit organizations. This means I have to receive, record, receipt, and report numerous financial transactions with monthly regularity and consistent accuracy.

It took a lot of work but I now have the spread sheet, word processing, and financial programs needed to accomplish this work set up in such a way until it is much easier to do. The work spent preparing for the work has made the work much less work!

This is the time of year when young people are graduating from High School and College. Hopefully, their preparation work has equipped them for the work that will occupy the next chapter of their lives. It does not take graduates long to realize, however, that getting by may get you by but when the “rubber meets the road” the only way work will work is if you work at work.

The ten hours Preachers spend preparing for a half hour sermon may seem to be a lot of work but in the preaching of a sermon someone will suffer. If the preacher does not suffer preparing the sermon then the people will suffer during the preaching of the sermon!

Preparation is needed in almost everything in life- and even in death you must “Prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12). Being unprepared is a terrible thing!

June 3, 2015 FAITH'S HOPE

Faith is belief based on expectation. Hope is expectation based on belief. Faith is “evidence of things not seen” producing things that are seen. Hope is courage to step into the dark because you trust in the Light. Faith empowers us to do great things while Hope motivates us to do great things.

Peter tells us that the power of Jesus’ resurrection should strengthen our Faith and give life to our Hope- “believe in God, that raised Jesus up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Peter 1:21).

I talk to many people in America today who have not lost Faith but they appear to have lost Hope. They still have Faith that God can save America but they no longer have Hope that God will save America. People believe America has the ability to win wars, but they have no Hope that we will. They have Faith in America’s ability to be prosperous but they have no Hope that racial, social, and economic situations will improve. There is a melancholy mood in America.

This same scenario is being played out in America’s Churches. Churches still have Faith in God but many have little Hope their Church can survive; much less thrive. They have Faith but very little Hope.

Jesus’ death killed all Hope; until His resurrection changed everything! Faith and Hope in the power of that resurrection changed the world and it can change America (and your Church!). Let your Faith stir that Hope today.

June 9, 2015 WARNING WORDS

[Menu](#) Calling God dumb is not a smart thing to do! Yet Peter had a tendency to do just that- When Jesus “began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again... Peter took him, and began to rebuke him” (Mark 8:31-32).

Later Jesus told Peter that Peter would deny him three times that very night but “Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee” (Matthew 26:35). Six hours later Peter was weeping bitterly after cursing his denial when questioned by a simple servant girl. Telling God you know more than He knows about yourself is an “unwise” thing to do.

Side note here- If Peter would have gotten his way and made a stand instead of denying Christ it could have led to open rebellion by the Zealots which could have led to Jesus being rescued from the Romans and installed as King for a short time before the full force of the Roman Army brought death and destruction. God’s way led Jesus to the Cross where He saved “whosoever will” whereas Peter’s way would have led to many deaths and no hope for a lost world.

It is always best to trust God’s heart even when you do not like what you hear. After all, He is God and calling Him dumb is not a smart thing!

June 10, 2015 THE RED DRESS

The Preacher’s wife had worn her Red Dress many times and now she was tired of it. It was still in good shape but she felt like she had gotten her money’s worth from it so she gave it to a lady in the Church having a yard sale.

The next morning the Preacher was out visiting and stopped at one of his members having a yard sale. As he looked over the merchandise a red dress caught his attention. After examining the dress he concluded it would fit his wife so he paid the dollar asking price.

He was excited about his fabulous find until he showed it to his wife and she told him she had worn that dress countless times before she gave it to the lady for the yard sale. His face was almost as red as the dress.

Over and over Jesus said society’s problem was that it had eyes to see but would not see. Like this Preacher, People fail to notice things under their eyes but seem captivated by them when viewed in another setting. They will laugh or cry about dramas on TV but never see the same warning signs in their own family. They will discuss in great detail with co-workers their ideas on how to handle a situation in the newspaper but never sit down with their spouse and children and try to work out family destroying problems.

How sad it is to have perfect vision and yet not be able to see.

June 16, 2015 GUIDANCE

[Menu](#) Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, ... (Isaiah 30:21).

I wanted to go but the Lord kept telling me to wait. I needed to get the oil changed and some minor work done on my car. I wanted to go in the morning so I could avoid Rush Hour traffic if the work went long but the Lord kept telling me to wait. Finally, about one o'clock, the Lord said it was time to go. On the way out I saw the mail being delivered so I stopped to pick it up. On top of the mail was a letter from my service center offering me a seventeen dollar discount for exactly the service I was on my way to obtain!

Leaving on my time would have caused me to arrive home, pick up the mail, and realize that I had lost a chance to save seventeen dollars. God's guidance is so good.

The next day I needed to visit a friend from the past who was deathly sick. It had been fifteen years since I had been to their home and the area had changed so much until I was unable to identify my friend's home. The Lord said stop at the next house and when I did I found another friend from years gone by sitting outside in the shade. I got to visit with him and get clear directions to where I needed to go. God's guidance is so good!

June 17, 2015 WHAT FAMILIES CRAVE

There are five things EVERY Family craves. They are expressed in different ways and in different orders of importance but they show up on every family's need list.

1) Financial Security- Enough money to allow the family to live in comfort without the constant worry about how they will make ends meet.

2) Family Stability- Your dwelling should be a home filled with peace and love instead of a bus station where virtual strangers meet in a confusion of different schedules, different goals, and disastrous relationships.

3) Friends to share life with- People with whom you can share fun, fellowship, and burdens. After all, what is the purpose of getting a new car if you cannot show it to your neighbors!

4) Freedom from Sickness- Maybe a common cold or even something as burdensome as chicken pox can be lived with but no family wants to deal with major sickness or extended illnesses.

5) Foundation for Rough Places- When disaster, disease, or death does touch a family then they want something to give them help and hope to enable them to continue with their lives.

The Good News is that each of these "cravings" can find its fulfillment when the family has a consistently faithful relationship with Jesus Christ. He answers prayers, gives a common goal, is a friend who is closer than a brother, either cures or comforts during sickness, and provides a rock solid foundation which the storms of life cannot shake. He is what YOUR family is looking for?

June 23, 2015 FAMILY PRIORITIES

[Menu](#) The Bible lists five Priorities for EVERY Family. I hope you will cut out this list, put it on your refrigerator door, and pray each day that these priorities will be fulfilled in your family.

1) EVERY FAMILY MEMBER SAVED- Your greatest goal should be that one day the circle will be unbroken. Nothing else in the life of your family is as important as this.

2) MORAL STANDARDS TO LIVE BY- It's not enough to teach your child to wash behind their ears. They must learn consistently that purity of life is vital.

3) THE BIBLE AS YOUR MAIN BOOK- Build your family's principles and convictions based on the Word of God. Read it (Family Devotion), refer to it, and reverence it so your family will honor it and follow its teachings.

4) LEARN TO LIVE TOGETHER AS A FAMILY- Each member of the family is different. Make it your goal to treat each other with respect and understanding. A family is different personalities which should be bound together by love as they work together to "train up a family in the way it should go".

5) FAITHFUL TO A BIBLE BELIEVING, GOD HONORING CHURCH- Make it a priority to be in God's house each week with the entire family. Make sure the Bible is being taught in the church you attend; and then make sure your family learns the lessons! Faithfulness to this priority will greatly help you with the other four in this list.

June 24, 2015 HOW CHRISTIANS HURT SOCIETY

Churches are no longer "turning the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). God has not failed but many in Christian Organizations have. Here are some ways this is true.

Luke Warm Christian Living makes God puke (So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth-Revelation 3:16) and does nothing to inspire the world to seek or desire Christianity. After all, who wants a religion when even the people who profess it can "take it or leave it"?

License is given for licentiousness by mainline Christian Organizations. Major Christian denominations now accept and participate in behavior condemned by the Bible but accepted by society. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13).

Lambasting other Christians over small differences while ignoring their own problems which are hindering them from winning souls and building God's Kingdom- "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matthew 7:3).

Living in the past with the belief that old methods are the only way to validate their message. Then wondering why people are using smart phones instead of admiring their rotary dial phone!

Is your church a river of living water quenching thirst or a stagnant pond breeding disease?

June 30, 2015 TELL MY STORY TEARS

[Menu](#) Recently our church sang a song that included this sentence-"When I wake up in the land of glory and with the Saints I will tell my story" and I thought to myself, "What a scary thought that is!"

I spent much of my life as a Pastor and Writer. One of the most difficult aspects of being a public story teller has been learning to "walk naked in public". Most of my private life and public problems were on public display each week (My salary was discussed in detail and voted on in public each year. My doubts, diseases, and downfalls were illustrations in sermons and inspirations for newspaper articles).

Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). I do not know about you but I have said some things in my life that I am not anxious to be broadcast among the Saints in Glory!

Paul told the Corinthians- "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"(2 Corinthians 5:10). "Whether it be good or BAD" makes my heart blush!

Will those who listen to your story in Glory be amazed at God's work in your life or astonished at how you used the valuable life assets entrusted to you by God?

July 1, 2015 TRANSITIONAL CHRISTIANS

Recent events have necessitated a change for Christians in America. The fact that God's Judgement is no longer a case of "if" but "when" means Christians must transform from Traditional Christians into Transitional Christians. Traditional Christians labored to prevent God's coming Judgment on America. Transitional Christians work to get as many people as possible into the ark before God's frightful wrath is unleashed on America.

Be aware that Churches will suffer and the Culling of Christians will accelerate as "Pretend" Christians (This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me-Matthew 15:8) abandon Traditional Churches due to increased persecution and public opinion swinging away from Biblical Principles (These have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended-Mark 4:17).

Do not, however, consider this a message of despair or despondency. God has put dedicated faithful Christians in Churches and communities all over America for "such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). And God has declared that "they which sow on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred" (Mark 4:20).

I believe we can no longer save America but we can save Americans! The ship is sinking but there are still seats in the life boats! Don't despair, declare; and believe God is still seeking to save "whosoever will".

July 7, 2015 A MILLION

[Menu](#) “It is hard to believe, not because it is hard to understand, but because it is hard to obey” Søren Kierkegaard.

It was January of 1991. Praying about Godly goals with which to challenge the Church where I was pastor the Lord simply said, “Seek a Million”. I sat there with my mouth open and my head spinning.

We were averaging less than one hundred in attendance each Sunday and publically proclaiming a goal of reaching One Million people seemed to venture beyond faith into foolishness. The goal was not hard to understand; it was hard to obey!

After carefully and prayerfully considering the goal given to me by God I presented it to the Church as part of my Sunday Morning sermon on “Allow a Great God to do Great Things in your Life”. It went over like a lead balloon! No one even smiled.

The entire congregation sat there with a stunned look on their face with little imaginary voice balloons over heads which seemed to read, “The Preacher has finally gone completely and utterly crazy”. But I was still the leader and so we prayed and asked God to make this goal a reality.

Three weeks later I received a letter from a national publication saying they wanted to use some of my sermon articles in their publications. They said they could not pay me but it would help to know my articles would reach over a million readers each month. A Big God can meet Big Goals!

July 8, 2015 DUNGEON DAY

It was just another Dungeon Day. The hot July sun was already turning the Egyptian Prison into a steam bath of pouring perspiration as Joseph began his morning duties. The cursing of prisoners pounded his ears as he supervised the morning meal and hopeless despair shone dully from the eyes of all he greeted.

An hour before Joseph had lain on his sweat soaked pallet and thought about the road that led him to his dungeon duties. He was his father’s favorite until he was rejected by his family and sold into slavery. Hard work and God’s Blessings had landed him a great job until he was betrayed by a woman and thrown into prison. In prison, his great wisdom had brought great hope until it became apparent he was forgotten by the King’s Butler. Now it seemed he had nothing to look forward to except more and more dungeon days.

“But the Lord was with Joseph”. What a statement for the Bible to make at a time like this when everything Joseph tried to do seemed to send him deeper into dungeons.

But, oh, what a difference a day makes when God is at work. Before this Dungeon Day was over, Joseph would be exalted from a prisoner into the second most powerful ruler in Egypt! He would prevent the starvation of millions of people, change the course of a nation, and start down the road to reconciliation and salvation for his family. But it started out as just another Dungeon Day.

July 14, 2015 CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE

Menu

In a nation where the highest government official can sing “Amazing Grace” in Church for political purposes but courts consistently rule against mixing anything religious with anything governmental it is important that the media and the masses easily identify genuine Christians.

The courts have declared that “life style” trumps “religion” so Christians must begin explaining their choices based on their “Christian Life Style”. This life style will need to be clearly defined so persecuted Christians being bullied by those who do not believe as they do can show the reasons they are being shunned.

The three marks of a Christian Life Style clearly identify a true believer regardless of his country, color, or culture: 1) His Faith is in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; not in personal preferences or good work performance. 2) His Food will be the Living Water (Holy Spirit) and the Bread of Life (Bible). His standards for what is right and wrong will not be determined by politically correct media pronouncements but by principles given by God. 3) His Fellowship- He will love and desire to be with other believers (John 13:35). He will “love not the world or the things in the world” (1John 2:15). His fellowship will be with those who build, not bully, his beliefs.

People were originally called Christians because of the Christ like life style they exemplified. May we return to that normal.

July 15, 2015 SINGLE SAINTS

“Single Saints” have a Single Mind- “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). This single mind constantly seeks to follow God’s plans as a guide for life’s activities because it seeks to “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). This “single mind” way of thinking will confound, confuse, and conflict with worldly wisdom because it will look at situations from a Heavenly; instead of a human, point of view.

“Single Saints” have a Single Heart- “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). Their body is on earth but their heart belongs to God. They are pilgrims and strangers passing through on their way to the Heavenly city. God and His work are the love of their life as they, like Jesus, seek to do always those things that please the Father (Joh 8:29).

“Single Saints” have a Single Will- They realize that no man can serve two masters so they listen to, and obey, God’s voice first and foremost. This “Single Will” will focus their choices and guides their decisions so they can cooperate with other Christians as a Body.

Are you a Single Saint who can say, “This ONE thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, I reach forth unto those things which are before, as I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”?

July 21, 2015 WORLD CHANGING CHURCH

[Menu](#) As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away (Acts 13:2-3).

The church at Antioch was a World Changing Church. Antioch was where the followers of Christ developed a life style which caused them to be called “Christians” (Christ Like- Acts 11:26). And it was from this church that the Foreign Mission movement began which helped change the world (Most exploration of the world by European Nations had as one goal the spreading of the gospel).

There are two things which stand out about Antioch as they developed into a World Changing Church. First, they could Hear the Spirit of God when He spoke (“the Holy Ghost said, Separate...”). Secondly, they were willing to Obey the Spirit of God when He spoke (“they sent them away to minister”).

Many churches are so busy “having church” each week until they fail to “minister to the Lord” by consciously fasting (separating) from outside distractions and listening for God to speak. Antioch realized they could not change the world if they were not willing to separate from it! Most church would not know how to deal with a 15 minute period of SILENT prayer and God seeking during a service.

If your church is to change the world it must learn to Hear and Obey the voice of God. Simple but hard.

July 22, 2015 FAR COUNTRY COMPANIONS

If you run with rats you may end up in a rat trap! If you lay down with dogs you may get up with fleas. You may be a pigeon but if you fly with ducks and roost with ducks you will be in danger of being a “dead duck”! It pays to be careful of your companions.

The Bible commands us to “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away” (Proverbs 4:14-15). In fact, we are told in the first Psalm to even be wary of the influence of our companions-“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful”.

The Prodigal Son is a good example of the damage that comes into our life when we allow “Far Country Companions” to take us away from the influence of the Father’s House. His friends told him the Far Country would be a place of unimagined Joy and unending Fun. Instead the Prodigal found Empty Pockets, Fickle Friends, Hog Pen Food, and Aching Loneliness. His Far Country Friends gladly spent HIS money but when he was broke “no man gave unto him” and in the depth of despair he finally realized Far Country Companions can never compare to the Father’s Love. A lesson we all need to learn!

July 28, 2015 FINGERS

[Menu](#) Fingers are fabulous. They are proportional (your nose is the distance from the end of your thumb to the top of your first finger) and productive (they can press something, play something, or point to something). The first finger is used to proclaim victory (#1). The second passes insults (ask your teenage son!). The third is for possession (wedding rings). And the fourth is the promise finger (Pinky pledge).

God used fingers in creation (When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; Psalms 8:3), in condemnation (The writing on the wall declaring God's judgment on Belshazzar in Daniel 5), and providing the Ten Commandments (And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God. Exodus 31:18).

Jesus used fingers to cast out demons (But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. Luke 11:20), heal diseases (And he ... put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; Mark 7:33), and discourage hypocrites (This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. John 8:6).

Marvel at fingers and see if God is using them for a message you need to hear.

July 29, 2015 REAL WORLD CHRISTIANS

As I talk to "John Q Christian" [waitresses, clerks, mechanics] in the real world of commerce, instead of the religious world of Church, I find heart wrenching situations. Once I ease their apprehensions by sharing that I am an imperfect person redeemed by the death of a perfect person they open up and talk to me about their real struggles.

Real World Christians struggle with debt, disease, and divorce. They wrestle with dark desires which they desperately want to talk about but are afraid to reveal because of the condemnation and judgment they will receive from other Christians. They grapple with depression about so much of life that is beyond their control and wonder why the "just pray and everything will be great" sermon does not stop the scary walk in the dark to an old car for the long ride to a lonely home.

The Good News for Real World Christians is that your struggles do not surprise God. Jesus picked ordinary fishermen and tax collectors as His disciples; not religious leaders and Pharisees. He then watched as these disciples argued about who was the greatest, denied Him under pressure, and doubted Him after His resurrection!

God does not throw out a baby because they poop in their pants- He helps them grow until He can potty train them! Jesus died for you, the Holy Spirit is living in you, and a mansion is being prepared for you! Walk with God and grow into a better Christian every day.

August 4, 2015 TRANSFORMED

[Menu](#) Church people were strangers and acted a little strange until suddenly they were family when I was born again. I thought they were all hypocrites trying to hijack me into their “holier than thou” society until the Holy Spirit came into my heart and they became Brothers and Sisters whom I love dearly and long to spend time with. The transformation that comes into your life when you accept Christ as your Savior is amazing!

I used to feel sorry for Christians who had to get up and go to Church on Sunday instead of spending the day sleeping or engaging in some fun activity. Now I feel sorry for those people who nurse a hangover or wallow in the depression of an empty life and a meaningless existence instead of enjoying the blessing that comes from meeting with God and His family in Church each week.

This transformation came because my soul was Redeemed by the blood of Christ, my mind is being renewed by the principles of God (And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, Romans 12:2), and my life is changing by the Holy Spirit living within me (But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18).

The difference when you know Christ is Divine! Thank God for the change in my life.

August 5, 2015 YOUR APPLE

How do you catch a monkey? You place an apple inside a jug and tie it to a tree. The monkey comes along, puts his hand in the jug for the apple, and then cannot withdraw his hand because his hand and the apple are too big for the mouth of the jug. Unwilling to release the apple the monkey “catches himself”.

What is your apple? What are you unwilling to give up in order to become free and fabulous? It may be Pride- Many people have not found the love and acceptance they crave from family and friends so they constantly seek the approval of strangers. What people think of them is more important than who they really are so they hold on to the “apple” of Pride with a deathly grip.

Some people’s “Apple” may be Possessions. The Rich Young Ruler was excited about being a disciple until Jesus asked him to replace possessions with poverty. Some people seriously believe that the joy of life is found in the number of “toys” they have even as their life is consumed with working to obtain or maintain these toys.

Strangely, some people have Pain for an “Apple”. They cannot let go of bitterness, anger, or desire for revenge and these things capture their life and control their emotions. They spend their time and energy lashing out at someone who hurt them instead of loving someone who loves them.

Eve did not eat an apple but it is surprising how easy it is to capture a monkey with one.

August 11, 2015 LAWN MOWER GAS

[Menu](#) A man had just purchased a new push mower to replace one that had become extremely frustrating to use because it was almost impossible to crank. He told his son to put gas in the new mower while he finished some things in the house and he would be out soon to crank it and make sure everything worked as it should before they cut the grass.

When the man went outside and tried to crank the new mower it would not crank no matter how much he pulled the starter cord or adjusted the controls. Frustrated beyond words that this new mower was acting just like the one it was replacing the man angrily grabbed the handle of the mower and slung it around- - where it connected with a fence post he had forgotten was there and warped and bent his new mower beyond use.

Just at that moment the man looked up and saw his son come into the yard holding a gas can and saying, "Dad we were out of gas so I had to go get some."

To try to do the work of God without the power of God is like trying to empty the ocean with a pitchfork- you will work all day and end up doing more harm than good. New methods and new programs may look exciting and show great potential but human effort without divine power produces frustration and failure instead of marvels and miracles.

August 12, 2015 PECULIAR PROTECTION

Christians are Peculiar People. We think of "Peculiar" as "Odd", "Weird", or "Strange". Biblically, however, "Peculiar" is from a Word which literally translates to "a dot within a circle" and is used to signify something that is so special until it is surrounded by protection from all sides.

Peculiar Protection is seen in the life of Job when Satan had to ask God's permission in order to "get through the circle" and do anything to the "dot"- Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? (Job 1:10).

Peculiar Protection encourages Christians to be fearless in doing good works- Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14).

Peculiar Protection glorifies God as it shows the world the benefit and blessing of walking with God- But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: (1 Peter 2:9).

But, remember, Peculiar Protection is provided only for God's chosen People- Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: (Exodus 19:5). Have you chosen to be one of God's people?

August 18, 2015 PRECIOUS TO GOD

[Menu](#) While studying in Revelation recently I discovered that the prayers we pray to God are so precious until He preserves them as the perfume of Heaven (Rev 5:8). Wow! Shouldn't that change the way you pray!

Then I thought, if my prayers are precious to God, I wonder what else God considers of great value (The meaning of Precious).

I found that the temptations and trials of my life are precious to God. I thought of them as problems but God thought of them as precious! (That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 1 Pet 1:7).

I found that the salvation of a lost soul is precious to God- For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever: (Psa 49:8). This is because we were not "redeemed with corruptible thing...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (1 Pet 1:18-19).

Finally, I learned that the time of greatest sadness in our life is also a time of great value to God- Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints (Psa 116:15). He walks with us through the valley of the shadow of Death and then welcomes His precious people home. What a precious promise!

August 19, 2015 PREPAID EMERGENCY

Make it your goal to end each month with Ten Dollars more in your bank account than when you began the month- You seldom find gold without a goal! If you simply seek to survive the month then you will probably end up getting a little more behind each month- He who aims as nothing normally gets nothing!

How do you keep up this plan when Life's financial emergencies come your way? That is when trusting God and walking with God pays off.

Someone called recently and asked me to stop by his office because he had an envelope for me. I collect money for several ministries so I assumed it was ministry money. When I returned home with the envelope I put it on my desk and returned to an ongoing project telling myself I would open it when I finished so I could record it and send a receipt.

As I worked a call came in telling of an unexpected, fairly expensive, family trip. As I was talking on the phone, and wondering how I could afford this trip, I made busy work with my hands by opening the envelope. Inside was a ministry check; but behind that check was another check for almost exactly the amount of money I would need for the emergency trip I was talking about on the phone!

God prepared for this emergency before I knew there would be an emergency- Glory! God still astonishes me!

August 25, 2015 THE MASTER'S VOICE

[Menu](#) Do not seek to simply live FOR God; learn to walk WITH God.

I had an early meeting in town so I decided to treat myself to breakfast. I picked a restaurant to stop at but the Lord told me to go to another restaurant. I told the Lord I preferred the restaurant I had decided on but He told me that if it was Him He would go to this other restaurant. I figured I would be better off eating where God wanted to eat.

Got to this restaurant, a good breakfast arrived, and I was reading my Bible chapters as I ate when someone came to my table and said they wanted to pay for my meal- Is there a Glory anywhere in the House? I like the restaurant God likes!

We received word that my wife's aunt has passed away. Since this was the sister of my wife's 95 year old dad we decided to carry him to the home to see the family. We arrived at her home to find no one there. We did not know where her children lived so we prayed for directions. God said inquire at a nearby department store. As I walked from my car to the store I saw a lady I knew leaving the store. When I greeted her and told her why I was in town she said, "Oh, I know exactly where her children live and I can carry you there"; which she promptly did- Glory!

God wants to help you live a great life- Listen to the Master's Voice.

August 26, 2015 SPENT MONEY

It is not wise to spend money that has already been spent. I use a credit card to pay many of my bills. I do so because it gives me cash back. It also allows me to use someone else's money (The credit card company) interest free for a month.

We use two rules with our Credit Card. First, NEVER fail to pay the credit card in full as soon as the bill comes due (If we cannot do this EVERY time then we cut up the card). Second, never spend money that has already been spent. I take ten minutes several nights a week and record all credit card purchases for that week in my banking program. Although that money is still in my bank account it is no longer "mine" and my balance reflects that fact.

A man saw a friend burying his cat. He noticed that the cat was buried with his tail sticking out of the ground. When the friend asked why he was told that leaving the tail out allowed the owner to pull the dead cat up from time to time and remember him!

Jesus paid my sin debt but that does not give me the right to "continue in sin that grace may abound" as if I were spending money that has already been spent. On the other hand, fearing for my salvation as if the sacrifice of Jesus did not completely pay for my sins is like digging up dead cats- It becomes a stinky situation.

September 1, 2015 **UNIQUE**

[Menu](#) Every Christian is unique. Before you were “formed in the belly, God knew you and ordained you” (Jer 1:5) for a specific responsibility in life. God created you with a human body which has a unique outward color, a unique inward personality, and unique features which allow others to easily identify you in a crowd. It even leads someone to choose you over everyone else to be their life partner!

When you become a Christian Believer the Holy Spirit of God moves into your bodily “temple” and imparts a unique gift specifically for you (1Cor 12:7-11) which empowers you to defeat the devil, defend the faith, and build the Kingdom of God. Suddenly, you begin conforming to the image of Christ as if you were “Born Again”!

Watching God work through your unique human personality and abilities in combination with the unique spiritual gift God gives you is an amazing experience. Growing into the exceptional person God intends you to be involves struggles, slips, slow transformations, and sudden moments of becoming “more than conquerors through Him that loves you” (Rom 8:37). You are a wonder to watch!

God chose you, Christ died for you, and the Holy Spirit indwells you; which makes you a very special person. Do not allow sadness or sickness or debt or doubt to make you forget you are a child of God; and, as such, you are one of the most important people in the universe!

September 2, 2015 **PULL THE PLUG**

My wife and I recently pulled the plug on DTV due to personal viewing habits and financial considerations. When others ask me if this is a good decision for them I give them a simple formula- Put your DTV remote in a kitchen cabinet. If you can go two weeks without removing it from the kitchen cabinet (A deliberate conscious act of desire) then you should pull the plug.

Many people struggle with a specific temptation in their life (Not the same temptation for everyone- one man’s worm is another man’s bait). They pray and pray for God to REMOVE the temptation. Wrong Prayer!

If your temptation is pornography and you pray for God to remove fleshly desire then consider the consequences of your request on your marriage relationship (Either seeking or sustaining a marriage). It is not wrong to have desire; it is wrong for desire to have you.

When the Devil used a snake to tempt Eve God could have destroyed all snakes; instead he turned the snake into a “dust devil” (Preacher Joke!). When Jesus taught prayer He did not pray “destroy all sources of temptation”; He prayed “Lead us not into temptation”.

When something has a pull on you (the man takes a drink, the drink takes a drink, the drink takes a man) then put that problem in the “kitchen cabinet” so you will have to consciously and deliberately make a choice. Then pray for God to give you strength to make right choices.

September 8, 2015 USED OF GOD

[Menu](#) Most people want to use God for their personal benefit or blessing instead of being used BY God to build His Kingdom and become the wonderful person God intended them to be. King Hezekiah is a great example of a person who learned to be used by God (2Kings 18:1-8).

Hezekiah made the best of his family influence- He had a bad father (2Kings 16:1-4) but a good mother. He chose to follow the example and teachings of his mother instead of using his father as an excuse to live badly.

Hezekiah dealt severely with the sinful things in his life. He destroyed Idols that could wrongfully influence him. He also removed religious symbols without substance (The serpent Moses used had a good purpose but it became a hindrance instead of a help when people started worshipping the serpent instead of the Savior).

He lived by faith as he “trusted in the LORD God of Israel and clave (to cling with all your might) to the LORD and departed not from following God, but kept his commandments.” He walked with God so he could work for God.

As a result of Hezekiah’s dedication “the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth”. This enabled God to use him to defeat Satan’s armies and bring victory to God’s people. What a legacy!

Do not let your beginning determine your ending. God is looking for yielded vessels that He can use to do mighty things in His name. Will you be such a person?

September 9, 2015 IN HELL NEED IN CHURCH

“The Rich man also died, and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes”. When Jesus drew back death’s curtain and allowed us to see Hell (Luke 16:19-31) He revealed Eight Things in Hell we Need in the Church - Sinners, a vision of Heaven (“He lifted up his eyes and sees Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom”), Earnest Specific Prayer (“send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue”), an awareness of the torments of Hell Fire (“I am tormented in this flame”), Faith that God’s Justice will prevail (“remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented”), a Missionary burden (“I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment”), a Dependence on the Word of God for Salvation (“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead”), and a realization of the finality of eternity (“so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence”).

There is a Hell to shun as well as a Heaven to gain. If your Christianity is only about praise songs on Sunday and never about proclaiming Christ on Monday then you need to examine what you have.

September 15, 2015 THE DIFFERENT PROPHET

[Menu](#) You were born an original; do not die a copy. The prophet Habakkuk is a good example of the difference being different can make. All other Biblical prophets spoke FROM God to the People. Habakkuk spoke TO God from the people.

Other prophets told the people about problems God had with them that needed to be corrected. Habakkuk dealt with a problem the people had with God that needed to be understood.

Habakkuk (like normal people all over the world) had a perplexing question about the punishment God allows on people- “for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.” [The really wicked Chaldeans were conquering God’s chosen nation].

When God answered this “different prophet” He revealed the most important principle in the Bible- “The Just shall live by Faith”. This Principle is the key verse in 4 books of the Bible (Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38) and is the foundation stone of Old and New Testament doctrine about salvation and living for God.

It is amazing that this principle would be given to someone who dared question the way God did business! That is why I tell people that I do not question God but I have a lot of questions for God! I realize that God does not think the way I think (Isa 55:8) but walking with God does make me wonder what He wonders- and Habakkuk shows me it is not wrong to ask Him about that sometimes.

September 16, 2015 SEEK GOD

Man always finds a “god” to control his life. That “god” may be passion, pride, possessions, or personal worship instead of the true God but everyone has something that motivates and moves them. Christianity’s main problem today is that the “God” being presented to people is a far away supreme being who will save them from their past and care for them in their future but with whom they have little personal contact except to “worship” on Sunday.

A W Tozer in his classic “The Pursuit of God” said: “The whole transaction of religion conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless. Faith may now be exercised without a jar to the moral life and without embarrassment to the Adamic ego. Christ may be “received” without creating any special love for Him in the soul of the receiver. The man is “saved” but he is neither hungry nor thirsty for God.”

My mission motto is “Use every method possible, to reach every person possible, so they can come to KNOW and SHOW Christ”. To me, Christianity is not simply escaping the wrath of God or learning the worship of God. It involves a walk with God that changes Him from a faraway Father into a near and dear Friend.

What good is it to be “saved” for fellowship with God if there is no desire for fellowship with God? Christians will not become world changers until their hungry and thirst for the True God draws them into His presence, infuses them with His passion, and sends them forth in His power.

September 22, 2015 DESCRIBE GOD

[Menu](#) It is interesting to ask people to describe God. To many He is a Vague God who just “is”. They know there is “something” out there that is bigger than them and who loves them in spite of all the bad they do.

Others describe God as a Reasonable God. Enough adequate evidence has been presented to them to persuade them that there must be a “god” of some kind so they believe God must exist. This “god” is constantly evolving in their mind as science and technology expand their theories and thought patterns. When bad things happen to good people it is hard to reconcile deity with disease or disaster and many who believe in this God find it difficult to reconcile the god in their mind with the circumstances in their life.

For others God is simply another name for beauty, truth, or goodness. Mother Nature and Father God share the same throne and seeing a beautiful scene in nature or a talented performance on a stage is their way of getting close to God.

Many describe God as the author of Life Guiding Principles. They accept the fact that a “higher power” is at work in the universe and they believe you should follow the “golden rules” (as defined by their circumstances and situation) in order to serve this god.

Do you know God well enough to describe God? Remember Jesus “was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (John 1:10).

September 23, 2015 END TIME CHARACTERISTICS

Here are some End Time characteristics as described in the Bible- People will love pleasure more than they love God. Knowledge and travel will greatly increase leading to questions about the authority and authenticity of God. There will constantly be wars and rumors of wars. A global acceptance of immoral behavior will lead to a surge in the breakdown of the family structure. An increase in self worship (MY body) and a desire for material possessions will bring about a widespread abandonment of churches and the Christian Faith. And people will increasingly be ready to accept any leader who can promise them fun, food, and freedom from responsibilities.

How can we be a “light in a dark place” during such a time as this? We all know the “stock answer” about being more religious and living better. But the Church has tried to promote religion and encourage people to be better for years while the world has grown worse and worse.

Christianity is not simply a belief that helps us escape the wrath of God. It is enjoying the worship of God, developing a walk with God, learning to wait on God for direction and strength, working hand in hand with God to build His Kingdom, and becoming one with God in thought and action. That kind of Christianity is what will make a difference in the end time by shining God’s light, and showing God’s love, to a world wallowing in darkness.

September 29, 2015 PLACEBO

[Menu](#) Recently I have attempted to “hammer home” the message that people need to examine the “god” of their belief. My goal has been to confirm God as the foundation of Faith- *For though there be (many) that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.* (1 Cor 8:5-6)

The need of this message can be seen when we realize thousands of young people raised in church to believe in Creation by God can be convinced by a college professor in one semester that everything they believe is a myth! Another concern is that churches spend much more time fighting among themselves over distinctive doctrines than they do exposing the devil and manifesting God.

If we are to successfully live in a world that is increasingly anti-Christian; and survive in a society seeking a “god” who allows every man to do that which is right in his own sight, then we must “*know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.*” (Psalms 135:5). We must be convinced that God communicates to man, demonstrates Himself in the world, and eternally reigns over the affairs of life. Anything less is simply a “placebo” God designed by our minds but never ruling in our heart.

September 30, 2015 GARDEN GUIDELINES

“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” (Gen 2:15). When God placed Adam in the Garden He gave him a work and a warning- Dress it (cultivate and groom the garden) and Keep it (Guard the garden from enemies). The same job description applies to your life today- do what God called you to do and guard yourself and your family from “snakes” who seek to destroy your relationship with God.

Adam was given a definite Place to Work- the Garden, a Definite Job to do- Guard and Grow, Definite Guidelines- Eat all but one, and a Definite Punishment- Death. God knew that People do what we expect when they know we will inspect so He gave them personal goals and punishment guidelines.

When we violate these guidelines it brings us shame (They knew they were naked), fear of exposure (They sewed figs leaves and hid themselves), and breach of fellowship with God (“Adam, where art thou?”). We then seek to blame others (Adam blamed Eve who blamed the snake), and make excuses for our failure (“the serpent beguiled me”).

Sadly, breaking garden guidelines always ends up badly. Brow sweat work replaced walking in the cool evening breeze with God. Slavery to sin, war with Satan, and universal death became man’s lot.

But when man was at his worst God was at His best and a redeemer was proclaimed and a new garden was promised- Glory!

October 6, 2015 PROBLEM PRAYERS

[Menu](#) When I visited my Doctor recently she was moving about with a scooter because of her broken ankle. Naturally, the first thing to come to mind was “Physician heal thyself”. But since my Doctor is such a wonderful person I began to think about how her sacrificial service should serve as an example.

I realized first that everyone has problems; even those who are trying to help others with problems. She could have used her problem as an excuse to avoid my problems but she put her heart above her hurt. Lord, help me be sensitive to the hurts of those who are serving those who hurt.

Secondly, I found her problem caused me to deal with my problems differently. As a help to her, the nurses did the preliminary work in one room and then brought the patient to the doctor’s room; thus keeping her painful travel to a minimum. Lord, help me go the extra mile in order to assist or make life easier for others with problems.

My doctor was using her problem time to help train a young lady desiring to go into the medical profession. The doctor received help during her problem while helping someone else avoid problems in her future studies. Lord, help me to make my problems a plus instead of a pout.

Finally, I expect my doctor to be well when I return. Lord, help me to realize “this too shall pass” as I maintain faith and faithfully do my duty.

October 7, 2015 INSPECT YOUR EXPECT

God knew that People do what we expect when they know we will inspect so He established personal goals and punishment guidelines at the very beginning. Seems simply enough doesn't it? Everyone does not have the same ability but everyone is expected to do what they can, where they are, with what they have.

This primary key of having a goal and being held accountable for that goal is why so many churches are so ineffective today- Attendance at services and Sunday School is "Optional". Students are never asked to account for what they learn thru tests. Income is on a "Volunteer" system. And, sadly, many people are unaware of what their Church is trying to accomplish and how it plans to reach that goal.

Here are four questions organizations and people need to ask- 1) Where do you want to go? Getting “there” means knowing where “there” is. 2) How do you plan to get there? Plan a plan and then work out how to work that plan. 3) What are you doing about it? A dream becomes a nightmare if you do not put “feet” on it. 4) When will you start? Delay is deadly. The first step must be made before any other step can take place.

Jesus consistently pointed His Face toward Jerusalem and the Cross. Healing people and feeding people were good things but conquering death was the purpose of His life. Thank God, He was faithful!

October 13, 2015 CONTROL S-W

[Menu](#) I use control “s” and control “w” many times each day. Since the “s” key and the “w” key are located one above another on a keyboard I normally hold down the control key and push “s” and then “w” in one smooth motion. I do it so much until I do not even “think” when I do it.

For those of you who are not computer “geeks” control “s” saves a document and control “w” closes that document. I write books, newspaper articles, sermons, web pages, and encouragement letters on a regular basis. I also keep the financial records for several mission and non-profit organizations which necessitates writing many receipt letters and using spreadsheets and financial programs regularly. I use “control s-w” a LOT.

Sometimes I make myself stop and think about “control s/w” as I work and apply that concept to my relationship with God. I remind myself that God is in control of saving me and God is in control of closing my life.

My weakness and my wickedness are constant reminders of my need for God’s Grace to be the controlling factor in my salvation. Ministry, military, and mission trip service have shown me death can come around any corner at any time and knowing God will never push my “control w” key without thinking is a great comfort to me. These two concepts keep me stable, secure, and steadfast.

October 14, 2015 OVERCOMING

I am smart enough not to carry a knife to a gun fight but I am confident enough to carry a Rock to a giant fight! So when life floods you with situations that are bigger than you are. Or when uncontrollable circumstances threaten to completely overwhelm you just remember “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” (1 John 4:4). We overcome what is outside because He is inside.

Sometimes, because we are human, we look at how little our rock is and how giant of a giant that giant is and we need a peace that is bigger than our problem- Jesus said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Our peace is in His power.

Just remember that it is not your wealth or your works, your strength or your stamina, that brings this overcoming power. It is a personal relationship with God through Christ-“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

Overcomers are winners in this life and in the next-Glory! “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” Revelation 21:7). Don’t be overwhelmed by life; be an overcomer in Christ.

October 20, 2015 SMALL GOD

[Menu](#) Is your life filled with wonder and overflowing with Glory at the power of God at work in your life? Or is your Christianity a standard of conduct that limits your life instead of a strengthening force that opens you up to an abundant life? God is not dead; He is not even sick! Stop restricting Him by limiting Him with the feebleness of your flesh.

I once read a book entitled "Your God is too Small". I do not remember what was in the book but I've never forgotten the title. I believe there are multitudes of people who need to examine anew their belief in the Power and Ability of God. I believe their God is trapped in the mentality of their mind and it would shock them if He would do something truly miraculous.

Most preaching seems to be about denouncing what God does not want us to do rather than about demonstrating that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us! I am not talking about turning God into a circus act to "wow" our friends and family with our feats of daring. Nor do I mean that God is some "magic" power we can use at our whim. I am saying we need a living Faith in God's Power used in God's program which can change our world.

Let God be God and learn what it means to have joy unspeakable and full of Glory!

October 21, 2015 BED MOMENTS TO AVOID BAD

Better to build a fence at the top of a hill than a hospital at the bottom! Better to look before you leap than to be a broken legged leaper. Avoiding an accident is better than having good insurance. Thus, the Bible cautions us to "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Proverbs 4:14-15).

Amazingly, instead of talking about life action plans to assist us in avoiding sin, three times in the Bible we are told to do certain things "and sin not" and each of these is connected to a "bed moment".

1) Lying in bed "Stand in awe (Reverential respect), and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah" (Psalm 4:4). Awe of God meditation shows us how Sin disappoints God and disgraces us which leads us to avoid it.

2) Before getting out of bed "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame" (1 Cor 15:34). Determine you are going to spend your day walking in the Light instead of being ashamed of dark deeds.

3) Prior to going to Bed "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:" (Eph 4:26). Remember that failure is not final. Confess, correct, and use God's glorious Grace as a pillow of peace.

October 27, 2015 GOD'S NEIGHBORS

[Menu](#) Ever wondered what kind of neighbors God wants? David wondered about that in the fifteenth Psalm- "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" He then listed three character traits God looks for in His neighbors.

1) "He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness and speaketh the truth in his heart" (Psalm 15:2). God wants neighbors who walk right, work right, and have integrity. So do I.

2) "He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD" (Psalm 15:3-4). God likes His neighbors to be neighborly in their talk as well as their walk. He doesn't want Gossipers or those who cause trouble with their tongue. He wants neighbors who will let bad people know they are wrong while letting good people know they are appreciated. So do I.

3) "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent" (Psalm 15:4-5). God wants neighbors whose word is their bond and who will help out in times of trouble instead of taking advantage of adversity. So do I.

The Great News is that if God welcomes you into His neighborhood then "He that doeth these things shall never be moved"- Glory!

October 28, 2015 GOD FIRST

Most people have heard the story of the young man who told his girlfriend, "Nothing can keep us apart. I would swim a deep river and climb a high mountain just to get to you. And, if it doesn't rain, I will come back to see you tomorrow!" It is easy to talk dedication in a dry house.

God should be First in your LIFE- *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* (Exodus 20:3). Family, friends, funds, and fun are all important areas of our life but God's will, God's word, and God's work must have priority over all these things. It is amazing how God is a four letter word to many people on Sunday- Golf, ball, race, shop, food, rest.

God should be First in your LOVE- *This is the first and great commandment. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* (Matthew 22:37-38). Real love involved Dedication: You try to do the things you like but you will "walk through the rain" for something you really love. As well as Devotion: *If ye love me, keep my commandments* (John 14:15).

God should be First in your LONG TERM PLANNING- *But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him* (Luke 12:5). If God is not first in your Life and your Love then you will not be happy as what happens last.

November 3, 2015 BEFORE YOU WERE BORN

Menu You were not an afterthought to God and God should not be a non-thought to you- *The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts* (Psalms 10:4). You are not an accident or a mistake; God created you for a purpose, with a plan, and for His possession.

Before you were born God knew where you fit into life's puzzle because He already knew You:

1) Fate- *But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly* (Psalms 22:9-10). Birth chose my country, my culture, and my communication (language)

2) Function- *Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations* (Jeremiah 1:4-5).

3) Future- *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:* (Ephesians 1:4). God chooses to choose those who will choose to choose Him and His endgame is fantastic- *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end* (Jeremiah 29:11).

November 4, 2015 HANDFULS

God is not a stingy, miserly, tight-fisted God. Jesus said He came to give us "abundant life" and Paul commanded Timothy to tell people that God "gives us richly all things to enjoy" (I Tim 6:17). Several times in scripture the phrase "handful" is used to describe God's abundance.

Handfuls of Blessings: *And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them* (Ruth 2:16). Boaz made sure Ruth's work was rewarded with the extra she needed; just as God gives us each day our daily bread

Handfuls of Better: *Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit* (Ecclesiastes 4:6). God gives handfuls of Peace as well as provision.

Handfuls from a bottomless barrel: *And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die* (1 Kings 17:12). Once the widow dedicated her last handful to God her barrel always had another handful!

Sadly, God also tells about Handfuls of bodies of those who reject God's Word and His Way: *Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather them* (Jeremiah 9:22).

Make sure you choose God's abundant handful and not His awful handful.

November 10, 2015 A SPIRITUAL PERSON

[Menu](#) True Christian character is produced IN the Christian but not BY the Christian. Lewis Sperry Chafer in his great book “He that is Spiritual” describes a Spiritual Person as “one who experiences the divine purpose and plan in his daily life through the power of the indwelling Spirit.” He goes on to say that the cause of this new life will be the unhindered indwelling Spirit.

The “Secret to Victory” in developing genuine Christian character is not the energy or enthusiasm of the flesh. It is allowing the Holy Spirit to control your life so the fruit of the Spirit is manifested in your character and conduct. The fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22-23) and their development enable us to be the Spiritual person we desire and God intended.

If you look closely you will see that “fruit of the Spirit” is singular in the Bible- Like one orange with nine slices. This lets us know that if you have the “fruit of love” you will also have joy, peace, longsuffering, etc. It is not you working to add joy to your love; it is the Spirit producing all of these traits in a yielded life!

You can try your best to be your best; and end up failing once again. Or you can yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to produce His character transforming fruit in your life.

November 11, 2015 MANAGING A MIRACLE

Are you Ready for a Miracle? Sometimes God cannot bless us because we do not know what to do with the Miracle He wants to involve us in! Let’s look at some basis rules for managing a miracle from the famous story of Jesus feeding the 5000.

1) IDENTIFY YOUR NEED- The people had gone without food for a long time and were far from home. If food was not provided for them then they might die in the dessert. Why do you NEED a Miracle?

2) RECOGNIZE YOUR RESOURCES- All they could find to meet this need was a little boy’s lunch of 5 loaves and 2 fish. They had to learn to trust God where they were with what they had.

3) ORGANIZE YOUR PROBLEM- Jesus made the people sit down in small manageable groups. This took Faith! They had to arrange people for a meal they did not see yet. Sometimes God will not provide because we do not prepare for His provision.

4) LOOK TO GOD TO BLESS YOUR EFFORTS- Jesus took the fish and loaves and blessed them. If you can do it without God’s help then it is not a miracle. Pray to a mighty God and watch something extraordinary happen.

5) DON’T WASTE GOD’S PROVISION- Jesus told the disciples to gather up the fragments that remained- 12 baskets full (One for each Disciple!).

Your problem is not so big when you look to God for supply and learn to manage your miracle!

November 17, 2015 THE POWER OF PRAISE

[Menu](#) “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (Psa 22:3). The amazing truth of this statement is that it is found in the middle of the Psalm that describes the agony of crucifixion; and is the Psalm that Jesus repeated while on the Cross. During this time of agony and pain Jesus taught us the Power of Praise.

Praise helps our Health- Prov 17:22 “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”

Praise helps our Looks- Prov 15:13 “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.”

Praise helps our attitude- Prov 15:15 “He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.”

And, above all, Praise Pleases God- Heb 13:15 “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” I Thess 5:18 “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Ps 50:23 “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.”

God is not glorified by our silence, our fears, our doubts, or our frustrations. He is glorified by our Faith in His Plan and our Praise of His wondrous works. Make it your business today to exercise the Power of Praise.

November 18, 2015 GOD PRAISING YOU

It is one thing for you to praise God but how do you get God to praise you? The answer is simple; People who please God, please God, and earn his praise. Jesus experienced this phenomenon on several occasions when God was so pleased with what Jesus did until God boomed His approval from Heaven.

When Jesus was baptized God was so pleased until the entire trinity manifested itself- “the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22). What a special moment!

When Jesus was on the mount of transfiguration talking about the cross on His horizon- “A bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt 17:5).

A proud Father acknowledging and praising a dedicated son is a wondrous thing. So much so until Peter (who was there at the time) never got over it and wanted to remind everyone about it- “Jesus received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (2Pe 1:17).

When you can say “I do always those things that please the Father”-(John 8:29) then you can experience God praising you in the midst of your praising God.

November 24, 2015 PRAISE FOR PRAISE

[Menu](#) Bitterness sours the soul and corrupts your outlook. Hatred captures the mind and wrecks relationships. Pride inflates your ego while belittling other's accomplishments. But praise lifts your attitude, improves your health, and gives joy to those who give it and those who receive it.

So today I want to lift my praise to God for His protection. In my walk through life I have found myself in some very dangerous situations where I could have; and, sometimes, it appeared I should have, dealt with death. But God's miraculous protection has always preserved me and brought me out when it looked like I might be done in! Thank God that He has guarded me.

I praise God for His provision. My wife and I have prayer diaries full of answered prayers where God has met needs in such a way until it was obvious that Heaven's window had been opened so God's blessings could be poured out upon us. The wonder of "manna from Heaven" still amazes me.

I praise God for His peace. Sometimes a thing becomes a "thing" and the hurt or the heartache would overwhelm you if you did not know that all "things" work together for the good to those who love the Lord and are the called according to His purpose. Thank God that He is a Rock in the midst of life's storms and that I have found a hiding place in the security of His stability.

November 25, 2015 THE BEST WORD

Rudyard Kipling was so popular until his writings were getting ten shillings per word. A few college students however didn't appreciate Kipling's writings. They facetiously sent him a letter enclosing ten shillings. It read, "Please, send us your best word." They got a letter back from Kipling, "Thanks."

The Best word indeed is "Thanks". Have you used it recently? When is the last time you told God Thank You for loving me enough to send your Son to die in my place?

When is last time you thanked God for faithful Christians who prayed for your salvation, paid to keep the church doors open so you would have a place to meet God, and pleaded with you to turn from sin to the savior?

When did you last thank God for the wooing and convicting work of the Holy Spirit? Have you thanked God recently for His long suffering with you while you wallowed in the hog pens of the world and squandered the wealth He had given you on the devil's delights?

When is the last time you spent ten minutes adoring and praising the Great God Jehovah for the blessings of life instead of complaining about all the things you don't have? Do your family and co-workers hear you lift your voice in praise to God instead of grumbling and griping?

When is the last time you hugged God's neck and told Him you loved Him? After all, even to God, the best word is THANKS.

December 1, 2015 GOD ALLOWED PROBLEMS

Menu How do you deal with a problem that God allowed in your life? - And Adam said, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Genesis 3:12). Adam did not have a choice about his companion- He went to sleep and when he woke up a strange woman creature was living in his house and she was the only one of her kind in the world!

Jehoshaphat (A king of Israel) faced the same situation when his country was invaded (2Chronicles 20). The people who were invading his country were people God had ordered Israel not to destroy –“The LORD said unto Moses, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession” (Deuteronomy 2:9).

The Moabites and the Ammonites were the descendants of the incestuous relationship of Lot and his daughters after the fall of Sodom and Gomorra and they were a constant “thorn in the side” to Israel but they were there because God had allowed them there!

Jehoshaphat (and Job who also faced God allowed Problems) found that trusting God, and lifting Praise to Him, turned these problems into a plus- Israel took three days to collect the loot left after God defeated the Moabites and Job got back twice as much as he had before. Amazing what trust and praise will do!

December 2, 2015 GIVING LIKE GOD

Menu When Christ was born on that first Christmas God gave the world an unexpected gift (God had been “silent” for 400 years), a personally involved gift (God became flesh and dwelt among men), and a gift given from love (For God so loved the world He gave). If we want to “keep Christ in Christmas” then we should use these same guidelines.

Do something unexpected. Give a \$50 dollar gift card to a Senior Saint and tell them you just wanted to share God’s love at Christmas. “Pay ahead” for someone at a fast food counter or drive thru. (I have never been financially able but I would like to approach a family at the checkout counter who appeared to be financially challenged and ask for the privilege of paying their grocery bill).

Do something with a personal touch. Contact a widow in your neighborhood and ask if you can bring them a meal or do some shopping for them in order for them to enjoy a blessing at Christmas. Offer to baby sit or elderly parent sit for someone. Carry a homemade cake or cookies to your next door neighbor and invite them to the Christmas program at your church.

Wrap your gifts in love and fill December with moments where love is expressed and where love is felt. Do not look for excuses; show your love even if you have to wrap it in swaddling clothes in a stable.

December 8, 2015 PRESENT PANIC

[Menu](#) I could be a “December millionaire” if I would sell sweat shirts with the motto “I am in the Present Panic mode so get out of my way” printed on the front! Little Jesus, meek and mild, better find a corner to hide in during the December celebration of His birth because people will trample Him underfoot without a thought if there is a super sale going on! And I find it very difficult to distinguish the Christians from the non-Christians in that crowd.

The Wise Men probably brought their presents to Jesus nearly a year after His birth. The only thing the shepherds brought on the day of His birth was their curiosity (“Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us”) and their testimony (And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child”).

Merchants are afraid to offend the politically correct crowd by mentioning Jesus during December but they want you to buy lots of gifts in order to celebrate “something” on December 25th. They cannot be religious but they do want the gift of your gold!

December can be a stressful time of “Present Panic” or it can be a time to rejoice in God becoming flesh and living among men. It is not wrong to show people you love them with presents; just as long as you enjoy His presence in the process.

December 9, 2015 BEING GOD’S DAD

How would you react if God came to you and said, “I want you to raise my Son for me”? That is what happened to Joseph when the angel appeared and told him Mary was about to have the God child and he was to marry Mary. What an overwhelming moment that must have been!

In the process of accepting God into his family, Joseph shows us what it means to take God into our life.

Joseph had to deal with the fear that he could not handle the responsibilities that came with having God in his life every day. That same fear keeps many people from taking the final step of salvation. They need to hear what the Angel told Joseph, “Fear not”.

Joseph also had to deal with the social pressure that came with marrying an already pregnant woman in order for God to be made flesh. In the same way, becoming part of God’s family can cause others to misunderstand the changes in our life because of our walk with God.

The supernatural work of God that brought about the conception of God also had to be accepted by Joseph (“That which is born is of the Holy Spirit” Matt 1:20). Welcoming God into your life is not a mental game you play; it is a supernatural “new birth” performed by the Holy Spirit.

If you want God to come into your life and make you part of His family then you need to follow Joseph’s example, “Then Joseph ...did as the messenger of the Lord had bidden him”.

December 15, 2015 WHY HE DID IT

[Menu](#) While it is true that men do what they do because they are who they are; it is also true that other factors drive them to do certain things. These factors include: the pleasure they receive from doing it, the pressure that pushes them to participate in it, the profit they expect from it, the principles that motivate them into it, the people that are a part of it, or the passion that propels them toward it.

When you combine these factors with a person's selfish desires, perceived duties, sinful depravity, financial or personal debts, or allegiance to a deity you sometimes end up with a man entirely different from the excited child opening presents on Christmas day.

Man is a complex conundrum shaped by inside forces and outside factors. No wonder the Bible says he is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps 139:14). He does not always play fair and sometimes he "draws outside the lines" but, normally, we know which "box" to put him in.

God, on the other hand, makes us scratch our heads. If man would have created man and the man he created would have messed up like Adam and Eve did then most men would have simply thrown them on the scrap heap and tried something else. God, however, became flesh, dwelt among men, and then died for all mankind so everyone who believed could be born again and start over. And He did it because He loved us! (John 3:16). Wow! What a Great God we celebrate at Christmas.

December 16, 2015 THE PERFECT GIFT

The Bible tells us that every good and perfect gift comes from God. The difference between a "good" gift and a "perfect" gift is more understandable at Christmas. People wander through stores having found a "good gift" but agonizing over the "perfect" gift. Here are some guidelines to make that selection easier; and, at the same time, show us some of the wondrous thought that went into the gift God gave in that Bethlehem stable.

A perfect gift thrills the heart and satisfies the mind. A perfect gift does not simply meet a need; it fulfills a want. A perfect gift brings out a teeth showing smile and initiates a squeeze hug Thank You. A perfect gift is so unexpected and so over appreciated until it delights the giver as well as the recipient. And that describes the gift God's love gave the world at Christmas.

A perfect gift is age related (Child gift vs Adult gift), wealth related-(A five dollar gift certificate for a meal would thrill a homeless person and greatly disappoint a millionaire), wisdom related-(A book would probably not please a person unable to read), and world related-(An African bush man would value a knife above a California man's wrist fitness monitor). So when God gave the "Perfect Gift" that first Christmas it was suitable for every age, culture, and heart need.

The perfect gift at Christmas comes from the Master; not from the mall. Make sure it is part of your celebration.

December 22, 2015 THE RIGHT GIFT

[Menu](#) I once asked Adults to share their favorite, the most useful, and the most unusual Christmas gift they ever received. The answers were remarkably varied and very interesting. Almost without exception the gift mentioned was not remembered because of its value but because of the “Story behind the gift” which told of someone’s special love or sacrifice.

You may be wondering about the gifts you are buying this year. Will the recipient enjoy them? Is the gift you are giving worth the crowds, the stress, and the cash you put into it? Is there some way you can enjoy giving gifts instead of dreading the entire process? Let me share some “Right gift” guidelines.

On that first Christmas, God gave us a baby wrapped in love. This year give the gift of Love. Many people cannot give money, or the things money can buy, but everyone can give Love. Make love the motivation and meaning in the gift you give.

Another gift you can give this Christmas is Forgiveness. God sent His Son to earth to provide forgiveness through grace (unmerited favor). Give a gift that will renew a relationship.

The Right gift is given from a heart filled with a desire to leave the routine (like the shepherds) and sacrificially become involved (like Mary). A gift like this, even if wrapped in swaddling clothes, will cause the angels to want to sing!

December 23, 2015 GIFTS FROM GOD

Did you know that God gives gifts other than a babe in a manger? He has a bag full of gifts that can change bad little boys and girls into saved Saints serving society as they build the Kingdom of God and shine forth God’s light into a sin darkened world.

One Gift from God is the ability to enjoy life: “Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the **gift of God**” (Ecclesiastes 5:19). Abundant life living draws people to the Almighty.

Another Gift from God is a place of service which energizes your life and motivates your service: “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the **gift of God**, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands” (2Tim 1:6). Knowing you belong; and that God can energize you to become, is a Blessing!

Finally (or firstly) God’s Gift born at Christmas, who died at Easter, pays mankind’s death debt: “For the wages of sin is death; but the **gift of God** is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro 6:23). This gift gives people the ability to have an eternity changing relationship with God by a simple act of Faith- “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the **gift of God:**” (Eph 2:8). Glory!

December 29, 2015 KNOWING GOD BETTER

Menu Most people want God to forgive their badness, alleviate their burdens, and pour upon them blessings but they have no desire to really know God. If you took away “holy” and “love” then most people would not have an idea how to talk about God. Here are some things to help you get to know God better.

How many cattle does God own (Psalm 50:10)? What Color is God’s hair (Dan 7:9 and Rev 1:14)? What kind of clothes does God wear (Psalm 104:1-2)? Where does God dwell besides Heaven (Isaiah 57:15) and what kind of neighborhood does God desire (Num 35:34)?

Why does God shine in the dark (1John 1:5)? Why is God solidly dependable (Deut 32:3-4)? (In fact, God is so unchangeable (Malachi 3:6) until He told Moses to introduce Him as (Exodus 3:13-14)?

God is trustworthy because it is impossible for Him to (Titus 1:2, Heb. 6:18)? You also need to know what God values as His Special Jewels (Malachi 3:16-17) and why He chooses to reveal His plans to certain people (Gen 18:17-19). God has a wife (Jer 3:11-14) and a Son (Matt 3:16-17) but certain other people also get to be called “sons of God” (John 1:12).

God said He did not think or act like Humans (Isaiah 55:8-9) and even in eternity we would not completely understand Him (Ps 147:5) so do not “put Him in a box”. He is worth getting to know!

December 30, 2015 GOD IN YOUR LIFE

The phrase “God is able” is found numerous times in the Bible. As we enter a new year the knowledge of God’s ability to work in our life should energize and excite us to be the best we can be.

God is able to keep you Faithful: “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,” (Jude 1:24-25).

God is able to keep you supplied: “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:” (2 Corinthians 9:8).

God is able to build you up (Acts 20:32) and bless you beyond your expectations: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,” (Ephesians 3:20).

God is able to sympathize with your tears (Heb 4:15) and give aid in your temptations: “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18).

And God is able to Save you to the uttermost: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). Glory!