

From My Bible

Sermon Notes
& Outlines

Victorious Living Articles

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Introduction

These articles are compiled from studies I prepared for a local news publication. They were published on a monthly basis for many years and now have been put into book form.

Many of these articles came from my personal devotions or from ideas that were a source of encouragement to me. These thoughts, coupled with a little study, helped produce these notes and articles.

The topic of devotions is one that is deeply close to my heart. For us to come together before God, as a regular pattern, it is vital and significant to have daily devotions. Someone once said that we must *walk with God* in order to *speak for God*.

I make no claim of complete originality for this material. Also, please remember that these messages are not expected to substitute for your own personal study of the Word of God! The thoughts and ideas are given as a catalyst to help begin your ideas on a given passage of Scripture or trigger a seed thought to get you going. It is my prayer that the "stuff" contained here will further kindle the fire of God's message that is already in your heart. Your own thinking, praying, and studying will be necessary to guide you into the delivery of His Word to your own people.

May these articles become *messages* from the Lord that He uses in your own life as He has used them in mine.

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A New Year Without Fear

God's Word brings us an encouraging promise, along with an discerning command as we face a New Year: *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Hebrews 13:5-6).

You and I can live this coming year without fear if we apply these four extremely wonderful truths to our lives and root them deep into our hearts.

I. The Contentment of His Provision

Contentment is not getting what you want, but it is wanting what you already have. First Timothy 6:6-8 says, *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us therewith be content.”* If you know Jesus Christ, you have contentment. If you’ve got clothes on your back, something to eat, and Jesus Christ in your heart, you’re rich!

Do you know why we have fear? Because we think our needs or the needs of someone we love are not going to be met. Or we fear that the things we think are meeting our needs are going to be taken away from us. The deepest need of your heart can only be met in the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. The Companionship of His Presence

I don’t know what I’m going to face next year. But there’s

one thing I know, He will never leave me. Are you a child of God? He will never leave you either. Isn't that wonderful!

What's another reason we may fear in the coming year? Because we're afraid we're going to have to face something we don't understand, and we're going to have to face it *alone*.

When God's Word promises that God will never forsake you, it literally means that He will never abandon you. He will not give up on you. We need to practice the presence of the Lord this coming year. When the devil comes and knocks at your heart's door, you can simply say, "Jesus, please go answer the door."

III. The Confidence of His Promise

We're going to zero in on a little phrase in our verses in Hebrews, "*He hath said.*" A promise is no better than the one who makes it. Who says, "*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*"? It is the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God. *This* is the confidence of His promise.

In the coming year, when you say, "God, I just don't have the strength." The omnipotent God will answer, "*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*" When you say, "God, I'm afraid of what is going to happen." The omnipresent God says, "*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*" And when you say, "God, I don't know what to do." The omniscient God will respond, "*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*" He himself hath said it.

IV. The Comfort of His Protection

Hebrews 13:6 promises, “*So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*” Now, put that with verse five which says, “*He hath said.*”

Like I said earlier, I don’t know what you’re going to go through this coming year. But I know you can boldly say, “*The Lord is my helper, so I will not fear what man shall do to me.*” When you find your contentment, companionship, and confidence in Jesus, then you’ll find your comfort and courage in Jesus too.

A.D.D. or A.P.D.

Attention Deficit Disorder or A.D.D. is a condition that exists primarily among children, resulting in hyperactivity, and as the name suggests, the inability to pay attention for any length of time. I do not profess to be any kind of child expert, nor do I consider myself an authority on A.D.D., therefore I am not going to attempt to deny its existence. It is quite possible that Attention Deficit Disorder is indeed a legitimate concern and is responsible for some of the behavioral problems that parents have with their children. However, I contend that many of the behavioral problems that parents experience with their children today is due to A.P.D., Absence of Proper Discipline.

The “experts” contend that we have advanced beyond the point of actually striking a child. These “experts” suggest a form of discipline that is more socially acceptable and one that is less likely to warp a child’s self-image. But regardless of what the so-called “experts” might say, God’s Word is still the supreme authority on all matters, including the discipline and correction of our children.

Consider these Bible verses: Proverbs 22:15 *“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.”* Proverbs 23:13, *“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.”* Proverbs 19:18 *“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.”* Proverbs 29:17 *“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.”* The bottom line is that parents who do not discipline, chasten, and correct their children are not following the given directives of the Word of God.

Perhaps you recall the old saying “*spare the rod, spoil the child*”. This is a paraphrase of what the Bible actually says in Proverbs 13:24 “*He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*” The verse itself is much more forceful than the paraphrasing. It is not love, but rather a lack of love that causes a parent to refrain from proper discipline. Love is primarily an action, not an emotion.

Parents must realize that discipline is not something they do **to** a child but **for** a child. A parent who “*spansks*” their child is showing love as they act to meet their child’s need. If this is true, and it is, then many of us were certainly “**loved**” an awful lot by our parents!

Christian America

“...*Happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.*” (Psalm 144:15). In this day of political correctness, we are expected to accept the falsehood that the God of America has always been a generic, “one-size-fits-all” god. The revisionist historians of our day are not only deceptive, but are purposefully trying to sever from our memory the Christian heritage that is such a vital part of the foundation upon which this republic rests.

While it is obvious that not all of our Founding Fathers were Christians, the vast majority were men who had an unerring faith in the God of the Bible. Not only can the hand of God be seen in the establishing of this nation, but His name can be read throughout the documents and writings of its founders. Those men were not concerned that someone might be offended by the boldness with which they proclaimed their faith.

It was Patrick Henry who said “*It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason people of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here.*”

If you will compare the history books of today and those that were once taught in our schools - you will discover two vastly different Americas. One was a nation in which the Bible was read in both the home and the classroom. That nation, according to our earliest historians, and in the eyes of the world, was a “Christian” nation. The other was a nation, according to modern history books, that was polytheistic from the beginning. The God of America has

been meticulously morphed into the gods of multiculturalism.

What is at stake in all of this is our national identity. By altering who we were, they seek to define who we are. The greatest threat to America today is not the radical Muslims who crave our destruction, but rather the revisionist historians and judicial activists who orchestrate our demise.

It was Lincoln who once said “”At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reaches us it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.”

Christian Foundations For The USA

Noah Webster, called “America’s Schoolmaster,” who authorized textbooks for schools and was responsible for the good old faithful Webster’s Dictionary, said: *“No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people.”*

In his first Dictionary (1828), he regularly used Bible verses to clarify the context in which a word was used. The Dictionary has later undergone censorship to remove its Christian perspective. He must be rolling in his grave! And what did they offer our school children? For many years (from 1690) the New England Primer was the textbook of American schools. When it taught the alphabet, it used Biblical phrases such as, “A wise son makes a glad father” and “Better is little with the fear of the Lord...”.

Can you imagine this? Listen, we were founded to be a Christian nation! Our founding fathers did everything in their power to set it up and keep it that way. They based our laws on God’s Word. They even set up our three branches of government, with the separation of power and a system of checks and balances, based on Scripture (Isaiah 33:22 and Jeremiah 17). It is estimated that 94% of all their quotes are from the Bible. This is where they got their idea for our form of government. And it has been remarkably successful! Our same constitution, documents, and system has survived, unchanged, for 226 years, while (during that same period) France has had 7 different forms of government and Italy, 48. Christian foundations make a difference. This has been our national heritage. Let us not forget it. And let us not turn from the God who made us great!

Hypocrites Condemned

“I would come to church, but there are too many hypocrites in church.” How many times have we heard that one? The world mercilessly condemns the church for the perceived hypocrisy within, and yet nowhere is hypocrisy more harshly condemned than by God and God’s Word. When Christ used the word “hypocrite” in the New Testament, He reserved His harshest words for them. (Matt. 23:13).

Hypocrisy is sin, and if we do not judge it, God will. Few of us would deny that we are, in some ways, *hypocrites...* that we have been guilty of hypocrisy. God’s Word repeatedly condemns the hypocrite, no matter how religious. In Matthew 23, Jesus pronounces eight "woes" on the scribes and Pharisees (vs.13-16, 23, 25, 27, 29). Seven times He calls them "hypocrites" and five times He says they are "blind." He calls each a "child of hell" (Matthew 23:15), and says they are like "whited sepulchers...full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27), also "full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (vs.28). They are, He says, "serpents" and a "generation of vipers" (vs.33). The obvious conclusion must be that God hates the sin of hypocrisy in religious leaders more than most other sins. God hates hypocrisy; He always has and always will.

Hypocrites are in churches, businesses, and families yet people do not avoid every place they are found. The world will continue to use them as an excuse for not obeying God, attending church, or doing right. This may never change, but be reminded that in order to hide behind the hypocrite, you must be smaller than he is! Don’t allow the hypocrite to be a bigger person than you. If you don’t want to be around hypocrites—Don’t go to Hell, it’s going to be full of them!!

Dealing With A Crisis

A crisis in anyone's life is hard to handle. We all have crises in our lives, not all are the same but one is as important as the next. We often look at certain things only as a crisis, such as; death, sickness, loss of material things. But there are some crises in our daily lives that we don't stop to think might be a real problem to people. Sometimes we make things harder than they have to be. When we do, it can oftentimes end in a personal crisis. A crisis is something that we really don't want to have to deal with, but as long as we are here on this earth, and we deal with our human emotions, there will be a CRISIS. Learning how to handle them is the goal we should set for ourselves. There seems to be a crisis in nearly every stage of life.

Crisis In Youth - new friends, new school, new authorities, etc.

Crisis In Teens - peer pressure, independence, college, etc.

Crisis In Young Adults - responsibilities, relationships, future plans, etc.

Crisis In Parenting - Once again everything seems to crowd around except this time your raising another life.

Crisis In Maturing Years (Senior Citizen years)

There are some things to help us go through these times of crisis, and we should remember to use these helps:

1. - Realize this is a part of life. No one is exempt from this. Circumstances and situations sometimes dictate certain happenings that can end up in crisis.

2. - God is still on the throne. He knows everything that is going on. God makes no mistakes. He is in control of our lives. Make prayer a daily part of your life. How are we to know His will if we do not ask?

3. - Things will get better. They always do. Time has a way of taking care of things. Remember the old saying, “Things will look better in the morning”, usually is true. Reading your Bible every day has a way of making things look better, even when things aren’t going well.

4. - What I’m going through now will help me later. Remember if there were no valleys, there would be no mountains. There is an excellent book entitled “*Bumps Are What You Climb On*” by Warren Wiersbe. It is an excellent source of encouragement when you’re going through trials. Reading good Christian books along with the Bible will sometimes give you extra strength.

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

What is Forgiveness?

“Forgive him? Are you kidding? After what he has done to me? I can never forgive him!” “Forgive me? How could God forgive me? You don’t know what I have done.” “How could I have done such an awful thing? I can never forgive myself.”

These are the things I hear all the time as a pastor. *Stuff* from people who have grown up in churches, with godly parents and yet without ever fully understanding God’s forgiveness and its intended effect on every level of their lives. Forgiveness is the act of setting someone free from an obligation to you that is a result of a wrong done against you. For example, a debt is forgiven when you free your debtor of his obligation to pay back what he owes you.

Forgiveness involves three basic ideas: (1) *A Wound (somebody hurt me)*, (2) *A Debt Resulting From The Wound (somebody owes me something because of what they did to hurt me)*, (3) *A Cancellation Of The Debt*.

All three elements are essential if forgiveness is to take place. Many today do not understand forgiveness and thus suffer from a problem with unforgiveness. I believe most people who suffer from an unforgiving spirit do not know that “*unforgiveness*” is the root of their problem.

All they know is that they just “can’t stand” to be around certain people. They find themselves wanting to strike out at people when certain subjects are discussed. They feel uncomfortable around certain personality types. They lose their temper over little things. They constantly struggle with guilt over sins committed in the past. A person who has an unforgiving spirit is always the real loser, much

more so than the one against whom the grudge is held. Unforgiveness, by its very nature, prevents individuals from following through on many of the specifics of the Christian life and practically necessitates that they walk by the flesh rather than by the Spirit.

Whatever your situation, whatever has happened in your past, remember that you are the loser if you do not deal with an unforgiving spirit. And the people around you suffer too.

God's Christmas Gift

"For unto you is born this day in the city David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11)

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." 2 Corinthians 9:15 (Also read Romans 5: 15-18; Eph. 2:8-9)

Christmas is the most wonderful holiday of the whole year. It is a time of giving gifts. It is a time when we show our love for one another. Children give to their parents, husbands to their wives, and wives to their husbands. What started all this giving and festivity? Well, it all started with God. The first Christmas was not a commercial. It was about a coming, God coming down to be with us. The first Christmas gift came from Heaven. It came from God. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16).

Jesus Was A Prepared Gift. Our great God and our Heavenly Father, who has always known everything, prepared His Son, Jesus, before the foundation of the world. When Adam and Eve fell, it did not catch God off guard. God was ready for what happened. The sacrifice for sin was prepared and ready. As Abraham told Isaac, "God will provide Himself a lamb" (Gen. 22:8). It was God, the Son, given by God, the Father, conceived by God, the Holy Ghost, who was delivered to the world as a free gift.

Jesus Was A Personal Gift. God's Christmas gift is personally fitted for everyone. This gift was to the whole world and yet to each of us. No one who ever receives Jesus will ever say He doesn't fit or will ever seek to exchange Him for someone or something else. He is perfectly designed to meet every need of everyone in the

whole wide world. Even though God's Christmas gift is to all the world, He is also a personal gift to every individual of the human race!

Jesus Was A Perfect Gift. Jesus is absolutely perfect in every respect. He was perfect in His pre-incarnate state - - before He ever took on a body. He was perfect in His virgin birth. He was perfect in His sinless life. He was perfect in His atoning death at Calvary. He was perfect In His resurrection. He is now perfect in intercession for us in heaven, and He will be perfect in His second coming for us in the rapture and in ruling this earth in righteousness forevermore. Thank God for this perfect, unspeakable gift.

Here, You Can Have My Children!

This is the despicable suggestion Lot made in Gen. 19:8 to a perverted crowd in Sodom when he offered to sacrifice his daughters to them in order to maintain societal tradition, practical peace, and personal gain. "*...I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof...*" How could any parent, especially "Christian", (II Peter 2:6-8) ever make such a suggestion?

Almost anyone would condemn Lot for offering his daughters to that perverted mob, no matter the custom that provoked it. But parents, including Christians, are doing the same thing today saying, "HERE, YOU CAN HAVE MY CHILDREN!!!! Customs, social, business, and peer pressure are more important than purity to the contemporary parent (Titus 1:15).

Parents sometimes allow their children to listen to any kind of godless music and view every kind of filth on the television screen. Every kind of immodest and inappropriate dress is allowed because it is stylish. Parents do not want to be too strict or called fanatics by either their children or their friends so there are few restraints concerning dates, friends, habits, entertainment, etc. Again and again their practice says, "HERE, YOU CAN HAVE MY CHILDREN!"

Fathers and mothers are too busy or detached to have family devotions and communication with their children. There is little desire or opportunity to manifest parental love in "training up a child in the way he should go" (Prov.

22:6). Many parents have no place in their family for a Bible believing church where salvation and holy living are taught. Some who do attend a good church will leave when they are offended at some Bible standard or strong message.

Modern day Lots are losing their wives and children to materialism and immorality. They prefer a well-watered plain that looks like Egypt (the world). They make decisions based on material gain and social custom instead of seeking first the kingdom of God. They choose a good place to water their cows, even if it destroys their children. They don't have the time, dedication, character, or the will to rear them for God.

Instead of, "HERE, YOU CAN HAVE MY CHILDREN," you could say, "Here LORD, take my children." God said of Abraham, "*For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD . . .*" (Gen. 18: 19). No wonder he is called the "*friend of God*" (James 2:23). Heb. 11 repeats three times, "*by faith Abraham . . .*". It is never said, "by faith Lot pitched his tent," or "by faith he sat in the gate." Abraham walked by faith, Lot by sight.

Abraham was a man of worship and prayer. Not even an altar of Lot is mentioned, and his only recorded prayer is, "*Let me escape*" (Gen. 19:20). How very different was Abraham, "*For he (Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*" (Heb. 11:10). Lot went to a city built by wicked men and destroyed by God.

Abraham could see the "*well watered plain*" as well as Lot, but with a "single eye" and purified affections, he let God

make his choice. Lot with “*double*” vision (James 1:8) tried to serve God and mammon and got a vexed soul and a vain life. They started together on their course but reached different goals. Abraham was favored and his family blessed because he chose, like Noah and Enoch, to walk with God instead of the wicked world's system. Lot was not content with the Lord and tried to find contentment in the world, but his nest was abruptly broken up and he lost his family.

Abraham taught Isaac in a tent away from the system, saying, "Here Lord, take my life and my children." The lines fell to him in pleasant places. Lot, in Sodom, taught his children saying, "HERE, TAKE MY CHILDREN!!!!" Who made the right choice? What choice will you make?

Hope For Our Nation

We are a part of the greatest nation on the face of the earth. From the California coast to the Georgia Coast you will find some of the most beautiful land that can be found anywhere in the world. Geographically we are in good shape, but spiritually speaking we have gone backward. What can we do? Where is the hope for our nation? It is in properly responding to this Bible verse—“*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land*” (2 Chron. 7:14).

I. What We Are To Do?

A. *Humble Ourselves*- The Bible says, “God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble” (I Pet. 5:5). The truly humble person realizes where God has brought him or her from, and adjusts their attitude accordingly. Those who are not humble, live their lives in the realm of self and the domination of “me-ism.” The Bible says, “Pride cometh before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”(Prov.16:18).

B. *Pray*- We go to God in dependence, asking Him to give us mercy from the judgment we deserve. If you read prior to 2 Chron. 7:14, the judgment of God was about to fall upon the people of Israel for their sins. America would be in worse shape than it is if there were not prayer warriors who can ring the bells of heaven and call down the help of God.

C. *Seek My Face*- The face indicates approval or disapproval. As a needy people, we should be so living our

lives that we will have the approval of God upon our lives and our nation. If we seek the Lord He can be found (Isa.55:6).

D. Turn From Our Wicked Ways- We should turn from **our** wicked ways, **our** acts and **our** attitudes that have offended God, and return to the God we have resisted or rebelled against. Sin is the biggest problem America faces today—the sins of greed, of pride, of lust, of waste, even among the people of God. “... judgment must begin at the house of God...” 1 Peter 4:17

II. What God Will Do

There are three things God promises if we respond properly.

A. He Will Hear From Heaven- If America needs anything today, it needs to hear from Heaven.

B. He Will Forgive Our Sin- We have a sin-forgiving God.

C. He Will Heal Our Land- America needs healing today. It is important who we have in political offices, but the ultimate healing in our land does not rest in one particular political party or individual. God is a healing God for our land and for its people.

Raising A Spoiled Brat!

This is an easy subject to discuss since there are so many parents doing this. One only has to observe and make a few notes. Here's some advice on raising a spoiled brat:

1. WHEN A BABY, DON'T LET HIM CRY IN BED

Do not allow YOUR baby to suffer any hardships, especially in infancy. Run to his aid as soon as he cries. He'll soon know how to control you, rather than you controlling him. This way, he will expect to be pampered all of his life.

2. LET HIM SAY "NO" TO YOU

It's so cute. Let that be his favorite word. Sure, it's rebellion verbalized, but he should be allowed to have a mind of his own.

3. DO NOT GIVE HIM ANY CHORES

Do it all for them. Then they'll think this world owes them a living.

4. NEVER SPANK HIM

When the senior citizens today speak of spanking as being "the way we used to do it," remember, grandma and grandpa were "child abusers."

5. ALWAYS TAKE HIS SIDE

Always take the child's side. Teachers and principals have got it "in" for the little angel. Understand that your child

can do no wrong.

6. CONDEMN LEADERS AND PREACHERS

You can't trust them. Tear down authority in front of them. Make sure they hear you. They'll live in insecurity not knowing who to trust.

7. NEVER TELL HIM "I LOVE YOU"

They can figure that out! After all, you've given them everything they've ever wanted. (Of course, don't give them yourself!)

8. GIVE HIM EVERYTHING HE WANT

Buy something for them every time you go into a store. Never say "no" to them.

9. NEVER TEACH HIM THE WORD OF GOD

Teach them math, science, history, art, music, reading, physical education, sex education, etc. but don't teach them the Bible. Let them decide for themselves. Make them go to school 5 days a week for all day, but don't take them to church on Sunday.

10. ALWAYS TRUST HIM

He's a little angel. He wouldn't dare do anything behind your back.

11. LET HIM COME AND GO AS HE WISHES

Don't set any boundaries. Brats don't need guidelines.

12. MAKE SURE HE IS POPULAR

They must be in with the crowd, their peers! Don't let them be an oddball.

13. LET HIM WATCH TV CONSTANTLY

Keep them away from reality. Let them live in fantasy all of their lives. Brats need entertainment! A life of comfort and ease produces high-class brats.

CONCLUSION - Brats are produced, not born. It takes effort to obey the above principles. Parents should prepare themselves for a life of heartbreak for it is sure to come.

In God We Trust?

“In God We Trust” is on our currency. The *“Pledge of Allegiance”* says, *“One nation under God.”* The *“Star-Spangled Banner”* reads, *“And this be our motto: In God is our trust.”* Do we really place our trust in God? Or have these words lost their meaning?

The Christian settlers of the 1600s established the foundational Bible beliefs that America was built upon. As the country began to grow, the early settlers’ Bible convictions made indelible impressions upon the colonial schools and local government. These brave men and women underwent extreme hardships, but they stood firmly in what they believed; they were truly *“In God We Trust”* pioneers. They not only trusted their souls to a living God, but they also trusted Him with their lives—many of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice. Their beliefs and values, especially the dependence they placed upon divine guidance, laid the foundation for what has become the greatest nation on earth.

From this group of God-fearing Christian explorers came the Founding Fathers of the eighteenth century. These men, especially the men of the second half of this century, wrote the greatest governance documents ever written by man—the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights—at a time when faith in God was placed in the Bible, prayer, and passionate Bible-believing pastors. According to history, more than 90 percent of the people living in the 13 colonies professed to be Bible-believing Christians. Sadly, most Americans today know little or nothing about the Christian men and women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was their Christian faith and dogged determination that built a nation with Christian values.

Since the Civil War, a slow, grinding influence of tolerance and humanism (dependence on man instead of God) has steadily shifted our nation's dependence on God to humanism. Humanism slowly displaced Judeo-Christian values and the teaching of America's Christian heritage that once prevailed in our nation's schools. For example, textbook revisionists rewrote American history textbooks, robbing our children of reading about their spiritual heritage and the heroes and heroines who settled and built America. If there is one thing humanists want to do, it is to keep public school students from learning about our Christian heritage.

Humanists are well-educated, intelligent people in prominent positions who are associated with institutions of higher learning, the judiciary system, and state and federal governments. Their liberal goals are open for the world to read in *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933) and in *Humanist Manifesto II* (1973).

Christian antagonists yell "foul" when they hear about someone praying or reading the Bible in a public school or at a school-

sponsored activity. "It's a violation of the First Amendment," they say, "to impose Christian beliefs and values on public school students"; yet these same people promote the "religion" of humanism (U.S. Supreme Court, 1961) in public school textbooks, public school classrooms, and secular teacher-preparatory colleges. The young teacher recruits graduating from secular colleges are prepared by their professors to carry forth the humanistic philosophy they learned in college.

Currently, the exercise of Christian beliefs in public

schools is regulated by law and strict policies. Specific boundaries have been set by federal and state courts, federal and state legislatures, and school district policies. These boundaries describe what school boards, administrators, teachers, and students can and cannot do in exercising their religious beliefs “at school” and “at school-sponsored extracurricular activities.” Where is “In God We Trust” in public schools today? The very mention of God welcomes a potential lawsuit. Our currency, “Pledge of Allegiance,” and “Star-Spangled Banner” scream loudly to anyone who will listen—“Why are you not trusting in God?”

Conversely, Christian schools are not controlled by court or legislative mandates. Christianity prevails in Christian schools, which means teachers can promote and teach students “In God We Trust,” and teach the Bible in every grade. And while doing this, every grade pursues a vigorous academic program. Students are instructed in Bible history and theology, and the relationship of the Bible to academic concepts presents truth in its purest form. Perhaps the words of the Apostle Paul best describe the “In God We Trust” philosophy embraced by Christian schools: “... in all things he [Jesus Christ] might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18).

The following four Biblical landmark truths state the distinguishing characteristics of Christian schools.

1. Creationism is taught in Christian schools. Two worldviews explain the origin of the universe—Creation and evolution. Both views are based on pre-suppositional truths, that is, the assumption that certain events occurred. Public school textbooks teach evolution, which is the belief that man evolved from a lower form of life. On the other

hand, Christian schools teach the Genesis account of Creation. Both Creation and evolution have a religious base and require a believing faith. Creation advances theism, whereas evolution advances humanism.

2. The Bible is taught in Christian schools. America was birthed by people searching for religious freedom. The first settlers read and taught their children the Bible. Eventually, the colonies fought a war with England to gain the right to be free and to worship the God of the Bible. The Fathers of the American Revolution— Samuel Adams, John Adams, Paul Revere, George Washington, and others—believed the Bible and its teachings regarding government and education. The first schools in America taught the Bible. Today, Christian schools (like our Founding Fathers’ schools) revere the Bible and its teachings.

3. Prayer is a part of every school day. In Christian schools, prayer is an integral part of education. Wisdom is sought through prayer and Bible study. Teachers and school administrators pray daily for each other and for their students. Teachers encourage their students to make prayer a part of every day; students hear their classmates pray, and they hear them testify publically of answered prayers.

4. Jesus Christ is taught as the Savior of mankind in Christian schools. The only way depraved man can know God is through a personal relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ. This life-changing truth is taught in Bible class, and the gospel of Christ is preached and taught in chapel.

The above landmark truths were once proudly proclaimed in public schools, but today all these truths are forbidden. But in Christian schools, these landmark truths are still

heralded and held in high esteem by educators and pastors who revere the Bible, honor the Lord, and model Christian values. Do Christian school educators trust in God? Yes, they do. They are living examples of what our currency, Pledge of Allegiance, and national anthem say—“*In God We Trust.*”

Independence Day

This July 4th our nation celebrates another Independence Day. Today, it's called, '*Independence Day*', 'America's Birthday', or simply the '4th of July'. As a child it was a day for parades and fireworks. As an adult it is a day when I think of the freedoms that we all enjoy in this wonderful country. The founders of our nation considered Independence Day an important occasion for rejoicing too. John Adams said, "I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty."

With all the celebration, it would be wise to consider this – do we know *what* we're celebrating? Are we celebrating a mere document of history, *The Declaration of Independence*, or the real freedom we enjoy every day? It better be more than just a document because it includes men and women and the sacrifices they made to ensure that it was more than just a declaration, a pronouncement of independence – it was a reality.

The Declaration of Independence is a very brief document of 1,321 words. A person can read it in 10 to 15 minutes. In the text of the Declaration of Independence our Creator is mentioned twice in the beginning and he is also mentioned near the end. Faith in God produced that document. Faith in God launched this nation. And it will take faith in God to preserve this nation. The Ten Commandments are engraved in several places on our buildings and monuments in Washington, D.C. Our pledge of allegiance declares that we are one nation "under God." Our nation's motto, engraved on our currency, is "In God We Trust." Make no mistake about the God-honoring foundations upon which

this nation was built!

It is only proper that we commemorate our independence and liberty, but we must be aware that we should never take it for granted, and that it is always protected – especially on the home front. There are individuals and organizations today that are set on destroying America's foundations. Someone has said, "The enemy is inside our gates with its God-defying demolition crew that will go to any and all lengths in their quest to erase our God from our nation and from the pages of history."

Aren't you just as tired as I am of our public officials cowering to all of today's off-the-wall groups? This country was not founded by adherents of a false religion which promotes murder and mayhem. This country was not founded by atheists, or agnostics, or by so-called "New Agers," with their hodge-podge of far-out teachings. This nation was founded by folks who believed in the living God, and in Jesus Christ, the Saviour, and in the Word of God, the Bible.

So, what can we do as we celebrate Independence Day? We can remember and honor our Christian foundations. We can make sure that we are right with God, having repented of our sins and by faith having committed ourselves to the crucified, risen, and coming again Son of God. We can make sure that, by his grace and help, we are maintaining purity in our own personal lives. We can pray, for ourselves, our leaders, and others. Only then can we participate, dedicate, and celebrate our Independence Day the right way!

Islam – Peace and Tolerance?

Many believe that Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance. **It is not!** It is far from anything of the sort. Surely you recall that all of the 19 terrorists who attacked America on September 11 were devout Muslims acting "*in the name of Allah.*" You are aware that faithful followers of Islam conduct the "suicide/homicide" bombings regularly against Israel.

Is it "*peace and tolerance*" when one either confesses that "*There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet*" or lose his head? Is it "*peace and tolerance*" when there are more revolutions, assassinations and terrorism in Muslim countries than in all the rest of the world, Muslim against Muslim? Is it "*peace and tolerance*" when Muhammad said, "*He who relinquishes his faith, kill him*"? Or when in Saudi Arabia only a Muslim may be a citizen; no non-Muslim place of worship may be built, and non-Islamic worship is forbidden, even in the sanctity of one's home? Or when everyone says Islam is peace and yet we "American infidels" must fight wars to obtain it for the Muslims? Our soldiers in Afghanistan are fighting to bring peace among warring Muslim factions.

Everyone in the public eye is appealing for tolerance toward Muslims in this country. That's fine. This is a free country and they have the right to believe anything they want. They have the freedom in this country to worship according to the dictates of their own consciences. But, neighbor, you can be sure they will not allow that same freedom to others. No one wants to mention the oppression and slaughter of non-Muslims in Muslim countries. Isn't it time someone did?

Isn't it time someone said, "That's enough, tell the truth. Islam is a religion of hate, war, and intolerance." Many think this but are afraid to say so for fear of appearing "politically incorrect" if they do. Don't be deceived by the peaceful face Islam currently shows in America. Is it "*peace and tolerance*"? You decide!

The New Age Cult

The New Age philosophy that has become so widespread over the last 30 years is as old as its ancient Hindu roots. In fact it even dates back to the time of Moses. Even though it may be clothed in a different garment, to the point of exchanging Indian robes for a respectable business suit, it is still an abomination to the Lord. (Deut. 18:9-14).

The subtle deception is managed through the field of medicine, education, entertainment, and even religion. New Age practices like encounter groups, channeling, meditation, visualization, and crystal therapy are just a few ways of hiding the cultic and horrid nature of the movement itself.

A careful study of the New Age movement will easily reveal its true nature. It is a movement that espouses such blasphemies as:

- Man is God (Shirley Maclaine, *Dancing in the Light*)
- No Sin (Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*)
- No Good or Evil (Maclaine, *Dancing in the Light*)
- All Things are One (Capra, *The Turning Point*)

This list is by no means exhaustive. The list of errors could go on for several pages of newsprint. The New Age movement is not so new as it would have you believe. Sin is still sin, false religion is still false religion, and a lie from Satan is still a lie from Satan. Satan is still up to his old tricks as he was in the Garden of Eden. He still suggests that man can be his own “god” and decide for himself what commands from God he will or will not obey (Gen. 3:1-7).

Christians must be careful in unconsciously being involved

in what seems to be non-religious activities because of Satan's new packaging. He has continued to remain a master of deception since the beginning of time. He is still in the deceiving business and getting many followers today. He does not care if you follow him under the guise of a "new" religion just so long as you follow him. He will be worshipped under any name, any religion, and any philosophy - it does not matter to him. He only wants to be certain that people do not trust, follow, or believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Please do not allow the trends of today in regard to religion to cause you to trust in a false gospel, a false Saviour, nor a false God. The Scripture says, "*And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house*" (Acts 16:31) and "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). These are some of the clearest statements that can be found anywhere in the Word of God setting forth the one way of salvation. Only Christ can save, for He both created and sustains all things. He Himself has made this plain (John 14:6). As offensive as such a truth may be to non-Christians and New Agers, we must continually make it clear for everyone, for without the Lord Jesus Christ they are lost and bound for Hell.

Saints And Sinners

“Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth” (Job 40:3,4).

It is remarkable how the saintliest of men often confess to being the worst of sinners. The patriarch Job was said by God Himself to be *“a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil”* (Job 1:8). Yet, when Job saw God, he could only say, *“Behold, I am vile.”*

And consider Abraham, who is called *“the father of all them that believe”* (Romans 4:1 1). When he presumed to talk to God, however, Abraham said that he was *“but dust and ashes”* (Genesis 18:27).

David, *“the sweet psalmist of Israel”* (11 Samuel 23-1), and *“a man after [God’s] own heart”* (I Samuel 13:14), said: *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me”* (Psalm 51:5). Isaiah, the greatest of the prophets, testified when he came into God’s presence: *“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips”* (Isaiah 6:5).

The angel recognized Daniel the prophet as *“a man greatly beloved”* by God (Daniel 10: 1 1). Yet, when Daniel saw God, he fell on his face, and said: *“My comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength”* (Daniel 10:8).

In the New Testament, the Apostle Peter said: *“I am a sinful man, O Lord”* (Luke 5:8), and Paul called himself the chief of sinners (I Timothy 1:15). God dwells *“in the light which no man can approach unto”* (I Timothy 6:16).

The closer one comes to the Lord, the more clearly one sees his own sinfulness and the more wonderful becomes God's amazing grace. No one who is satisfied with his or her own state of holiness has yet come to know the Lord in **His** state of holiness! None dare face the Lord except by His grace, through the mediator, Jesus Christ.

The Sin of Covetousness

Covetousness is a terrible sin, a vice of a very degrading kind, and this makes it all the more surprising that those who have a renewed nature, and in whom the Spirit of God dwells, should require a warning against bowing down their souls before it, and yet...once and again the saints are warned against “*covetousness, which is idolatry.*” (Col. 3:5).” As long as Israel was in the wilderness she was not out of danger from the golden calf. The best of saints may be betrayed into the basest of sins.... the sin of covetousness.

Apparently this is a very hard lesson for Christians to learn, especially in lands and times of affluence. The frequency of Biblical warnings about this sin may indicate its seriousness. Note, for example, such Scriptures as Exodus 20:17; Matthew 6:19-34; Acts 5:1-10; Romans 14:17; Ephesians 5:5; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; and James 5:1-4.

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have...” (Heb 13:5). It is deeply humiliating that the best of Christians should need to be cautioned against the worst of sins. It appears from this verse that the children of God need also to be exhorted to cherish that most simple and natural of virtues-**contentment.**

C. H. Spurgeon, often called the prince of preachers, once said, “The best of men are only men at best. Unless the grace of God keeps us every moment, and defends us from the temptations of our many foes, we would utterly perish from the way.” How true this is especially in regard to the sin of covetousness.

Standing Alone

It is human to stand with the crowd; it is divine to stand alone. It is man-like to follow the people, to drift with the tide; it is God-like to follow a principle, to stem the tide.

It is natural to compromise conscience and follow the social and religious fashion for the sake of gain or pleasure; it is divine to sacrifice both on the altar of truth and duty.

“No man stood with me, but all men forsook me” (2 Timothy 4:16) wrote the battle-scarred apostle in describing his appearance before a civil court to answer for his life of believing and teaching contrary to the Roman world. God’s absolute, revealed Truth has been out of fashion since man changed his robe of fadeless light for a garment of faded leaves.

Noah built and voyaged alone. His neighbors laughed at his strangeness and perished in style. Abraham wandered and worshipped alone. Sodomites smiled at the simple shepherd, followed the world’s fashion, and fed the flames. Daniel dined and prayed alone. Elijah sacrificed and witnessed alone. Jeremiah prophesied and wept alone. Jesus loved and died alone.

Speaking of the lonely way His disciples should walk, the Lord Jesus said, *“Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”* Matthew 7:14.

Of their treatment by the many who walk in the broad way, He said, *“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, . . . therefore the world hateth you.”* John 15:19.

The redeemed children of Israel in the wilderness praised Abraham and persecuted Moses. The people of God in the days of the kings praised Moses and persecuted the prophets. The court of Caiphias, the high priest, praised the prophets and persecuted Jesus.

And multitudes now, both in the church and the world, applaud the courage and fortitude of the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and martyrs, but condemn as stubbornness or foolishness the same faithfulness in standing for truth today.

Wanted, today, men and women, young and old, who will obey their convictions of truth and duty at the cost of fortune and friends and life itself.

“Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.” Heb.13: 12,13.

The Timeless Word of God

All scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). The obvious reference is to the words. The words of the Bible are themselves God-breathed. Some would tell us that the words are not necessarily inspired, only the thoughts. I am not a scholar, nor a great theologian, but no one has ever explained to me how it is possible to have thoughts without words. Have you ever tried to have thoughts without words? What kind of thoughts would you have? Were words involved? How would you explain or express yourself to others about those thoughts unless you had words? Wouldn't they have to be the right words? If not, isn't there a great danger in being misunderstood?

However, if you had the thoughts AND actually chose the exact words you wanted, wouldn't that make certain that you got your message across to others. The Bible states in 1 Corinthians 2:13, "*Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth...*" This is a claim that the words themselves are taught by the Holy Spirit. Where can you find the very words the Holy Ghost teaches? Are they in a Book? Where is that Book? Do you have a copy? Does your pastor have a copy? "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*" (Matthew 24:35).

Dr. Henry Morris, founder - *Creation Research Institute*, wrote, '*The only physical entity in this physical universe which is not subject to the law of disintegration is the written Word of God*'. When everything and everyone has passed from the scene, the timeless Word will remain. God speaks of the eternal origin and duration of His Word "*For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven*" (Psalms 119:89).

Times of Trouble

“But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.” II Chronicles 15:1-7:

Are you going through a time of trouble? Don't waste it. Use it as a time of seeking the Lord. Decide to come out of this valley a stronger Christian.

You've heard the saying: "If you get a lemon, make lemonade." That is, find some way to make use of your difficulties. If the devil attacks you, use that time of trouble to deepen your Christian life. Spend more time reading your Bible. Pray more fervently. Lean harder on Jesus. Confess every known sin. Examine your thought life. Be sure there's nothing between your soul and your Saviour. When you take this approach to trouble, you not only spoil Satan's purpose, you make his attack a springboard for blessings. And don't forget to pray for others who are going through trouble. Wava Campbell has written:

*"He went into the valley, And I quickly went to prayer
To walk the valley with my friend, For I saw him heading there.
He cried out when he stumbled, For he was wounded sore;
I bled before the throne of God Because my heart, it tore.
He came out of the valley With sunshine on his face;
A truer and a wiser man For being in that place. "*

Never be afraid to turn to Jesus during times of trouble. Don't think of your cry for help as an evidence of foxhole religion. God knows our hearts and we do not have to impress Him. He has filled the Bible with promises for troubled people just like us. He's waiting for your call!

True Thankfulness

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving Let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6)

One of the ways the Lord describes the people of the last days is as unthankful, unholy, and without natural affection (2 Tim. 3:1-5). This is the result of a heart out of tune with heaven and out of fellowship with the Lord.

Un-thankfulness is a great sin and will bring a fatal sickness to the soul, but thankfulness is the attitude of a soul in touch with God. True Thankfulness:

1. GENERATES HOLINESS

The thankful person always directs his thanks in the correct direction. This brings his heart to the source of the things he is thankful for, and this always brings a person to the Lord, because all good gifts come down from above (see James 1:17). It is our Heavenly Father who feeds us, clothes us, gives us health, and watches out for our every need. As we learn to look up and thank God in every thing, we spend much time In His presence. As we behold Him in His holiness, we become more like Him, and this produces holiness in us. Give thanks unto the Lord.

2. GENERATES HEALTHINESS

The unthankful person is never really satisfied. Rather, he is like a ship without anchor - - loose on a troubled sea, and tossed and driven by storms of greed and selfishness. He never seems to have enough, and this restlessness produces high blood pressure, ulcers, heart trouble, and many more

health problems, which thankfulness could prevent and possibly cure. Giving thanks unto the Lord is healthy.

3. GENERATES HAPPINESS

The thankful person is a happy person. It is impossible to be thankful and to be unhappy. Thankfulness never registers a complaint. While there may still be desires and needs, they are simply brought to the Father as requests in prayer, and the thankful person accepts the will of God and waits patiently for God to do what is right. The thankful person fully trusts the Lord and casts all his cares upon Him. "*Happy is that people ... whose God is the Lord*" (Psa. 144:15).

Watch Out For Satan

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (I Peter 5:8,9). The devil is far more powerful and intelligent (as well as subtle and seductive in his malevolent purposes) than any combination of human enemies we could ever face, and we would be utterly unable to defeat him with our own human resources. Yet God’s word makes it plain that we are neither to yield to him nor flee from him. Instead, the admonition is: *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”* (James 4:7).

But how can we resist such an enemy? As in our text, we must constantly maintain sobriety and vigilance against his enticements, careful to remain *“steadfast in the faith.”* Otherwise, the pressures to which we are subjected daily could quickly persuade us to compromise the faith, or even to depart from the faith. We are commanded not to yield and not to compromise. Instead we must “put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” We have *“the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the [wicked one],”* and also *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”* (Ephesians 6:11,16,17).

This mighty sword with which we can make Satan flee from us is literally “the saying of God” – that is, an appropriate individual word from the complete word of God. This was the instrument with which the Lord Jesus resisted the devil, parrying each temptation with thrust of Scripture. The result then-as us also-was that the devil *“departed from him”* (Luke 4:13).

Worldviews For Your Child To Know

The significance of worldview cannot be overstated. To provide a Christian education you need to have a Christian philosophy. Philosophy is the way of looking at our experience in the world, hence a worldview. What your child needs to know depends on your worldview.

Let me repeat, your worldview not the state's worldview, not your mother-in-law's view, not the neighbor's view and not Aunt Susie's view from her support groups

Everyone has a worldview. You may not have written it down, but you have one. Your worldview is what determines your values. It sorts out what is important from what is not.

Walsh and Middleton in Transforming a Vision suggest there are four questions that identify a person's worldview.

Four Questions

1. Who am I?
2. Where am I?
3. What is wrong? Why am I often frustrated, disappointed and defeated?
4. How can it be fixed? How can I solve my problems and satisfy my desires?

The answers will vary depending upon who you ask, but the basic answers are:

Questions:

First Answer (Western Worldview Taught in America's State Schools)

Second Answer (Christian Worldview)

1. Who am I?

I am a human being, an accident. My species evolved from a monkey.

I am a human being created by an awesome, wonderful, loving God. He specially put me here for a specific reason.

2. Where am I?

I am on earth, a planet that just happened by accident. The accident is called "The Big Bang."

I am on the earth created by God. This earth is so marvelously created that if it were hung in the universe, one inch more or less, that this earth would not be in existence.

3. What is wrong? Why am I often frustrated, disappointed and defeated?

There is a lack of education and a lack of money, therefore people are frustrated, disappointed and defeated.

Sin. Our disobedience to God. When sin entered the world it broke our relationship with God, our creator. We need our relationship with God restored.

4. How can it be fixed? How can I solve problems and satisfy my desires?

By getting more money by getting more education.

Jesus Christ, God only begotten Son, came into the world in human form and gave His Life as a sacrifice for our sins. Accepting His sacrifice and making Him Lord of our life!

Those who do not believe in God, have to find another way to explain the universe. Humanism, for example, is a worldview that states that the universe is centered upon man and his achievements. Marxism is a worldview that believes in the inevitability of class struggle based on economic factors.

Major world religions are based upon worldviews. Hinduism is a worldview based upon many deities, and endless life-death cycle and inevitability of human suffering. Islam, on the other hand, is a religion of martyrdom, conquests by force, and police state modesty. Thus to understand any of these movements and religions, we must understand the worldview they are founded upon.

A secular worldview does not value human life. If all a child has ever been taught is that we are all accidents, is it really so unusual that there are so many abortions, murders and suicides?

Let's look at the answers from a Christian worldview.

What value does a Christian place on life? On education? On material gain? The public system teaches for a secular worldview. Children are taught that the answers to all life's problems are money and education. Much of this

philosophy has crept into the church. So much so, that many Christians value education to the extent that they choose a “good education” over God’s command to “be not unequally yoked.” Or they choose curriculum because it is equivalent to the academic requirements of a traditional education.

Developing a Christian worldview is of extreme importance in order to advance Christ’s kingdom as false systems collapse under their own corrupted weight. One reason for the decline of Christianity in western culture is the lack of a biblically based worldview. Instead the cultural worldview of materialism, selfishness and greed has become the predominant vision.

In education, a Christian worldview seeks knowledge, wisdom and understanding as outlined by God’s Word. A secular worldview focus gives little or no thought to character, morals and values.

Thus if we were to properly understand the role of worldview, we would understand it as a set of rules that reside at the very core of our being. If our set of values is earthly, carnal and debased, then our actions will reflect such deterioration. However, a change in this set of values will bring a change in our actions. If we are taught a biblically based worldview, radical change will take place. Believers the world over will experience revival and evangelism will become more effective than ever.

Whose Voice Are You Listening To

People often ask, “How do I know if I’m hearing from God or from Satan?” This is a legitimate question because the enemy of our souls also attempts to speak to us. We know from Jesus’ temptation experience in the wilderness that Satan will try many tricks to convince us to listen to him instead of to God. (Matthew 4:1-11.)

We must be on the alert continually to make certain that the voice we listen to is God’s voice. In Matthew 16: 21-23, Peter, a follower of Jesus from virtually the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry, was likened to Satan himself. We need to recognize that sometimes Satan’s voice comes to us not in our thoughts and imaginations, but through the words of other people, some of whom may seem to be well intentioned or say they love us. The Bible assures us that there is a way to tell Satan’s voice from that of our Lord.

Proverbs 24:6 - *“For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counselors there is safety.”* We are to seek godly counsel and to hear from people who truly love the Lord and who are firmly grounded in His Word. When we seek counsel from others, we must seek out people who are knowledgeable in their field, but in addition to that, they should be:

- 1.Counselors who have no ulterior motive over our lives
- 2.Counselors who are eager to hear from God and are eager for us to hear from God
- 3.Counselors who base their opinions on the Word of God and are eager for us to check their advice against the advice of the Bible.

If your counselor lacks these traits, find a new counselor!

The Wrong Words

Dirty words are fast becoming a part of today's vocabulary. Terms that were unheard of outside the locker room are now being seen on T-shirts, bumper stickers, and even brought into our homes. Although it's disturbing enough to hear non-Christian people use these words, we should not be that surprised. The Spirit of God does not live in them, and they are not guided by the Word of God.

What's worse is that so-called Christian folks are using the same words. The swearing and impure language of the street can be found coming from the mouth of God's people. Children today, boys and girls - some younger than their teens, can be heard using foul language that would turn one's stomach. Much of this comes from network TV, indecent movies and the Internet, not to mention the filth that some kids are allowed to listen to in their music. Some parents are "*crippled too high for crutches*" that let their children listen to garbage that offers up filthy four letter words and sexual innuendos.

"*What's the big deal?*" some ask. The big deal is God's disapproval. His Word says:

- 1.Psa 34:13 *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.*
- 2.Eph 4:29 *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,..."*
- 3.Col 3:8 *"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."*
- 4.James 3:10 *"Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."*

We might not be able to do much about the language that the lost world uses, but we who love the Lord must not stoop to the language of the gutter. Someone has appropriately said, “***A foul mouth is the mark of a polluted soul.***”

The Death Penalty

In recent days much has been said about the Death Penalty, especially in light of the Timothy McVeigh execution. The Death Penalty has many critics and yet, from a Biblical perspective, I would encourage you to support it. Here's why:

First Mention

As early as the 9th chapter of Genesis, God said: "*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SHED: for in the image of God made he man.*" (9:6). Believe it or not, this was the first order God ever gave concerning the institution of human governments. Think about that!

When God Gave The Law

The Lord really began to get specific concerning moral principles governed by law as he dealt with the nation of Israel through His man, Moses. Yes, God legislated morality! It's humorous to hear people parrot the lie, "*You can't legislate morality.*" Folks, the reason you can't steal from a bank is because we have legislated morality. The reason you must wear clothes in public is because we have legislated morality. The reason you can't shoot your neighbor is because we have legislated morality. The reason you can't rape a woman is because we have legislated morality, etc., etc., etc. Strange- most laws in one way or another have to do with the legislating of morality.

There are over 40 references in the first 5 books of the Bible (The Law) to when the death penalty should be enforced, and various reasons for it, including murder. Here

are a few examples of God's instruction to Israel through Moses: Exodus 21:12, "*He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.*" Numbers 35:16-18 states three times "... *the murderer shall surely be put to death.*" Numbers 35:30, "*Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses...*"

What About The 6th Commandment?

Pacifists and "bleeding heart" liberals love to quote the 6th of the 10 Commandments, "*Thou shalt not kill,*" to try and correlate their position with Christianity. Christianity, however, is NOT a namby-pamby, lovey-dovey, you can do whatever you want, God will pat you on the head and say - "*It's Okay*" religion.

"*Thou shalt not kill*" means "*Thou shalt do no murder.*" This is not changing the text, because this is the way Jesus Christ Himself interpreted it in Matthew 19:18. The Lord is allowed to freely quote Himself! To say the 6th commandment applies to capital punishment is to load the Bible with contradictions! Some 40 of them at least! That's insensible hermeneutics (Bible interpretation). Jesus was speaking of premeditated, cold-blooded murder of an innocent victim.

The Purpose Of Government

The New Testament also addresses this subject in Romans 13:1-4. Note that Romans 13:4 supports the concept of using "*the sword*" by government when necessary. This would confirm the principle of justified capital punishment first established in Genesis 9:6, as well as the concept of warfare when justified.

A Great Deterrent To Crime

God's laws of justice require "*diligent inquisition*" (Deuteronomy 19:18) to ensure that no one is punished unjustly. The guilty however must be punished, and the severity of capital punishment serves an important purpose for a society. What is that purpose? To deter future crimes. Proof of this, God's wisdom, is found in Deut. 19:20, "*And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.*"

There you have it! The death penalty does deter crime in two ways:

The criminal will never commit the crime again. (Obviously)

Those that hear of the sentence will fear to commit the same crime (Regardless of what the media claims).

The death penalty is a sensible path to ensure peace and safety in a society, where criminals are punished, not innocent people and their families.

Friend, you have a Death Penalty hanging over you but Christ died for your sins. Paid your death penalty for you. Took your place. He was your Substitute. Don't waste his sacrifice by refusing Him as your Savior. Only through Him can your record be clean and your death penalty absolved. Ask Him to save you from your sins and come into your heart and life as your personal Lord and Savior today!

Every Word – Dictated?

When reading the Scriptures, you may well come across the following verses that tell how God inspired His Word: “*The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and **his word was in my tongue***” (2 Samuel 23:2). God simply spoke the words through human writers, “*Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, **I have put my words in thy mouth***” (Jeremiah 1:9). Jeremiah makes the explicit claim that his words were verbally inspired by God.

On occasion God gave His words to men who then dictated those words to another person to write. “*And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, **How didst thou write all these words at his [Jeremiah’s] mouth? Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book***” (Jeremiah 36:17, 18). Baruch acted as Jeremiah’s secretary and wrote what God had dictated to Jeremiah. The Apostle Paul dictated to Tertius the words of the Book of Romans, (Romans 16:22). Tertius evidently acted as Paul’s secretary as he dictated the epistle. Paul was apparently almost blind (Galatians 4:13-15), therefore he needed someone to render this service.

Bible-believing theologians such as Calvin, Warfield, Spurgeon, Gray, Sorenson, B. B. Carroll, and D. A. Fuller referred to *dictation* as the means by which God gave the words to the writers of Scripture. They had a strong Biblical basis for using the term *dictation* when referring to verbal inspiration, for God gave the very words of the Bible. Jesus Himself said, “*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*” (Matthew 4:4).

Where Do I Go From Here?

Graduation is always a mixed bag of excitement over what has been accomplished in your life and the excitement, fear and wonderment at what lies ahead.

Exodus 14:15 *“And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:”* Moses had finally graduated from being a shepherd on the back side of the desert to being the emancipator of the nation of Israel. The children of Israel had graduated from the bondage and slavery they were under with the Egyptians to now being a free people for the first time in their lives. The question for both Moses and the nation was, *“Where do I go from here?”* You see, obtaining something is just a small part of the package, what to do with it after you get it is another thing all together.

God’s message for Moses and the people of Israel was, “Go forward!” There will be obstacles, troubles, and trials, but “Go forward!” There will be defeats and victories, but “Go forward!” There will be burdens and blessings, but “Go forward!” There will be all the things that life may hold for you, both good and bad, but “Go forward!”

Upon graduation, you will get your diploma. What will you do with it? Use it as a stepping-stone and not the end of the road. Much more awaits you as you set goals, accomplish them, and aspire to achieve success. Enjoy this time in life, pray for God’s guidance, listen to godly counsel, obey His Word, but “Go forward!”

