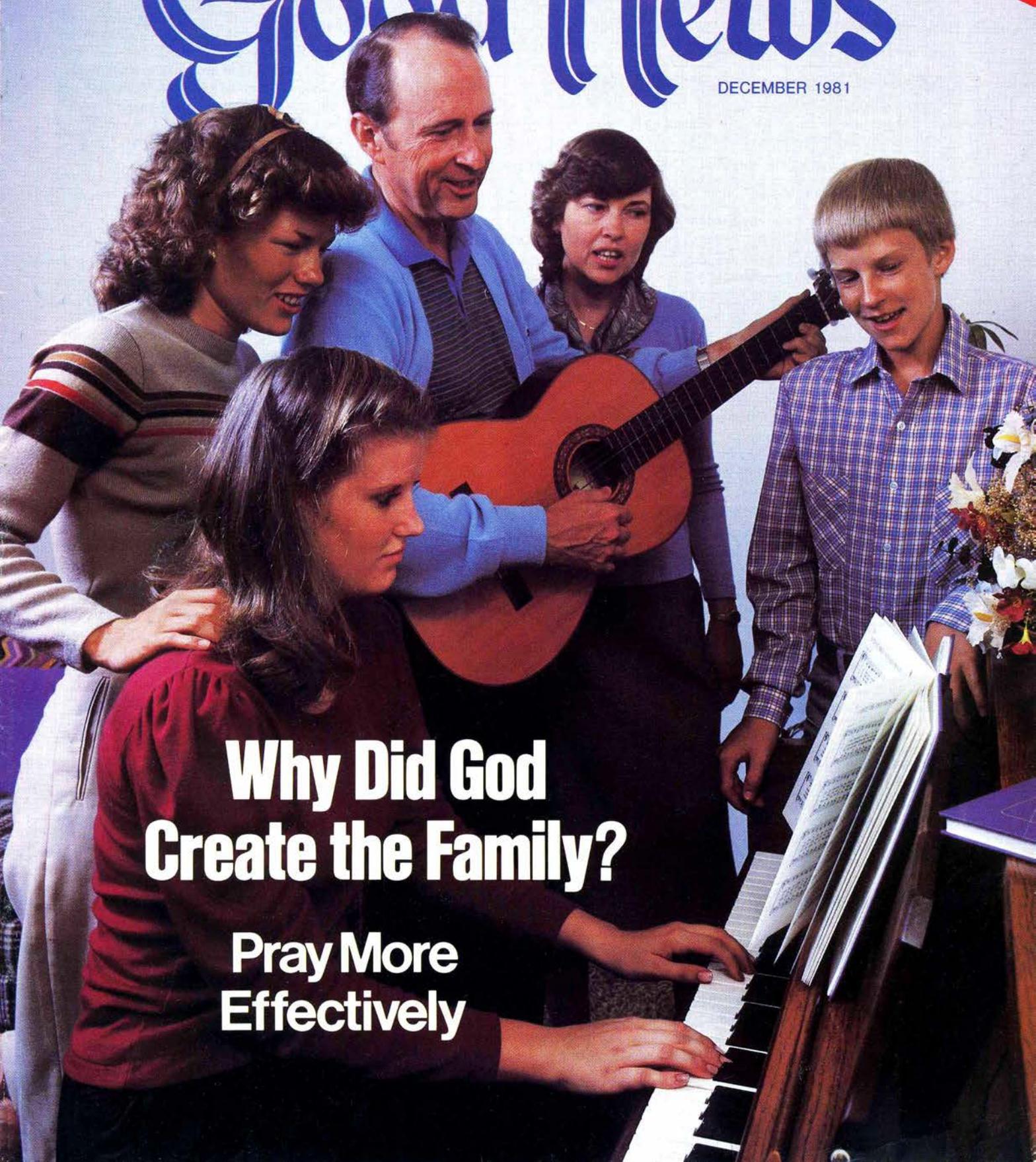


The

# Good News

DECEMBER 1981

Page 6  
The Church  
They Couldn't Destroy



## Why Did God Create the Family?

Pray More  
Effectively

# The Good News

December 1981

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**COVER:** Couldn't mankind get along without the family relationship? Couldn't God have given man another way to live? Read about the importance of the family — a God-ordained institution — in "Why Did God Create the Family Relationship?", beginning on page 14. Photo by Warren Watson.

## Letters

### "Personal" hit home

The "Personal" in the August issue of *The Good News* was and is a message of great power and strength for this end time, which God used you to write to the flock. It hit home good and hard. May we the flock be doers and not hearers only.

Dwayne E. Lewellen  
Simi Valley, Calif.

### Nonmember mates

Thank you, thank you for the fine article in the August, 1981, *Good News* on "Living Abundantly with Nonmember Mates."

Sometimes we spiritual widows feel as if we are walking on a tightrope, never quite sure with which step we will fall. It is as if we are or have split personalities — one way with the brethren and another with our mates. We long to share every bit of every service with our mates but know this is impossible.

Each of us truly needs an abundant supply of wisdom to be able to apply the knowledge we have received as we live with our husbands.

Member  
Southern United States

### Easy to deceive ourselves

Just a note of thanks for all of the wonderfully inspiring and uplifting articles in the August *Good News*. I especially enjoyed the article entitled "Stay Out of the Gray Areas!" by John Halford. It's so easy to deceive ourselves, and our adversary the devil truly is as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour.

Sally Green  
Pasco, Wash.

### Watching world events

The article "How to Better Watch World Events" by Mr. [Gene] Hogberg [August] was great. It's been sorely needed. Today we are bombarded by an ever-increasing variety of magazines, newspapers and newsletters, all claiming to give information we need to be well informed. It would be impossible to read even a fraction of these; Mr. Hogberg has shed some light amidst confusion.

I especially enjoyed the section on TV "journalism." While the networks do a creditable job considering the restraints they must operate under, I've long felt that local news coverage on TV is mostly show-biz fluff.

Mike Kelley  
Birmingham, Ala.



**S**OME OF our readers of *The Good News* are unemployed right now. Others may be in danger of losing their jobs.

And yet employers are even now hiring many thousands every month. Someone must replace those who retire, quit, die or are fired. Of course, new jobs constantly open as businesses expand, communities grow, buildings are built and people buy more goods.

Who will obtain these jobs depends on certain basic, unseen laws. There are certain economic laws that regulate economic conditions.

I remember vividly the sudden, nose-dive depression of 1920. I was then a publishers' representative in Chicago, Ill. I was a member of the Chicago Association of Commerce, through its Advertising Club division.

In early January that year, at the regular, midweek Association of Commerce luncheon in the Cameo Room of the Morrison Hotel, the noted business analyst Roger Babson was the speaker.

He warned the businessmen of Chicago that within less than a year we were going to crash into the most drastic economic depression our generation had seen.

I noticed some important bankers and security brokers smile knowingly in disagreement. They were sure Mr. Babson was wrong.

A year later Mr. Babson was again the speaker at the same association luncheon.

"I saw some of you businessmen smile, a year ago, when I warned you of the coming economic tragedy," he said. "Now let me tell you WHY I knew what was coming, and you didn't.

"When you want to know what is

the temperature in the room, now, you look at the thermometer on the wall. But if you want to know what the temperature *will be*, an hour or two from now, the thermometer can't tell you. You go down to the boiler room, or consult the U.S. weather prophet.

"You look to the factors that *determine* conditions, not the thermometer that records conditions after they have occurred. You gentlemen looked at charts of current business activity, at bank clearings, records of freight car loadings, the stock market quotations — the thermometers on the wall.

"But," he continued, "there are LAWS that *govern* economic conditions. These laws are the factors which determine what conditions *will be*, a few months or a year from now. They are the CAUSES."

**How YOUR FUTURE is determined**

Yes, and *your own personal* economic future is determined by definite LAWS!

Very few realize that the eternal Creator set in motion invisible yet inexorable LAWS, which regulate personal financial conditions!

In my 50 years in God's ministry, I have seen these laws *actually work* in the experiences of many people whom I have known personally. I have experienced their relentless working *in my own life!* I had to learn this lesson *the hard way*, myself!

I have often mentioned on the air and in articles how God struck me down, not physically, but *economically*, to bring me to Him.

That very depression of 1920 destroyed my business in which I was making the equivalent of \$175,000 a year in today's money. Everything I touched turned, *not* to gold, like King Midas, but to loss of

and lack of money. It was in poverty and hunger that God actually *conquered* me, and turned me to HIM, giving my life to HIM, more than 50 years ago.

But even after conversion — even after my ordination as a minister of Jesus Christ in 1931 — our family was still on the economic rocks. I had begun to learn something about God's law of tithing as a Bible *doctrine*. I had studied it in the Bible. I had learned — seen **PROVED** — that this law was still in effect.

Yet, in those early years, it didn't seem to apply to *me*. I had seen it as a doctrine to accept as true — *not* as a LAW that I, personally, must OBEY.

How many of YOU are right now like I was then?

For a few months I had been receiving a salary of \$20 per week as a minister, holding evangelistic campaigns. We had been able to live, very modestly, on that. But at the end of November that year, the salary was cut off. The Church conference treasury was empty! I *had* learned the lesson of FAITH. I trusted God implicitly to *supply every need*, as He has promised (Phil. 4:19). But I didn't yet realize how much we must "TRY the spirits *whether* they are of God" (I John 4:1).

So when a former newspaper associate came to me with an urgent request that I join him, as advertising manager of a new morning newspaper he was starting, I *assumed*, foolishly and without making sure this offer was caused by GOD, that it was the answer to my petition to supply our financial need.

I had not yet learned, as I was to learn later, how to launch out in God's Work *on faith*, knowing that God had called me. Of course, many try to launch *themselves* into God's ministry when GOD NEVER CALLED THEM. They are making a bigger mis-

take than I made in turning back to the advertising profession. In my case God had called me *from* the advertising profession into HIS WORK. He had ordained me, *put* me into His ministry. I had "put my hand to the plow," but did not realize Jesus' command never to turn back.

Of course I did not turn back from the Christian life — nor, for that matter, even consider for a minute that I was turning back from the ministry. I regarded this as only a *temporary* job. I thought God had sent it, to supply this need temporarily. I actually accepted the job on the condition that it was to last three weeks only, fully expecting the way would open to be back in the ministry within three weeks.

But, once on this newspaper job, there was no quitting. God did not open the way to get back into His ministry until a year and three months had passed — during which time I had realized my mistake and prayed earnestly to be released from the newspaper job and restored to God's Work. God let me learn the lesson, *by experience*, that His instruction to ministers, "Preach the word; *be instant* in season, out of season" (II Tim. 4:2), meant "KEEP AT IT in season and out of season."

### How I learned the lesson

Once on this newspaper job, December, 1931 — in the midst of the Great Depression — there was no money to pay salaries. I had to work out a way of trading advertising for food, clothing, hotel and rooming-house accommodations for the 23 men on the staff.

We had frequently gone hungry before I was converted. Now we went hungry even more frequently.

Then one day, it dawned on my mind that we, ourselves, were actually breaking God's financial law by not tithing!

All of a sudden God made me see His financial law as something *personal* — not merely a doctrine to accept impersonally. It meant *ME!* That very day I took 10 percent of what we had — and it was not enough to buy food — added an offering and mailed it to the Church treasury.

That very afternoon food came for a completely adequate meal. I don't

remember how, but I do remember that *the very day* I REPENTED for not having accepted tithing as a *personal obligation*, instead of a mere doctrinal *argument*, THAT VERY DAY FOOD CAME!

God did not bring us immediate financial prosperity. For some years more, for our own good, we were forced to live in very poor economic circumstances. But *that very day* our financial condition started upward.

### Scores of friends, too

Since that time I have known of the experiences of scores of other people. It was only a short time after

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*Your own personal economic future is determined by definite LAWS! Very few realize that the eternal Creator set in motion invisible yet inexorable LAWS, which regulate personal financial conditions! . . . I have experienced their relentless working in my own life!*

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that experience that God opened the way to bring me back into His active ministry. By this time I had learned *that* lesson, too. I have never left God's service, and never shall, as long as God permits me to live.

It was some months later that the very man whom God sent with his truck to move us, together with what household furniture we had, back to the Willamette Valley in Oregon — where I was to start an evangelistic campaign in Salem — himself had an experience in tithing.

This young man already was tithing the *money* that he handled. He was a farmer, and suddenly realized that he was not selling his eggs, and had not been tithing them in any way. He brought us a tithe of all the eggs his hens had laid that day.

Believe it or not, that same day his hens went on an egg-laying spree. Yes, laugh if you will — those hens

cackled, too — it actually *happened*. It was the off-season for eggs. But that very day they began to lay more eggs than was normal in the best egg-laying season!

It seemed incredible — BUT IT HAPPENED!

I have given you the facts, before, of the well-driller who was unable to get any business in 1933. He began to tithe — one single dollar of the only \$10 he had. Next day a man who had owed him \$50 he never expected to collect came and paid it — and he tithed \$5. Immediately he began to get more wells to drill than he could handle.

Almost daily, *some* radio listener, reader of *The Good News* or co-worker in this great Work writes me a letter telling of a similar experience — beginning to pay God's honest TITHE, and beginning to PROSPER financially.

Now don't get the idea from this that in *every* case God is going to work some incredible miracle. Don't get the idea that if you TRY tithing, you are to expect some astounding thing to happen, or that you are going to fall heir to a million dollars the next day. Perhaps in most cases the increase in income is not immediately apparent at all.

But of this, you MAY BE SURE! Over the long haul, the 90 percent of income God allows you to keep for yourself will increase to *more* than the 100 percent formerly was. God PROMISES to bless and prosper the tither! God KEEPS His promises!

### There's a reason

God did not establish a binding LAW of tithing without a good REASON! Actually, there are many reasons. All of God's LAWS are for our GOOD.

Listen to God's Word to us: "Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, *that it may go well with thee*, and with thy children after thee for ever" (Deut. 12:28).

It is not *good* for a person to get *something for nothing*, or for very little effort. This evil human urge to GET without *giving* — to *receive* without *paying* — is the very thing in human nature that produces criminals.

ALL God's spiritual LAW may be  
(Continued on page 23)

# Pray More Effectively - Straight From the Heart!



*There are numerous keys to making prayer more effective, but one of the most important is simply praying from the heart.*

By Clayton Steep

**“W**hy doesn’t God do something?”

That question must have been asked by many in ancient Israel.

They saw things go from bad to worse in their personal lives and on the national level as well. The economy was sick. There was political corruption, crime, religious confusion, a constant threat from enemy nations — even the weather was not acting right.

**God answered** *Elijah’s heartfelt prayer, sending fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice on the altar (1 Kings 18:17-40).*

Yet God didn’t intervene to change things for the good.

Why?

“They have not cried unto me *with their heart*,” God declared (Hos. 7:14). Isaiah described the general lack of heartfelt prayer this way: “There is none that calleth upon thy name, that *stirreth up himself* to take hold of thee” (Isa. 64:7).

It’s no different today. Except when a real crisis strikes, most people in the world around us, if they pray at all, are accustomed to offering dull, empty, meaningless prayers.

Since they do not get results, it is little wonder many doubt God’s existence or at least admit they do not

know who He is. Finally they give up entirely on prayer. “What is the Almighty,” they ask, “that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?” (Job 21:15).

We in God’s Church know there is much profit in praying to the true

God. **Prayer changes things.** It can bring real peace of mind, divine guidance, deliverance from problems, healing, spiritual strength and countless other blessings.

**But for our prayers to be really effective, we must learn to put our hearts into them.**

How can we better do this?

## Having perseverance

**Just praying once about a matter and then “leaving it in God’s hands” may not always be enough. God may want you to prove your sincerity and your earnestness by praying more than once for whatever you need.**

Consider Elijah. He prayed that a severe 3½-year drought would be broken. Elijah went to the top of Mt. Carmel and “cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees” (1 Kings 18:42).

This was not a “sleepy-time prayer.” No “60 seconds of silent meditation” was this. Elijah was totally wrapped up in what he was doing — calling upon the almighty Creator of the heavens and earth, the One who controls the weather.

After praying, he sent his servant up to an elevated viewpoint to see whether any rain clouds were forming in the sky yet. “And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing” (verse 43). What if Elijah had said, at this juncture: “Well, I’ve prayed once about the matter. Now I’ll just wait, knowing that whatever happens will be for the good”? Would any rain have fallen on the parched land? It’s doubtful.

But that was not Elijah’s reaction. He prayed again. Once more his servant went to look for storm clouds. Nothing. Again Elijah prayed. And again. And again.

Seven times he petitioned God to

make it rain. Seven times his servant went to look. Then the answer came: A small cloud appeared and quickly grew until "the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain" (verse 45).

Are we to think such prayer was only for Elijah's day? No, for this very incident is mentioned by the apostle James as an example of how Christians ought to pray for one another (Jas. 5:16-18). James points out that Elijah was no superhuman. He "was a man subject to like passions as we are." But — and here is what made the difference — when he prayed, "he prayed earnestly" (verse 17).

Elijah's prayers got results. James assures Christians that theirs can, too — if they are fervent prayers, for the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (verse 16).

### Jesus tells how to pray

Persevering is an important part of praying fervently, as Jesus Himself instructed. One day, when He had finished praying, His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. Jesus first gave them His prayer outline (Luke 11:1-4). That told them what to pray about. But it didn't tell them how.

So Jesus immediately explained to them about the man who at midnight needed to borrow some food from his neighbor.

The man's first request got nothing. But he continued to seek, to ask and to knock. Finally the neighbor crawled out of bed and gave him the bread he wanted.

"I say unto you," Jesus commented to His disciples, "Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend [likewise, God does not always grant our requests merely because we are Christians — how we pray is a determining factor!], yet because of his importunity [persistence, urgency] he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask . . . seek . . . knock" (verses 8-9).

Again in Luke 18 Jesus stressed how we ought "always to pray and not lose heart" (verse 1, Revised Standard Version). In this case He told about the widow and the unjust judge who finally granted her request

because of her "continual coming" (verse 5).

And if an unjust judge would listen to a persistent widow, Jesus remarked, how much more surely will our heavenly Father respond to our needs? "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily" (verses 7-8).

As we have seen, Elijah had to pray seven times for rain. The Bible shows that Jesus prayed fervently three times that His cup of suffering would pass from Him if it was God's will (Matt. 26:36-47). The apostle Paul beseeched God three times about his "thorn in the flesh" (II Cor. 12:7-9).

While we may have to pray about some matters repeatedly, we should not assume that we always have to make a request more than once. The Scriptures contain numerous examples of miraculous answers that came after only one prayer was made.

If after we pray once about a problem, however, the problem persists and we still need deliverance, we should feel free to pray again, if it takes one time, three times, seven times — whatever it takes until we are no longer bothered by the problem — unless, of course, God should make it apparent, as He did to Paul, that we are going to have to live with the problem for the time being.

### God knows best

Importunity and persistence, it should be pointed out, do not mean nagging at God. They don't mean sounding like a stuck phonograph. They mean being close to Him and talking to Him from the heart.

They mean praying always or "without ceasing," as I Thessalonians 5:17 describes it, keeping constantly in touch with Him mentally in between periods spent in a private place or prayer closet.

Prayer does, in fact, require effort. But it is effort richly rewarded. It takes time to develop the right prayer habits.

Actually, if you are a Christian, a begotten child of God, your heavenly Father always answers your prayers. Many times the answer is an immediate "Yes."

Sometimes, however, the answer is

"Not yet," in which case God may want to see more effort put into seeking the answer or into getting ready and qualified to receive it.

There are also times when God's answer may be "No" — granting what is asked may just not be good for the people involved.

This helps to explain why God responds differently in situations that seem almost identical — why one family may have a child hit by a car and the child is miraculously healed, whereas another family has a child who is hit and killed.

Or why one Church member may be healed of cancer whereas another one dies. Or why the same person may sometimes be immediately healed of one sickness or disease, but not healed of another.

God knows the individual needs of each of us. He is more interested in building eternal character — His workmanship — in us than He is in giving us a smooth, effortless, problem-free existence in this temporary life.

If God always answered our prayers with an immediate "Yes," we would need no faith. It would just be automatic: We would pray and the request would be granted right away every time.

Neither would we need faith if God never granted our requests, never having promised to do so. We would have no reason to expect an answer, and none would come.

But — and this reflects some of God's great wisdom — by answering our prayers sometimes with an immediate "Yes," sometimes with a "Not yet" or "Wait" and sometimes with a "No," God puts us in a situation where we must exercise faith.

And, we should remember, even that faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8). The Holy Spirit strengthens us and leads us to have the spiritual conviction we need to overcome the trials of this life. We must maintain and strengthen our conviction that God always knows best, that His Work and truth stand fast.

Each of us has to decide that while we in our limited wisdom may not understand exactly why God allows a particular test to come upon us, we will say as Job did, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job

*(Continued on page 16)*

# Do You Send God 'JUNK MAIL'?

By John Halford

**"A**n important message for you!" the envelope blared.

It was addressed to "Mr. Haflod (or resident)." And there was a note to the post office telling them not to bother to return the letter in case of nondelivery.

It certainly didn't *seem* to be an important message. Whoever sent it got my name wrong and wasn't even interested in knowing if I received the "important message."

I put it with the rest of the day's "junk mail," intending to look at it later, and forgot all about it.

That's what usually happens to these "important messages" at our house — and at yours, too, probably. We are so inundated with "special offers," "supersavers" and "free" coupons that we hardly notice them anymore.

But, conversely, a hand-addressed envelope from someone we know always gets immediate and serious attention.

Did you ever think of your prayers as being like that?

They are important messages addressed to God. He gets thousands of them every day, from His people around the world.

But do we perhaps send God junk mail sometimes? James 5:16 tells us that the fervent prayers of righteous people obtain results. It follows, then, that *unfervent* prayers, even from righteous people, do not! And we all, from time to time, offer up "unfervent prayers."

## Prayers may lose impact

God's Church is made up of praying people. Most of us pray at least once a day — the day seems incomplete without prayer. We have built the prayer habit.

But therein lies a danger. Habits become routine and routine prayers can become filled with repetition and cliches.

Junk mail is full of cliches: "especially for you," "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," "unrepeatable offer." After you have been told a few dozen times that "you may have already won," the phrase loses its impact, right?

And so must our prayers lose impact in heaven if we mumble the

gets every around

same things in the same way day after day.

Christ warned against using vain repetition (Matt. 6:7). Most of us have long since abandoned the *thees* and *thys* and the standard litanies that pass as prayers in the churches of this world.

But is there really that much difference between those repetitive worldly prayers and the monotonous incantations of the same prayer list day after day?

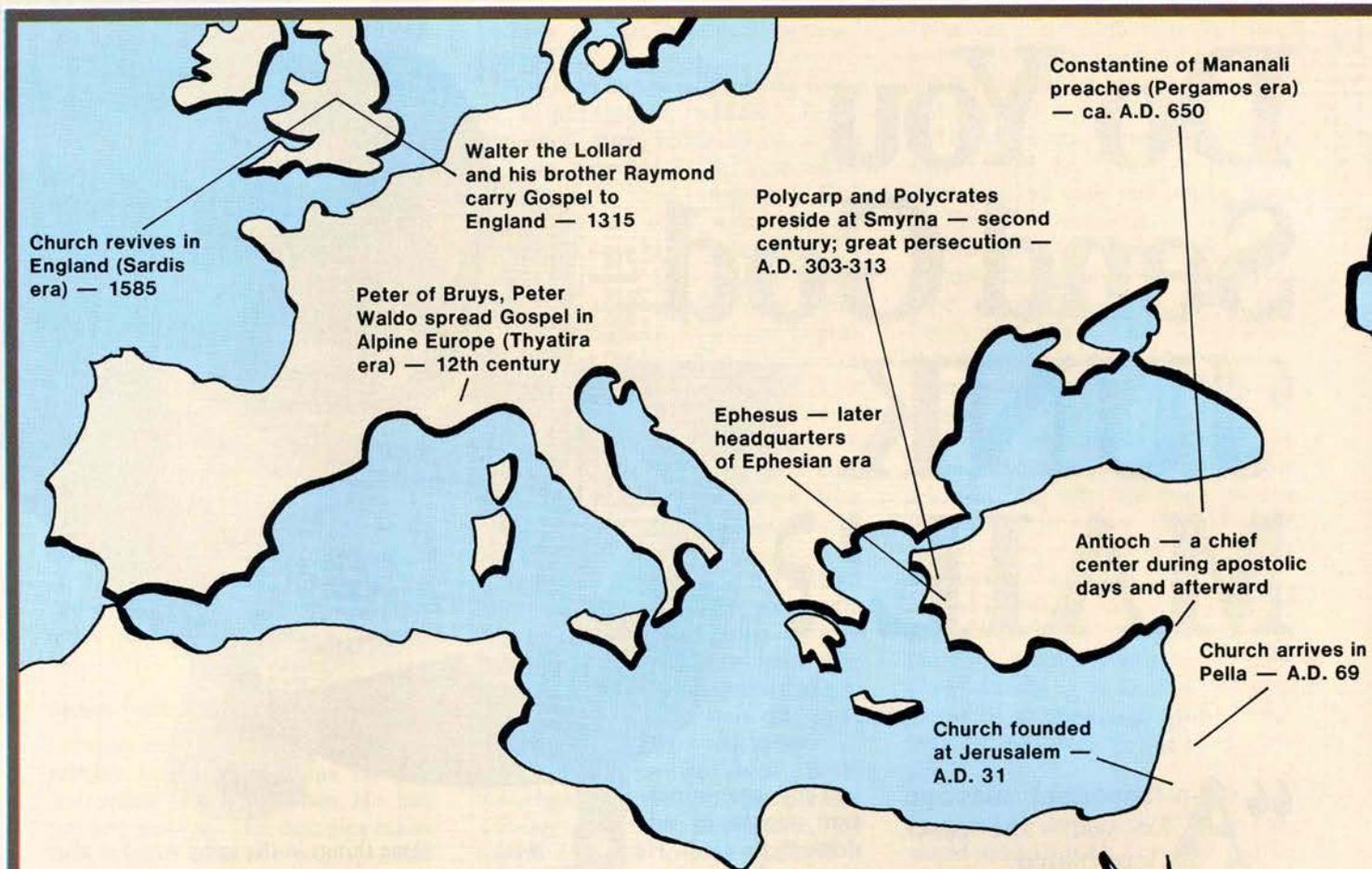
Have you ever noticed how you can keep "praying" while your mind wanders to something entirely different? It is because you have become so used to praying that the thoughts run along well-worn grooves. Your lips can freewheel for a while even when your brain changes direction.

Before you know it, "Bless Herbert W. Armstrong," "Help the Work" and "Keep Mr. [your minister] safe" become just "vain repetitions."

Even asking "in Jesus' name" can become a cliché unless you deeply think about the meaning of what you are saying.

Communication is becoming more  
(Continued on page 29)





# The Church They Couldn't Destroy

**J**esus prophesied, "I will build my church."

That Church, foretold Jesus, would never be extinguished. "And the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Christ's Church is to last through all ages!

It has. It is here today, doing the Work of God!

## World looks at the wrong church

Strange to say, almost everyone — for these past 19 centuries — has been looking in the wrong place for the Church Jesus built.

What really happened — after A.D. 70 — to the Church of the Bible? Let's turn back, for a moment, the pages of history. How did the Church Jesus built come to be where it is today?

A great yawning gap — an unbridgeable chasm — lies between the apostolic Church Jesus founded and the earliest beginnings of today's professing Christian churches. Nearly all the writings of that period after A.D. 70 have perished. But Bible prophecy remains — and the slanders of enemies!

Where has the true Church been for these 1,900 years?

Few have realized that within the first three chapters of the book of Revelation is condensed an amazing prophecy revealing more than 1,900 years of Church history!

### **A prophecy hidden in Revelation**

Listed in time order here are the past epochs of God's one true Church, together with an astounding description of the Worldwide Church of God today.

Almost no one understands these prophecies relating to the Church Jesus built. Most churches and their commentaries ignore these prophecies, explain around them or deny they have any prophetic meaning. But why?

Could it be that these prophecies expose counterfeit Christianity?

God's Church is a spiritual body. It is composed of those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, those who obey and teach God's commands (Rev. 14:12). Revelation 1 to 3 lays bare the whole course of that Church.

God's Church did not grow big and become a powerful organization, exerting powerful influence on the world. It is described in the prophecy of Revelation 12 as a persecuted church.

That visible organization calling itself "Christian" and ruling over the nations during the Middle Ages was not God's Church. It is the church described in Revelation 17 as a fallen woman dominating the political rulers of this world.

The true Church continued, a tiny "little flock," almost unnoticed by the world, almost unknown to later historians.

The Worldwide Church of God has consistently taught through the years that the message for each of the churches is for the whole Church throughout time.

That is, the spiritual state or attitude of each of the seven churches is a lesson for all. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22).

The Worldwide Church of God has also taught that the letters to the seven churches are not dead history, as some scholars have proposed. They are a message for God's Church in

every century. A prophetic history of 1,900 years of experience of God's people!

### **Missing history of Church foretold**

The true Church did not die after A.D. 70! It has continued to this day.

The Jerusalem Church of God began as the mother church, the headquarters church. In about A.D. 69 that church and others from Judea arrived in the town of Pella, east of the Jordan River.

The Pella congregation still called itself the Jerusalem church. Its chief elder was still pastor of "Jerusalem," in exile because of the Jewish wars with Rome.

In the first 38 years, as congregations and conversions multiplied, the distant churches had frequently appealed to the authority of the mother church in Jerusalem. But now a period of declining zeal set in for the whole Church. Why? Because Jesus had not returned at the height of the crisis over Jerusalem in A.D. 66 to 70 as many expected. This condition was foretold in the prophetic messages to the seven churches.

Meanwhile, in the Greek world to which the apostle Paul was sent, Antioch became a secondary headquarters. It was equally accessible from Jerusalem and Syria, as well as from the Greek-speaking area in western Asia Minor. Paul, Barnabas and other leaders continued to work in gentile lands in Asia Minor from Antioch. Even long after apostolic days, Antioch remained a chief center.

But where was Paul's later headquarters when he went to Europe? Ephesus! See Acts 19:1, 10 and I Corinthians 16:8. It was from Ephesus that "of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30).

Ephesus was so important a city on the Aegean Sea that it naturally served as the later headquarters of the Ephesian era, to which it gave its name. It was not coincidence that Christ chose Ephesus (Rev. 2:1) to represent the first era of the Church.

John, last survivor of the original 12 apostles, and the Philip who had originally been a deacon, both died in Ephesus, according to Greek tradition.

About A.D. 90 Roman Emperor Domitian began the second imperial persecution. John was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea, where he received the Revelation and the command to write it down. John was finally released.

Jesus Christ highly commended the first (or Ephesian) era of the Church for its labor and patience and goodness (Rev. 2:2-3). The Ephesian era had early to face false apostles — men seeking to build up a following for themselves.

But Christ also had something against this church era. They had left their first spiritual love (verse 4). Christ threatened to remove the church out of its place!

This was done physically, in type, even before the prophecy was written, when the Jerusalem headquarters church was transferred to Pella. It was done spiritually when the authority and respect in which this mother church had been held was stripped from it in A.D. 135 after the second major Jewish war with Rome.

At the time John penned these words around A.D. 96, Jesus Christ already knew the performance record of the church at Ephesus. That church congregation was chosen by Christ, the Head of the Church, as a type of the entire Church in apostolic times. Jesus did not use the Jerusalem church for this purpose because John's headquarters was not at Jerusalem or Pella, but Ephesus.

The Ephesus church had let down. It had not continued its work to all nations after A.D. 69 (Matt. 28:19). It is significant that after his release John trained Polycarp elder of Smyrna, a city near Ephesus in the province of Asia. And according to Revelation 2:8-11, Smyrna follows Ephesus!

Polycarp and Polycrates, elders at Smyrna in the second century, are the last leaders of the Church in this part of the world of which we have any record.

Interestingly, too, the literal city of

Ephesus also suffered the stern sentence of the living Christ. "If you will not repent, I will move your candlestick out of its place."

In later years, the site was completely deserted. The local population moved to a higher location more than a mile to the northeast, which is today called Ayassoluk in Turkish. That name itself is a corruption of the Greek words for "John, spokesman for God"!

### Leadership shifts to Smyrna

At neighboring Smyrna, Polycarp presided over the Church of God for half a century after John's death. Polycarp stood up boldly for the truth while many fell away and began having fellowship with the Catholic bishops of Rome.

History relates that following the example of Peter, Paul and John, Polycarp wrote many letters to congregations and individuals, though all these have perished, save one in an edited version.

In old age — he was about 85 — Polycarp journeyed to Rome over the matter of Passover. His mission was not a success. The bishop of Rome, Anicetus, observed communion on Sunday. He would not be dissuaded.

The following year Polycarp was burned to death by a mob in Smyrna.

The name *Smyrna* means "bitter." And bitter, indeed, was the era of the Church that it symbolized!

### 1,260 years in the wilderness

Christ revealed in His prophetic letter to the Smyrna era that persecution was to come in a specified period of 10 years' duration (Rev. 2:10). (See the "day for a year" principle in Numbers 14:34.)

This prediction has been completely misunderstood by most people. Most everyone has applied it to the wrong church! Eusebius (*Ecl. Hist.*,

VIII, 15, 16) correctly mentions that the 10 years were fulfilled in the last great pre-Constantine persecution (that of Diocletian and Galerius) in 303 to 313. The persecution lasted on Rome only three years. In the eastern Roman Empire it lasted 10 years. And that is where God's people were!

But the true Church was not

churches of Pergamos and Thyatira.

About A.D. 650 God raised up an inspired leader to correct His people and to spread the Gospel. Constantine of Mananali (not to be confused with Emperor Constantine) was a well-educated man. He was given a gift of portions of the Bible.

Upon studying it, he was utterly amazed at the truth he found revealed in it. Soon he was preaching and, with the help of trained evangelists, was ministering to tens of thousands now being converted and put into the true Church.

The world calls these "Pergamos" Christians, whose ancestors had fled to Armenia, Paulicians — just as it called the "Smyrna" Christians Ebionites — and the "Ephesus" Christians Nazarenes and heretics. In its original Armenian, the word *Paulicians* meant "a follower of wretched little Paul."

After the Arabs began to contest the Byzantine power over Armenia, about A.D. 650, persecution drove some Paulicians to hide in Moslem territory. About 750, the emperor Constantine Copronymus reconquered the upper Euphrates region from Armenia and removed many Paulicians to fill the deserted cities of Thrace.

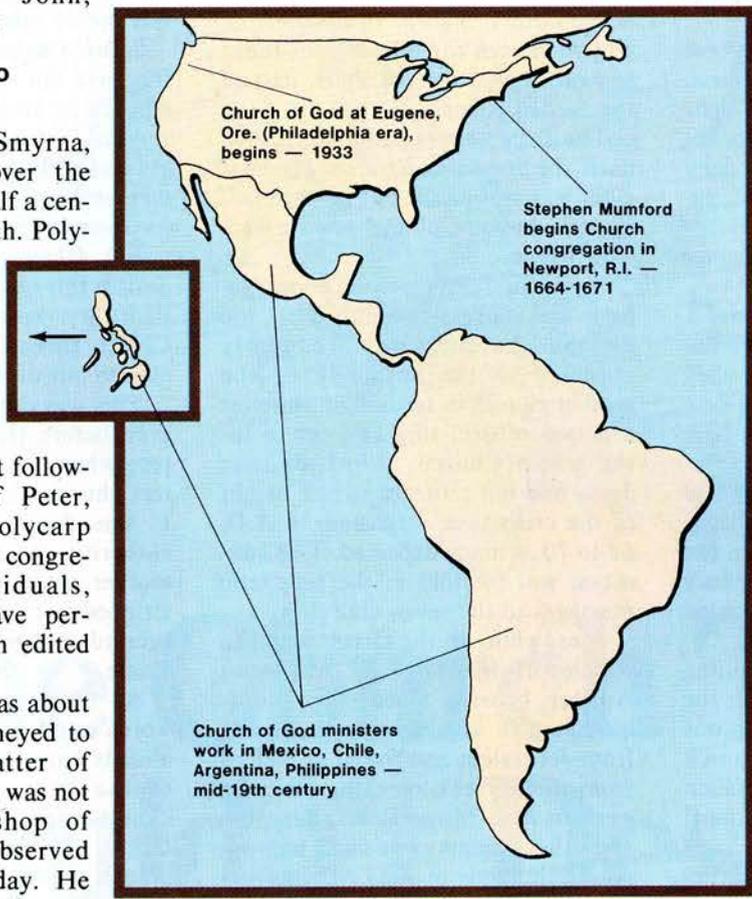
From here on we can begin to trace the development of the churches of God in Europe.

Because of constant persecution and hiding, it is doubtful if any two of the scattered groups believed exactly the same doctrine. But Christ preserved among these people a germ of His Church in the few who were faithful to His rule over their lives.

Such was the religious situation in western Europe at the time He had chosen to revitalize His Church — to raise up the Thyatira era to do His Work.

### Church revitalized—in Europe

In the Middle Ages, the geographical area of southern France, where



stamped out of the Roman Empire. That was accomplished when Constantine established "Christianity" as a state religion by the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325, and then issued edicts favoring his brand of Christianity and anathematizing all others.

Eusebius, always a supporter of Constantine, explicitly states that Constantine expelled all other churches from the Roman Empire or exterminated them beginning in A.D. 325.

The next 1,260 years find the Church of God centered in Armenia (the region of eastern Turkey today), and later in Alpine Europe as the

the Thyatira era was to begin, was the very center of the textile industry of Europe.

Furthermore, the itinerant cloth merchants who carried the woven silks of Byzantium and the east to the eager markets of the west included Paulicians.

The pope in 1096 described the Valley Louise in Duaphiny, France, as infested with "heresy." It was a result of Paulician evangelization of the Alpine regions. About 1104, a man from this valley, called Peter of Bruys, began at Embrun to preach repentance throughout Languedoc and Provence.

Later we hear of Peter Valdez or Peter Waldo.

Waldo brought the same practical common sense that had made him successful as a businessman to the organization and Work of the Church. He had the education and experience that so few in God's Church had (I Cor. 1:26). Jesus Christ had probably guided that experience, unknown to Waldo, long before his conversion.

As he preached, others added their efforts to his. They became, as it is said, "as many co-workers for him." They dedicated their lives and their property to spreading Christ's Gospel. The world called them — and other groups, too — by the name Waldensians.

Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, Waldensians had become known by their enemies as Lollards — from a Flemish word, *lollen* or *lullen*, meaning to sing or speak softly, or to mumble — because of their practice of memorizing Scripture, in the vernacular, by mumbling it to themselves or repeating it to one another.

These "wandering and hypocritical fellows" (as their enemies called them) were noted in Holland as early as 1309.

In 1315, one Walter the Lollard, a chief Waldensian minister, with his brother Raymond, carried the Gospel of Christ to England.

He is said to have spread the Waldensian doctrine all over England before he himself was seized and burned in Cologne, Germany, in 1322 (Par Bresse, *Authentic Details of the Waldenses*; Orchard, *A Con-*

*cise History of Foreign Baptists*).

And from here begins the story of the Sardis era of the Church of God in England and America. The Church Jesus built was to be brought down until it was practically nonexistent — all but dead — at the end of 1,260 years of the tribulation of the Middle Ages. It could never totally die, for Christ had said, "the gates of hell [the grave] shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

This period of 1,260 years of flight from Satan's anger is not to be confused with another 1,260-year period — A.D. 554 to 1814 — during which revivals of the old Roman Empire were dominated politically by the papacy (Rev. 13:5).

Waldensians and others during the Middle Ages were in unanimous agreement in stating the time God's true Church became an outcast and fled to the wilderness. They began it with the agreement between Emperor Constantine and Pope Sylvester. There is no mistaking this time.

From Constantine's decree in A.D. 325 and the consequent initiation of persecution on non-Catholics, 1,260 years brings us to the time immediately following 1585.

At this time, the hand of God is again clearly seen in events. The living Jesus Christ moved to make it possible for His Church to grow again, and for His Work to be done!

In 1586-87, conviction and execution for conspiracy of Mary, Queen of Scots, removed for the last time the possibility of a Catholic domination of the English throne.

And the following year, as the supposed "invincible" Spanish Armada approached Britain to attack, it was utterly overwhelmed by a great storm at sea, a miraculous intervention in the weather!

And what a miracle it was!

In that day, it was on the lips of every Englishman and even on those of Continentals that this could not have been other than a great miracle from God. Not only was England enabled to remain politically free, she was encouraged to stay non-Catholic.

The magnitude of this defeat made

Europe's strongest Catholic power second rate. Israelite Britain was now supreme, and in the political and moral climate of a freedom-loving and Protestant Britain, God's Work could again develop.

But it took the Church that had been brought down to almost nothing centuries to revive and again become significant.

### The name of the Church

About 1585, almost immediately after the end of her 1,260 years in the wilderness, God's Church began to revive — this time in England.

In the reign of Elizabeth (1558 to 1603), states *Chambers' Encyclopedia*, article "Sabbath," "Many conscientious and independent thinkers" advocated the seventh day. Sabbath keepers now commonly came into historical view. Books were published urging the keeping of the seventh day.

Almost as early as local congregations are known to have existed in England, the Church of God in the Sardis era spread to America.

In 1664, Stephen Mumford was sent from the "Bell Lane" Church of God in London, England, to Newport, R.I. For a while he associated with the members of a Sunday Baptist church, and persuaded several of them to embrace his views.

After seven years, a seventh-day congregation of seven members was raised up from these people. They identified it as (a part of) the Church of God (*Seventh-day Baptist Memorial*, Vol. 1, p. 36).

The Church in Rhode Island became the mother church in the United States. It grew slowly for about 30 years. Then in 1708, the enlarged and geographically widespread Newport congregation was officially constituted into two congregations.

The "Westerly" or "Hopkinton" congregation retained the original records — being recognized as the leading or headquarters location.

One of the most important local congregations was founded at Piscataway, N.J., in 1705. The record of its founding uses the name "the Church of God." The connection of this name and this local congregation

with the Rhode Island headquarters is also clearly demonstrated by the fact that its minister was sent to Westerly for ordination (*Seventh-day Baptist Memorial*, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 121).

At Shrewsbury, N.J., also, the record plainly speaks of "the Church of God dwelling at Shrewsbury" (*Seventh-day Baptist Memorial*, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 160; Randolph, *A History of the Seventh-day Baptists in West Virginia*, pp. 19-20).

#### **A few remain faithful**

By 1800, Protestant doctrines were prevalent in the Sabbath-keeping congregations. Many began to form a denomination. This group officially adopted the name "Seventh-day Baptist" in 1818.

Ten or 12 congregations — in the Pennsylvania to Rhode Island area alone — would not at first affiliate with this denomination of men. Even as late as 1828, only 16 to 20 congregations were being represented at the Seventh-day Baptist Conference meetings, while they spoke disparagingly of other "fanatical and unworthy" Sabbath keepers (*The Seventh-day Baptists in Europe and America*, pp. 153, 175).

As always, the few had refused to go along, and had remained faithful to the name and doctrine of the Church of God!

In the middle of the century these remnants of God's people are found in fellowship with Sabbath-keeping people who were part of a great Advent movement.

When the Adventists organized themselves as a denomination in 1860, only a few — mostly in the states of Ohio, Iowa and Missouri — did not go along. The printing plant and the magazine formerly published in the name of the Church of God were taken over by the Adventists.

But a group of the faithful in 1861 began the publication of a new monthly paper called *The Remnant of Israel*, later changed to *The Sabbath Advocate* and finally to *The Bible Advocate*.

Certain strong families provided the Church of God a tenuous continuity. These came to be located mainly in Missouri, Oklahoma and

Oregon. Some few retained a knowledge of God's Holy Days and the identity of modern Israel.

Church of God ministers began work in Mexico, Chile, Argentina, the Philippines. A few thousand of their converts and/or their descendants remain throughout Latin America to this day. Spanish-speaking congregations in Chile and Argentina kept the Holy Days continuously from their beginning in the 1890s until the middle of the 20th century.

But for 70 years after the departure of the Adventists, the Church of God (Seventh Day) in the United States remained spiritually powerless.

These were the people Herbert W. Armstrong came in contact with in 1927.

#### **Philadelphia era of God's Church begins**

Mr. Armstrong had been very successful in business as a younger man. But more than once God had swept his business away in order to humble him. Then God called and converted him.

Mr. Armstrong began to search for the one true Church he knew must exist. Somewhere there had to be the Church Jesus Christ said He would build (Matt. 16:18).

These Church of God people in Oregon seemed to have the truth — certainly they were the closest of any. But something was wrong. They were spiritually dead!

Consequently, Mr. Armstrong never "joined" their organization. But he began to fellowship with the people. He was asked to speak to them, and was finally ordained by the Oregon Conference of the Church of God in June, 1931.

God revealed the true identity of the modern house of Israel to Mr. Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong also came to see that God's annual festivals were commanded to be kept today along with the weekly Sabbath. He began to understand their meaning. But it was seven years before any others in Oregon kept God's annual Sabbaths with Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong.

The world did not notice the Sardis

era of God's Church because it did not proclaim the Gospel with power. It did not exploit the possibilities opened to it by the development of printing.

At the critical moment when the Church of God (Seventh Day) was breaking up, the living Jesus Christ separated a mere handful of people in Oregon to begin the present "Philadelphia" era of His Church (Rev. 3:7-13).

He began to use Herbert W. Armstrong, and the small group He had called to assist as co-workers, to reach the world with the good news of the coming Kingdom of God.

Christ set before them an "open door" (verse 8). This "door" is an opportunity to disseminate Christ's Gospel (I Cor. 16:9, Col. 4:3).

Christ opened the door of radio to the Philadelphia era of His Church. Since the first Sunday in January, 1934, *The World Tomorrow* broadcast has not missed a week on the air. And now the message goes out also on television — an even greater door.

This church era has "[only] a little strength" of itself (Rev. 3:8), but it is magnified greatly through the modern "doors" of radio, television, the printing press and personal appearances of Mr. Armstrong before world leaders — and, most important of all, through the power of the Holy Spirit!

*Philadelphia* means "brotherly love" or "those who love their fellowmen as brothers." It expresses the characteristic that is the motivating zeal of the Philadelphia era of God's Church.

The Worldwide Church of God shows love to mankind by carrying out God's commission — that of warning the world of impending destruction. It is revealing how Jesus Christ will soon rescue humanity from cosmocide and teach man the way of peace, happiness and prosperity.

The goal of the Philadelphia church is the ultimate salvation of all mankind!

And this brings us to where we are today in this amazing prophecy in Revelation 1 to 3 of the seven churches. □

# Your Child's Incredible Potential— Are You Helping Him Achieve It?

## Part Two

*How may we best help our children attain their incredible potential in the coming Family of God? Here are practical guidelines.*

By Ellis LaRavia

**G**od does not give us a responsibility without revealing to us how to accomplish it.

When God dealt with ancient Israel, He gave the nation His commandments, statutes and judgments — His laws. In short, He gave them all the instruction they needed to achieve national greatness, though they didn't have the power of His Spirit to accomplish the goal.

In like manner, God has given us a special role to perform as parents. God could have designed another method of reproduction and family system of government. But He didn't. God ordained the family.

We as parents must learn to operate in a family atmosphere, for we

will all be part of the God Family, which will live and rule as a family unit forever.

We who are called now have the role of the firstborn. Anyone who has been the firstborn of a large family knows the requirements of that role. The demands are great upon the first child to mature early and assist the parents in the care of younger children.

So is it also in God's plan!

God provides essential instructions to us as parents in order to comprehend and fulfill our responsibilities. Following are some of the major requirements we must fulfill as guardians and caretakers of our children.

### **Love them**

The instructions in this area of love are manifold. The major command-

ment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:39) is a basic tenet of being a parent.

What commandment could apply more significantly to our children? There is no one who needs and requires love more than do our offspring. Outgoing concern must be demonstrated daily, whether for a newborn baby or a youth who just turned 15.

Physical requirements vary with our children's ages, but love is required continually. Affection, attention, outgoing concern are key ingredients in all relationships. But children most assuredly shrivel up and die inside without these things.

Most parents love their children a great deal, but many do not understand the needs of youths. Some compete with their children; others live their lives vicariously through them. Many will not let go of their children and allow them to develop and mature.

But the needs of children are ever changing. Love makes the growth transitions possible.

I knew well one family that was so possessive of its single offspring that the young man today, at age 40, is a



dependent “child” on the one remaining parent. He never developed his own identity or became a mature individual. The parents protected and stifled him, not realizing the devastating result of denying him a normal growth process.

Some few parents abandon their newborn babies at birth. They did not want the baby. It only came as a natural consequence to selfish, unfeeling parents. Of course, many abandoned babies are born out of wedlock.

Still other parents retain possession of their babies but abandon them just the same, even though they dwell in the same household. They neglect the fruit of their marriage because they don't understand the needs of the children nor their parental responsibilities.

### **Prepare them for life**

To love our children means to prepare them for life.

First, of course, to prepare them for this brief, physical, temporary, chemical existence by instructing them in the purpose of life from the Creator God's standpoint. God is reproducing Himself. Teenagers must know that God has a purpose

for every human — that every human is to become like Him. But the greatest expression of our love is to do our part as physical parents to prepare our offspring for that ultimate relationship with God in the God Family.

Does this sound too spiritual?

The full understanding of this basic purpose of human life is spiritual, but we must plant and nourish the seed. Love must permeate our relationship with our children. We must love them at every age, at every stage in life, through every trauma and anxiety — not just when it is convenient.

If we want our children to be part of God's Family and view our role from that perspective, our parental responsibility takes on new meaning. If we ourselves want to be part of God's Family, we must take the performance of our responsibility as parents seriously!

### **Teach them**

Solomon was the wisest man, apart from Christ Himself, who ever lived. God granted him wisdom to rule over Israel (I Kings 10:23-24). But Solomon did evil in the sight of God. He

had great knowledge and wisdom, but lacked the necessary character to apply it in his own life.

When Solomon wrote the Proverbs to his son or sons, he could warn against a great many wrongs from firsthand experience. No doubt the Proverbs were written with great feeling.

God commands us to teach our children. He is specific as to what we should teach them. God commands us as parents to teach our children the commandments of God, that their lives may be prolonged (Deut. 6:1-2).

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (verse 7).

God is specific about both what we shall teach and when. God relates that it is imperative to speak of the things of God continually.

Why? It is by these teachings that our children learn of the basic necessities for life. Our children must be continually reminded of God, lest they forget. These are more than food, clothing and shelter; they include God's commandments, statutes and judgments and the meaning and purpose of life.

Children can learn anything and will. But we must be certain of what their educational diet consists just as surely as we are concerned about their physical diet.

Children are like sponges. They readily absorb virtually everything. We must provide an environment in which they absorb the proper and appropriate things.

Do we inspire and exude enthusiasm about the things of God? We have a tremendous example in the Old Testament. Moses was given the responsibility of teaching the children of all the Israelites who died in the wilderness. This was a new generation, who didn't personally experience all the miracles God used to deliver Israel out of Egypt and by which He had sustained them for 40 years.

Moses was to teach them, though he was not permitted to go into the promised land. God took away the leadership of Israel from Moses for a single, foolish sin. Moses struck the

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## To love our children means to prepare them for life. . . . God is reproducing Himself. . . . the greatest expression of our love is to do our part as physical parents to prepare our offspring for that ultimate relationship with God in the God Family.

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rock twice to cause it to deliver water, rather than speak to it as God commanded. Yet Moses had to teach the Israelites with conviction and inspiration, knowing he himself would not enter the promised land.

What a lesson for us!

We, too, must teach our children what God regards as important. We must do it because we, too, regard it as important and because we consider our responsibility a command from God. We must identify with God and His ways and teach them to our children.

### Set an example

God disciplined Moses and had him relate it to all Israel. Moses had to communicate the incident and the penalty to all of the people, who numbered in the millions.

Moses related to the people that God was upset for their sakes, because Moses had sinned and had not given the glory to God (Deut. 3:26). God doesn't condone sin, even in His appointed leaders. God condemns sin because it destroys. It demands a penalty.

We as parents must set a godly example to our children. The most confusing thing parents can do to cause disrespect and disobedience is to be hypocritical.

Hypocrisy is the leaven of which we are all to rid ourselves (I Cor. 5:7-8). Christ condemned the Pharisees for their hypocrisy (Matt. 23).

There is not, and indeed cannot be, any respect when a parent teaches one thing but lives another. We can teach our children all day long, but the greatest impact on them comes from seeing how we live.

We see an outstanding biblical example in this respect. Both Judah and Israel had many leaders and kings. When these kings restored order and began to obey God, so did the people.

This is an outstanding example for us to follow, for we can obey God even in spiritual truths.

### Spend time with children

Young children initially seek attention and affection from their parents and want their parents to participate in their activities. But if parents are continually unresponsive, many children will seek alternatives. They will turn to television, drugs and alcohol and submit to peer pressure and Satan's influence.

Children enjoy exciting activities like going to amusement parks, but what they really want, by nature, is the attention of their parents. And they will be content with almost any activity in which the parents are involved.

A recent poll revealed that parents on the average only spend 19 minutes a day with their children. With this little association, parents and children can become virtual strangers.

Watching television is not quality time. It is like sitting in a theater with dozens of people you don't know. Time spent in front of a television is basically lost time, and we cannot afford to lose this precious time.

One of the real crimes in today's families is the unsupervised time so many children spend. Letting your child have unsupervised time at nearly any age is like holding a revolver to your child's head and playing Russian roulette.

We as parents must know where our children are and what they are doing. This doesn't mean we spy on them or overly protect them. It is just a simple fact that children will get into trouble or difficulty without supervision and concern from their parents.

Even with teenagers, we must know their activities and involvements and approve their activities.

Lack of guidance and direction can be devastating at any age, but partic-

ularly during the teenage years. Teenagers who are permitted to roam the streets, who make all their own choices and who are never required to report to their parents will find themselves in trouble.

Children in homes where no one cares — or in homes where it appears that no one cares — will experiment and gravitate to wrong involvements.

Satan does not go to sleep at the switch. We as parents do, but not Satan.

Most serious crimes are committed by teenagers. Because they are neglected, many purpose to do something wrong just to get attention, or to prove their worth.

Serious crimes do not appear that extreme to youths, especially when they continually see violence on the television screen.

Youths cannot be neglected. They have developing minds and bodies but are still quite immature. They are not prepared to handle all the serious things of life alone, especially with Satan's keen sense of timing to lead them astray.

The apostle John wrote to the fathers and the young men who had overcome the wicked one. He told the young men that they were strong and that the Word of God abode in them and that they had overcome Satan (I John 2:13-14).

But our children are not converted. They need our help to understand what they must fight and how. We must help them overcome the evil one and build human character until God does give them His Spirit. And of course, God will work with our children even now if they seek Him (I Cor. 7:14).

We must spend quality time with our children, literally to help them survive. Wholesome family activities are important. Get involved as parents. Involve the children in sports and other outdoor activities with you.

Children are not chattel for us to rule over and use all of our lives. We are to temporarily oversee them, until they are prepared to become parents and raise children and continue the process God is performing.

### Children belong to God

Our children belong ultimately to God. They are not ours to possess and use or abuse however we see fit.

God outlines our responsibilities as parents. We are to love them, teach them, train them and prepare them for the ultimate purpose of life — to become spirit-born members of the God Family.

There is a tendency to misconstrue our parental functions. We tend to discount children and consider them second-class citizens. On the other hand, parents may place children on a

symbolic pedestal. Both approaches are wrong.

We must always view our children as potential Gods, not just as our physical offspring. Children are given physical lives through the physical reproduction process, but their ultimate purpose is to attain spiritual life as sons and daughters of God in God's Kingdom (Ps. 82:6). God expects us as parents to care for, teach and train them for Him and His purposes.

God reminds us to "provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Col. 3:21). God is very concerned about little children. Christ was and is. We are in the role of God as parents, but according to His purpose, not ours. Proverbs 22:6 states that we must "Train up a child in the way he should go." God deter-

mines this way. We must carry it out.

### Help children appreciate themselves and others

There is a theory that an individual under our influence will fulfill whatever image we have of him. This is no doubt true in many instances.

If we expect little of children, they will oblige, or if we think a child is no good, our image will be fulfilled. Contrariwise, if we think well of children and encourage them, they can achieve even above their aptitudes.

God wants all of us to become His children in His Family. God devised this plan before man's creation. God will accomplish it. We can fulfill a dynamic part in making this occur in our children's lives, not by trying to convert them ourselves, but by teach-

## Why Did God Create The Family Relationship?

Couldn't mankind get along without the family relationship? Couldn't God have given man another way to live?

After all, man is the only creature on earth to partake of the family relationship anyway. Sure, certain animals and birds may dwell together at certain times, but their relationships are just not on the same plane as is the human family. Why is the family institution so important to man?

God ordained the family from the very beginning, when He created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. God said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

Men and women, as husbands and wives, are to develop the most close-knit and intimate of relationships. They are to dwell together and become as one, working as a team. God intended that the human family typify the God-plane relationship, which is also a family.

The first verse in the Bible indicates that God is a family. The word *God* in Genesis 1:1 is translated from the Hebrew word *Elohim*, a uniplural noun meaning more than one. Further, in verse 26 God says, "Let us make man in our image." God is a family made up of, presently, two members, God the Father and Jesus Christ. God's great purpose is for

every human being to become a member of God's Family.

If we are led by God's Spirit in this fleshly life, then we are God's begotten children (Rom. 8:14). The Church is portrayed as the mother who nourishes and teaches us, preparing us for the Family of God.

But why? Why has God given humans the family relationship? The answer: to prepare mankind to be part of God's Family. How well are we doing?

Paul, inspired by Christ, recorded the specifics of the family structure. The husband, for instance, is to head the household. He is to be the loving leader, loving his wife as his own flesh, even as Christ loves the Church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:23, 25). Have any of us as husbands yet achieved this as the heads of our families?

The wife, on the other hand, is to be subject to her husband (verses 22-24) and learn to be the true help God intended her to be (Gen. 2:18).

It was and is God's purpose that a man and woman develop a harmonious, loving relationship, becoming as one in every way. Is this occurring today? No! Divorces and homosexuality are rampant. Even when husbands and wives remain together, friction, abuse, hatred and unhappy families often exist.

There is a vast gulf between the happy family God intended and how well man has done in achieving it.

When God created Adam and Eve, He intended that they build a happy family, composed of a loving husband and wife who would "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28). Children were to be born into this loving family relationship.

What kind of family relationship were your children born into? What is your family relationship like now?

The first husband and wife did not fulfill the family relationship as God intended. Adam sinned. He partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He chose to decide for himself what he should be like as a husband and father. Eve chose to wrongly influence her husband rather than submit to him and be a positive force in the marriage.

These decisions affected not only Adam and Eve but their immediate offspring and every human being and family in every generation to the present.

Man forsook the opportunity to receive God's spiritual knowledge concerning human relationships, of which the family is foremost. As a result, men today don't really know how to be loving husbands and fathers. Neither do women know how to be loving wives and mothers. Couples choose to decide for themselves what family relationships ought to be, rather than believe God.

But God has revealed to His Church the truth about the family. We must hear and heed, as Christ said in Luke 6:46-49.

ing them, setting an example and helping them to attain their great potential.

We must teach our children to have self-respect as well as an appreciation for others.

King David had self-respect, yet didn't consider himself greater than he was.

When King Saul was pursuing him in the wilderness, David considered himself a flea or a dead dog in comparison to God's anointed. David was a man after God's own heart, a young man of character who believed and wanted to obey God. God saw a heart that was right (I Sam. 16:18). David wasn't perfect, but he sought to obey God.

King David truly had a right respect for himself and others. Having such respect is the only way we

can love our neighbors as ourselves. David showed his great love and respect for Jonathan, Saul's son, even after Jonathan was killed. David still honored his pact with Jonathan and cared for his offspring.

David fulfilled the law of loving your neighbor as yourself. We, too, must teach our children to have a right respect for themselves as members of the human family and as potential members of the God Family.

### Chasten in love

God teaches us that "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov. 22:15).

Foolishness undeterred will cause a child to embarrass his mother and father and can lead him to commit a serious crime or do violence to another

human, or even cause death to himself.

Chastening or spanking is difficult to get in perspective. Christ places it in proper focus, if we will grasp His instruction.

Disciplining is a vital part of our role as parents, even as Christ corrects us.

Parental discipline should be a forerunner of self-discipline. Only through self-discipline will anyone build character. In Proverbs 16:32, God states that he who rules his spirit (has control over his mind) is better than the mighty warrior who takes an entire city.

The home should be the training ground of moral discipline. God commanded the first parents to be fruitful and multiply and to administer on a human plane God's government in a family atmosphere. Godly discipline

How else will we turn the hearts of the fathers — our hearts — to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers (Mal. 4:5-6)? This is to be one of the major signs of this Church era.

Now we come to one of the most significant aspects of the family relationship. God is a family, and He wants us to become members of His Family.

The physical family today is for our spiritual training. God has given us an important job to fulfill. Together, as husbands and wives, we are to share a profound role that we may have overlooked.

If we have been truly called of God, our children are sanctified — set apart for a holy purpose. Our children have the special blessing of having access to God if even one parent is converted (I Cor. 7:14). We can teach them spiritual knowledge.

We have a special role as parents. With conversion, God gives us spiritual knowl-

edge. This knowledge is absolutely vital for building and maintaining happy, abundant family relationships.

A strong, spiritual family relationship can only be built with spiritual truth and understanding and with God's Spirit. Man can only deal with *things* with his carnal mind, but a spiritual mind comprehending spiritual knowledge is required to fulfill a family relationship that involves father, mother and children — *people*. Man of himself doesn't know how to develop these relationships.

Now comes the heavy spiritual obligation. God expects us to provide a spiritual environment for our children. Our children are physical, not spiritual, not yet having the mind of God. But we are to provide a spiritual environment in which our children can grow up.

We can do this only as husbands and wives working together spiritually with singleness of purpose. Our children are to

experience this godly relationship with parents who are obeying God. This is the home environment in which our children can grow up and come to perceive God and His way in action.

Children don't have the Spirit of God. They don't discern spiritual

truth with their carnal minds. But they do perceive the way we live. It is God's purpose that we live in harmony with God. When we do, our children see it. They learn during their formative years how a family relationship should be.

This gives our responsibility as parents great meaning. It gives weight to Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

God expects us as converted parents to prepare our children for God's calling. God knows when and how He will call our children, but are we providing the spiritual family environment to properly prepare our children?

We must not overlook this most important spiritual obligation in the family relationship. We must teach our children in the spiritual environment of a loving family that is obeying God.

This is how our children are sanctified — set apart by God for a holy purpose. As we fulfill this most vital human relationship in the family environment, our children are learning God's way.

Paul wrote, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). God is revealing to us our great purpose and how we can enhance and help fulfill the same purpose for our sons and daughters.

When we do so we help fulfill the tremendous purpose for which God gave us the family relationship. — By Ellis LaRavia □



Photo by Warren Watson

is always for the profit of the children. This we must always remember as we administer our responsibilities as parents. We are to be ministers for good to our children.

Discipline is not spanking out of hatred or anger or frustration with a child. Neither is it to be done at an age when a baby doesn't understand. But it is a vital part of corrective, constructive instruction from us as parents.

Discipline in the form of denying privileges can be used as a child grows older.

The apostle Paul states, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6).

God chastens all of us. Why? Without discipline, we will never make it into God's Family. Then what benefit is this physical life if we do not fulfill God's purpose? It becomes a waste.

Chastening is a useful tool for us as parents to help children comprehend the nature of going the wrong way. It is corrective in nature. It is not just punishment for doing wrong, but it is to correct a child, to help him see and want to do the right.

God always chastens us for our profit. If He wanted to just punish us, He could destroy us all in a moment. But God has a greater and higher purpose. Chastening or punishment isn't an end in itself, but to correct our paths so that we might achieve eternal life.

"We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. 11:32). When God sees us hurting ourselves and off the track, He corrects us that we might attain the Kingdom of God.

Being parents is an awesome responsibility. God will hold us accountable for our deeds in this vital area of His plan. God will not count us guiltless if we have neglected such a profound role.

We are fulfilling a function for God in nourishing, teaching, leading and correcting our offspring, who are in the likeness of God Himself!

Whenever we consider our responsibilities as parents, let us ask ourselves: How may we best help our children attain their incredible potential in the coming Family of God? □

## Pray Effectively

*(Continued from page 4)*

13:15). Then we can know that "all things work together for good to them that love God," as Romans 8:28 promises.

Verse 27 explains that sometimes we may not know how to pray in a particular situation or trial. In such cases God's Spirit in us communes with God and "maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

It follows that the more of God's Spirit we have in us, making "intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (verse 26), the more effective our prayers will be. **Ask for more of God's Spirit to help you pray.** He is more than willing to give it to you, as Jesus pointed out when He was teaching about prayer (Luke 11:13).

### Be mindful of God's mercy

**It is possible for a person to exclude some of his own prayers from being answered because he does not allow for God's mercy.**

When he is sick, he may find it difficult to have faith that he will be healed. Perhaps he knows full well he is sick because God's righteous laws have been broken and he deserves the sickness he has brought upon himself. The same process of reasoning may take place concerning any other trial or problem in life.

We are all aware of God's righteous laws and His perfectly just judgment. But sometimes people stop there.

There is no doubt about it, God loves righteousness (the keeping of His laws). However, there is an additional, all-important aspect to God's character: His loving-kindness — His mercy when we have a repentant attitude.

Notice how this fact is expressed in Jeremiah 9:24: "I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things [all three!] I delight."

What if God delighted in judgment based on righteousness alone? Stop and think how that would be. We would be doomed! His laws — His righteousness — would stand fast for ever and ever, as they do now.

And His judgment would be perfect. We've all broken God's laws, so He would be thoroughly justified in pronouncing a sentence of "guilty" upon us all. We would have to die.

And that would be that. Except, you see, along with judgment and righteousness — not in place of them, as churches of the world preaching that there are no works to salvation would have it, but along with them — God also delights in mercy, in loving-kindness. It is because of His delight in loving-kindness that He provided a sacrifice for our sins and that He does not condemn the world as He so justly could do (John 3:16-17).

When we pray to God we should remember that He is not a stern, harsh, feelingless Being just waiting for a chance to see us get what suffering we deserve.

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. . . . He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. . . .

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. . . . the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting" (Ps. 103:8-17).

God is merciful, tender and compassionate. Talk to Him with that in mind. **Because of His mercy you can have confidence that He will hear and answer.**

"Let Israel hope in the Lord: [Why?] for with the Lord there is mercy" (Ps. 130:7).

Hebrews 4:14-16 explains that Jesus is now our great High Priest. He can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" because He was "in all points tempted [tried] like as we are" (verse 15).

"Let us therefore come boldly [that is, with feeling, conviction and confidence] unto the throne of grace [the mercy seat!], that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (verse 16).

That invitation should help us all put our hearts into our prayers, knowing that **how God will respond is not automatically decided beforehand. The answer we receive can**

depend on how we approach that throne of grace.

### Reason with God

It is not wrong to reason with God. In fact, God urges, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18).

Abraham reasoned with God concerning the city of Sodom. As a result God promised He wouldn't destroy it if there were only 10 righteous persons therein (Gen. 18:23-33).

Moses reasoned with God about the rebellious Israelites. God was going to destroy them for their idolatry, but changed His mind because of the intercession of Moses (Ex. 32:9-14).

Reasoning with God does not mean making excuses for what we are or what we have done. Nor does it mean trying to get God to change His laws. It means giving God reasons for why we ask what we ask in prayer.

How God answers our prayers may often be flexible and depend on how and why we make the requests we do. He wants to know our reasons for asking, just like any loving father wants to know why his children ask for something. He wants to know we sincerely mean it when we pray.

When David prayed he knew a real God was listening. That's how we ought to pray.

### Prayer and supplication

It is clear from the Bible that a Christian should offer up both prayers *and* supplications (Acts 1:14). They are not the same.

If prayer is heartfelt talking to God, supplication is a special, moving appeal to God. It is done with an extra degree of heartrending feeling, even accompanied by fasting.

In the Scriptures various words translated *supplication* mean "entreaty," "earnest prayer," "imploring," "petition." There are similar meanings in many scriptures where the English word *cry* appears in the sense of crying out to God.

"Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry," David wrote (Ps. 39:12). God's elect are described as those "which cry day and night unto him" (Luke 18:7).

That's the same as saying they are "Praying always with all prayer and supplication [being persistent!] in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with

all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18).

In our crowded living conditions it is frequently a problem just to find a closet or a private place where one can kneel to pray. It is harder yet to locate a place where one can actually call out to God vocally. Not that it is necessary to do so for God to hear, but you just might find it a help in praying from your heart if you can do it occasionally.

Apparently David did so often. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud [literally, "make a loud sound, a great commotion"]: and he shall hear my voice"

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Tell God what you need. He is waiting to hear. He is not making it difficult for us to reach Him. God is "not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). He just wants us to put our hearts into it when we pray to Him.

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(Ps. 55:17). Yes, David went so far as to beseech God to bend His ear down in order to better hear him: "Bow down thine ear to me," he prayed (Ps. 31:2).

King Hezekiah was sent a letter threatening that there would be an attack by the Assyrian army. "And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord" (Isa. 37:14).

When you receive some bills you cannot pay, or a threatening note from your child's school principal, or a notification that you have lost your job because of the Feast, or any other bad news, did you ever think of taking the document itself to a private place and spreading it out before God, asking Him to look at it?

Listen to how Hezekiah prayed: "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that

dweldest between the cherubims . . . thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see" (verses 16-17).

Hezekiah meant it. And God responded.

Position is also a factor that can contribute to earnestness in prayer. As has often been recommended, one of the best positions is kneeling with hands spread toward the heavens. One of several other biblical examples is kneeling with face to the ground.

Of course, some people are physically unable to kneel or to remain kneeling for prolonged periods. God understands that. In such cases the position of the heart is of more value than the position of the body.

The important thing is to avoid halfhearted, indifferent prayers — prayers that go no higher than the ceiling.

### Let your requests be made known

"Why should I pray to God if He already knows everything I need?" some might wonder. It's true. God already knows what we need (Matt. 6:8). But He wants to hear from us anyway. He wants to know we are really in earnest.

A parent may know a child wants something, but the parent still usually waits for a child to ask for it. "In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

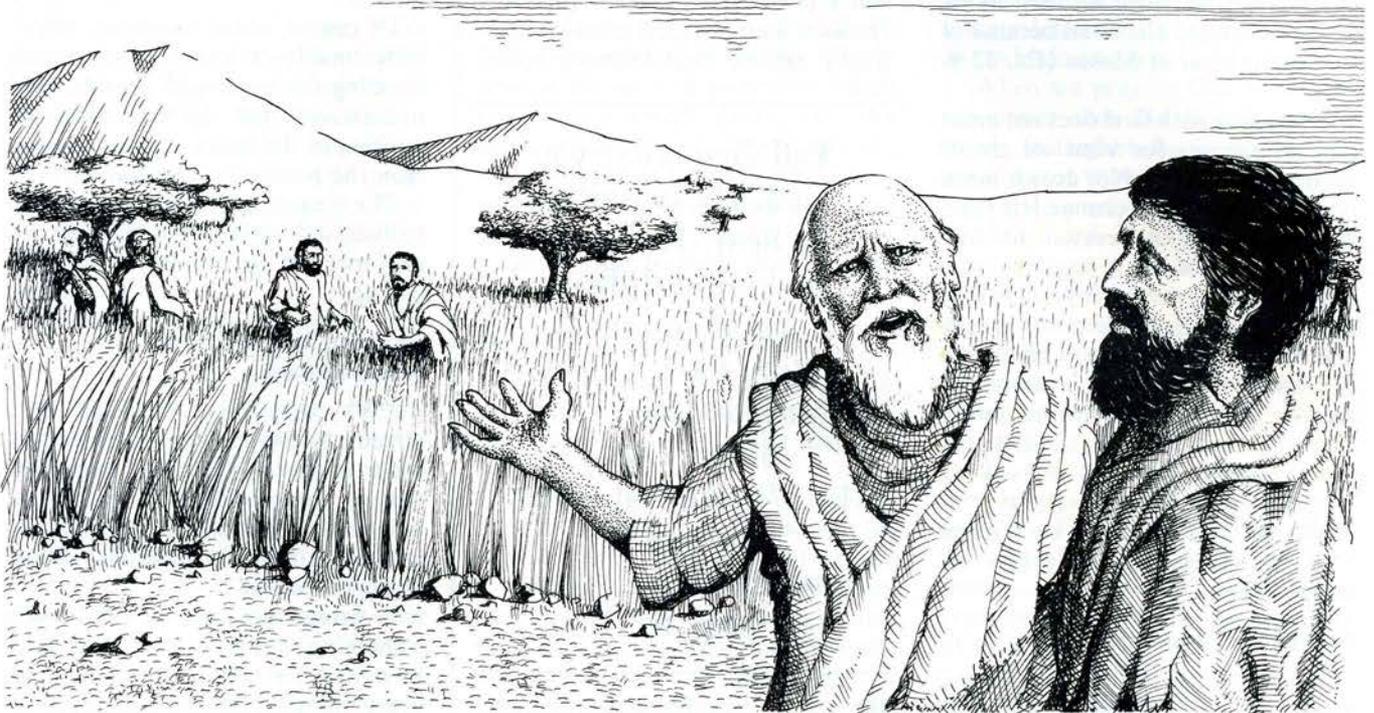
Tell God what you need. He is waiting to hear. He is not making it difficult for us to reach Him.

God is "not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27). He just wants us to put our hearts into it when we pray to Him.

God has a full measure of the wisdom that is "gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy" (Jas. 3:17). He is the God "that giveth to all men liberally" (Jas. 1:5).

Put some heartfelt feeling into seeking God through prayer. You will find it well worth the effort. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Ps. 84:11). □

# STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT



## Chapter 8

# The Apostles Are Chosen

By Shirley King Johnson

**N**ear the sheep market in Jerusalem, not far from the Temple, was a large, spring-fed pool named Bethesda. It was the scene of much human misery. Men, women and children who were sick, blind, crippled or had other afflictions gathered on the pool's five wide porches.

### A healing at the pool

As Jesus came upon this scene of dust, rags

and illness, He saw a man lying on a mat, his head and shoulders propped up. A cripple, this man was the picture of hopelessness. Stepping over and around the human obstacles until He was at the man's side, Jesus leaned down. "Would you like to be healed?" Jesus asked.

The man's eyes moved to Jesus' face. "It's no use," he replied. "Everybody else climbs over me

*The Pharisees, finding Jesus' disciples in a field picking grain to eat on the Sabbath, accused them of breaking God's law.*

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The man hesitated. Then he reached up to grasp the hand that Jesus extended to him. His deformed limbs straightened and he rose to his feet, astounded to find that he could stand erect.

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and I never get to the water in time to be healed.” He referred to a belief concerning the pool: Whenever the water became agitated, the first person to step in would be healed (John 5:7).

Jesus commanded the cripple: “Stand up. Take up your bed and walk.”

The man hesitated. Then he reached up to grasp the hand that Jesus extended to him. His deformed limbs straightened and he rose to his feet, astounded to find that he could stand erect. Bending down, he wound his mat into a tight roll and carried it out, stepping over and around the bodies on the crowded porch.

Moving on to the Temple, Jesus joined His disciples in an outer court. They chatted with Zebedee and other relatives who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover and Spring Holy Days.

Jesus noticed that the man He had just healed was in the crowd. Jesus detained him. “Just a moment. Be sure that you stop sinning or you’ll be in a worse condition than you were before I healed you” (verse 14).

“Yes, sir,” the man answered. “Will you tell me your name?”

“I am Jesus of Nazareth.”

“Thank you.” He turned away, hurrying back the way he had come. He reported to the Jews the name of the One who had told him to carry his small, rolled bed. Carrying a mat, according to a Jewish tradition, was work on a Sabbath day and the Jews sought out Jesus to confront Him with the infraction.

“Why do you teach this ignorant man that it is permissible to work on the Sabbath?” demanded the group’s leader.

“My Father works and I work,” Jesus replied.

One of the Jews angrily raised a hand. “He not only told this man to carry his bed, He just called God His Father! Do you hear Him? He makes Himself equal with God!”

Overlooking the interruption, Jesus continued: “The Son can do nothing of Himself. He will do what the Father does and the Father will show Him greater works than this to amaze you. Whoever hears my words and believes in Him who sent me is on his way to eternal life.”

Jesus went on to discuss the resurrections and talked about the work of His cousin John, who had been imprisoned by King Herod. Jesus reminded them of Moses’ works and writings, which they had studied but had not obeyed. “I won’t accuse you,” He told them. “There is another who will accuse you — Moses. He wrote of me and you don’t believe him. Neither will you believe me” (verses 45-47).

During this confrontation with the Jews, the disciples watched and listened with dread, realizing that Jesus was making enemies of men who would take great offense and seek to have Him killed. When He finished speaking, Jesus turned and walked through the crowd. The people made a pathway as He and the disciples left the area.

### **The disciples are accused**

Later, on a weekly Sabbath day, Jesus and His disciples were walking along a rural road by a field of grain.

The disciples wandered leisurely into the field and began to pick off kernels to eat (Matt. 12:1, Mark 2:23, Luke 6:1).

Among the travelers on the road were Pharisees, and one of them thought he saw an opportunity to censure Jesus. “Your disciples are breaking the law,” he said, pointing to them in the field. “They’re picking grain on the Sabbath!”

Jesus turned to the Pharisees. “Surely you’re acquainted with the scripture that tells us what King David did when he was hungry. He went into the Tabernacle of God and ate the bread offered to God, even though it was intended for

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After spending a full night in prayer, Jesus selected 12 men to be His closest disciples and apostles. . . . These men would begin to take the Gospel message to the world.

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the priests' use." Turning to the crowd who had stopped to observe, He added: "The Sabbath was made for man's benefit, not man for the Sabbath. The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27-28).

### **Another Sabbath healing**

On yet another Sabbath, Jesus and His disciples were in a synagogue, and Jesus was teaching the people.

A man with a shrunken right hand sat in a prominent place on an aisle where everyone could see him. Jesus knew that the religious leaders would watch to see if He would heal the man's hand on the Sabbath. When He had finished His discourse, He motioned to the man. "Come up here, please."

One of the rulers challenged Him. "Is it right to heal on the Sabbath day?" (Matt. 12:10).

Jesus answered the question with a question. "Tell me, if you had a sheep and it fell into a ditch early on a Sabbath morning, would you wait until sunset to lift it out? Of course not. A human being is much more valuable than a sheep. It's not wrong to do good on the Sabbath." Turning to the man with the deformed hand, Jesus said again, "Please come here."

The man walked to the platform where Jesus sat. Jesus looked around at the people watching and saw hatred in their eyes. A deep silence had fallen over the synagogue. "Straighten your hand out to me," He said.

The man painfully moved the deformed hand toward Him. The hand took shape. In an instant it was restored and as perfect as his other hand. With a grateful cry, the man fell at Christ's feet, thanking Him and praising God.

Because of the hostility and resistance He encountered, Jesus withdrew from that area. He had many followers from a distance now — men and women from the Jerusalem area, from across the Jordan River and from Tyre and

Sidon on the Mediterranean Sea. Some came to see the miracles of healing and the casting out of demons. Often the demons cried out, "You are the Son of God!" Jesus stopped them from speaking and ordered them to leave their victims. They obeyed Him and the crowds were profoundly impressed (Mark 3:7-12).

When Jesus and His disciples withdrew to the shores of the Sea of Galilee, a large crowd followed them. Reports of all the miraculous healings caused the throngs to increase to thousands. Jesus instructed His disciples to have a boat ready while He taught the multitudes, lest the crowd should crush Him (verse 9).

### **Jesus chooses 12 men**

After spending a full night in prayer, Jesus selected 12 men to be His closest disciples and apostles. The word *apostle* means "one sent with authority." These men would begin to take the Gospel message to the world.

In addition to the four fishermen (Peter, Andrew, James and John) and Matthew (Levi), Jesus asked Bartholomew and Philip to join the work full time. To these He added Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus (Lebbaeus), Simon the Canaanite and Judas Iscariot (Matt. 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:13-16).

The disciples were being trained for a work vastly different from what they imagined it to be. They expected Jesus the Christ to establish a political world empire in their time.

Peter was a natural leader, but the others did not concede that he had any authority over them, and they had frequent arguments about who was the greatest. Gradually a special relationship developed between Jesus and Peter, James and John as Jesus took them into His closest confidence.

These were the 12 men who would begin to prepare the way for the Kingdom of God to come to earth. □

## The 'Day of the Lord' Begins

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

*The Good News*, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

**Instructions:** The format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and *read in your Bible* the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

Most people know very little, if anything, about the "Day of the Lord." Yet it is the focal point of all prophecy! The awesome events to take place during this time are described in more than 30 different prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments.

Recall from our previous study that the heavenly signs of the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-14, Matt. 24:29-30) are events intended to warn the world that God's wrath upon rebellious mankind is about to begin — that the Day of the Lord with its punishments for sin is about to commence. Let's pick up where we ended our study.

1. How does Isaiah 13:6-13 describe the Day of the Lord? Will the whole world be punished, and not just modern descendants of Jacob? Verse 11, Obad. 15. Also notice again the following scriptures dealing with the Day of the Lord: Joel 2:30-31, Zeph. 1:14-18, Rev. 6:15-17, Isa. 2:6-21.

The Day of the Lord is going to be a terrible, awesome, fearful time!

God is going to intervene in world affairs in a powerful way, after having left the world to its own way, its own devices, its own governments, for about 6,000 years.

Note that the main theme of the book of Revelation is the Day of the Lord. The apostle John

said he was in spirit on the Day of the Lord (Rev. 1:10).

He saw unfold the horrible events described in many Old Testament prophecies. And so the sequence of events in this book deals with the Day of the Lord, except for those interludes relating to other matters.

2. Exactly why will God have to punish mankind severely? Rev. 11:18, last few words; Zeph. 1:17; Isa. 24:5.

Jesus Christ, the Lord God of the Old and New Testaments, will be angry at the grievous sins of mankind. In order to bring mankind to its senses and save the human race alive, Christ is coming to "spank" humanity in love, otherwise man would destroy all life on earth (Matt. 24:22).

As any loving parent punishes his disobedient child who will not listen to gentle admonition, Christ will have to punish this world to wake it up, after which He will usher in peace, abundant prosperity, happiness and joy for all mankind.

3. What scriptures indicate how long the "day" of God's wrath on sinful man will last? Isa. 34:8, 61:2, 63:4. Does a prophetic day often represent a year? Num. 14:34.

When the Bible talks about the "Day" of the Lord, it refers not only to the 24-hour day when Christ returns, but also the year of God's punishment that precedes it and culminates in that return.

4. What transpires as soon as the seventh seal is opened? Rev. 8:1-6.

John sees in vision seven trumpets being handed to seven angels. The seven trumpets are, of course, symbolic. They represent real world events to come. These trumpets are plagues God shall send as physical punishment upon rebellious mankind.

Notice also that the seven trumpets constitute the seventh seal. This seventh seal occurs, then, in seven successive stages, each of the seven stages or parts being called a "trumpet."

5. What occurs on earth after the first trumpet is blown? Verse 7.

The result of limited use of chemical defoliants during the Vietnam War will seem trifling after this

# MINISTUDY

supernatural fire burns all the grass and one third of the trees on earth!

**6.** What does the blast of the second angel's trumpet announce? Verses 8-9.

The seas will be gravely affected by this plague. One third of the seas will turn to blood and one third of all life in them will be destroyed.

**7.** Next, what happens to part of the earth's supplies of drinking water when the third angel's trumpet is sounded? Verse 10. Will many die from drinking this poisoned water? Verse 11.

**8.** What terrifying plague is announced by the fourth trumpet? Verse 12.

**9.** What are the last three trumpets called? Verse 13.

In vision, God continued to show the apostle John that the next tormenting events to afflict rebellious, heedless mankind will be renewed warfare. The last three trumpets are called "woes" because there will be great destruction of human life and natural resources as a result of this warfare.

Just as God punished ancient Israel by sending the armies of Assyria, and punished Judah with the armies of the Chaldeans, so He will send armies of one nation against another to punish them because their evil is bringing suffering, poverty and unhappiness on all peoples.

And so the last three trumpet plagues specifically picture three phases of coming world war. At the third stage — the third "woe" and last trumpet — men will be saved from extinction only by a miracle from God. If God did not personally intervene in this climactic way, men would destroy the last vestige of human life from the face of the earth (Matt. 24:22).

**10.** As the fifth angel sounds his trumpet, how is the first woe described? Rev. 9:1-11. Are men to be tormented by symbolic locusts? Verses 3-6. Note in verse 5 that their torment is not "of" a scorpion, but "as . . . of" a scorpion.

**11.** How are these "locusts" described? Verses 7-10.

These symbolic, locust-like "horses" with power to hurt men can only refer to terrifying war machines — possibly sophisticated attack helicopters. Today machines carry men as horses did then. And helicopter gunships are highly maneuverable so as to seem able to hop and jump and fly like locusts. Precisely what specific weapons are meant and how they will be used by power-crazed men will be plainly evident when the fifth trumpet (first woe) is blown and this terrible warfare begins.

**12.** Where does the super army of the first woe come from? Verses 2-3. Where do we find the "bottomless pit" interpreted? Rev. 17:8-14.

The final resurrection of the Roman Empire is the power that emerges from the bottomless pit or abyss. It is a war-making power (verse 14) with a super army equipped with sophisticated weaponry. Mussolini restored the pitifully weak, insignificant sixth "head" of the "beast" — the so-called Holy Roman Empire. A seventh and last revival is prophesied to come soon.

**13.** Who is the motivating force, the real leader, of this religiopolitical war-making power? Rev. 9:11.

The Hebrew word *Abaddon* and the Greek word *Apollyon* both mean "destroyer." The sinister power guiding the beast's army will be none other than the great destroyer himself — Satan the devil.

**14.** Who will be spared from this blitzkrieg-type warfare? Verse 4.

When the forces of the beast attack its enemies, those who lived through the Great Tribulation, turned to God and were "sealed" by His Spirit (see all of chapter 7 and chapter 14, verse 1) will be protected during these terrible plagues. Meanwhile, hordes of other people in Asia will also have been preparing for war. The second woe is now ready to begin — the sixth trumpet is ready to sound.

**15.** Are the sixth angel's trumpet plague and the second woe clearly the same? Rev. 9:12-13. What happens when the sixth trumpet is blown — who will dare to threaten and even make war with the beast? Verses 14-16. And how are their weapons described? Verses 17-19.

To the east (from the point of view of Jerusalem), beyond the Euphrates River, lies the communist realm. From there an army of 200 million men will attack westward. Their war machines, here again described in symbolic terms, deal death from front and rear — principally by "fire," "smoke" and "brimstone." These symbols may mean firebombs and all forms of explosives, possibly including atomic and hydrogen bombs, as well as poison gas and other chemical agents.

**16.** How many people will suffer the torment, torture and death inflicted by this mighty army and its sophisticated weaponry? Verse 18.

More than one billion people will be killed as a result of the warfare pictured by the sixth angel. It is this wholesale carnage that Jesus Christ's personal intervention must halt, or no flesh would be saved alive (Matt. 24:22). □

*(This subject to be continued.)*

# PERSONAL

(Continued from page 2)

summed up in one word — LOVE. But Jesus magnified this into the two great laws — love to God and love to human NEIGHBOR.

Love is the principle of GIVING. Jesus summed up the reason for it when He said, "It is *more blessed to give than to receive*" (Acts 20:35). God knows and reveals that we receive a *greater* blessing by *giving* than by *acquiring*. GOD WANTS US TO HAVE BLESSINGS!

People really *want* blessings, but few know the way. Most people think the greater blessing comes from receiving — getting — taking — acquiring.

Today we talk about "the American way." But the way of most Americans today is to try to *get* more than they *give*. Formerly employers took more in production from labor than they paid employees in wages. So labor organized.

Today the labor-union principle seems to be to *get* more, in wages, than they *give* in production from their labor. Less work — more pay! Deluded labor unions seem to think this is for *their good*. They don't know GOD'S LAW. They know not that they are bringing a CURSE on themselves.

We talk, today, about owning property. But GOD actually *owns* all the earth. That includes the property on which *you* pay taxes. God says the EARTH is His — for *He created it!* God OWNS it. He lets us occupy HIS earth, as temporary tenants. All wealth comes from the ground.

IT IS NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO TAKE ALL HE CONSUMES OUT OF GOD'S EARTH WITHOUT PAYING ANYTHING FOR IT! If you rent ground from a MAN who *thinks* he owns it, he charges you rent — up to 50 percent or more of what you produce from it.

## Law in motion

God set a LAW in motion — that we should pay HIM, not 50 percent, but *only* 10 percent, plus whatever offering we have in our hearts to *give*. Now a LAW is not a law without a *penalty*. God does not *force* you to tithe. But if you don't, there is a pen-

alty! You lose the BLESSING that goes with honest stewardship. You come under a CURSE!

God says our WHOLE NATION is under a CURSE today (Mal. 3:9) because we have *robbed God*. The man who does not pay God His tithe is a *thief* — and, worse than a criminal robbing a bank, he is *robbing God!* Yes, GOD SAYS SO — verse 8!

And one of the Ten Commandments is "Thou shalt not steal" (Ex. 20:15). The man who does puts himself immediately *under the law* — under penalty of DEATH for *all eternity* — unless he *repents*, and pleads

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God is most merciful.  
The minute you really  
repent, *quit* breaking  
this law, begin  
keeping it honestly  
and go to Christ  
for forgiveness, then  
all is forgiven  
and God begins  
pouring out His  
blessing, just as He  
did on me.

---

the blood of Christ for forgiveness, and reconciliation to God!

Ignorance of the LAW does not excuse. You may say, "Well, I never *knew* all this." Well, you are without excuse, for you know it now — or you can know it if you'll check up IN YOUR OWN BIBLE!

But God is most merciful. The minute you really repent, *quit* breaking this law, begin keeping it honestly and go to Christ for forgiveness, then all is forgiven and God begins pouring out His blessing, just as He did on me.

Hundreds of our co-workers have written me, during the past many years, saying God had opened their eyes to His tithing law, and telling how they have been blessed. One even wrote that she, too, had started tithing eggs, and her hens, too, had immediately gone on an egg-laying spree! She had either heard me

mention that experience over the air or read of it in a former issue.

Of course I won't guarantee God will cause hens to start laying eggs faster every time. Probably it won't work out exactly that way — but He *does* promise a blessing (Mal. 3:10-12).

## All for our good

How do you pay your tithes to GOD? By putting them into GOD'S WORK — where God Himself is working — where HIS Gospel is being preached, not merely MAN'S gospel *about* Christ, but the very message Christ preached.

Most professing Christians have never heard the Gospel today! Jesus preached only one Gospel — that about the KINGDOM (government — rule) of GOD — of how God is going to RULE ALL NATIONS — of how we may, by being begotten *now*, be actually BORN INTO GOD'S KINGDOM at the Second Coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead *in* Christ, being then GLORIFIED just as Christ is *now* glorified in the very FAMILY of God!

But most professing ministers of Christianity today deny this Gospel altogether and say it is not for this time!

WHAT does God *do* with His tithe? He uses it for HIS MINISTRY, to preach *HIS* message of REPENTANCE, FAITH IN CHRIST AND BEING BAPTIZED BY HIS SPIRIT INTO HIS FAMILY — His message of the KINGDOM OF GOD — the WORLD TOMORROW! It is the message of GOD'S WAY. It is the message of true salvation. It is the message of a changed and a fuller, happier LIFE — the message of ETERNAL life, God's gift through grace!

He uses it to tell mankind THE WAY to happiness, joy, prosperity and eternal life in HIS KINGDOM.

But look at the CURSE!

God's WAY has not been preached. The WORLD is unhappy, empty, sick, poverty-stricken, cursed with fears and worries, restlessness, frustrations, insanity, crime, violence, war — DEATH!

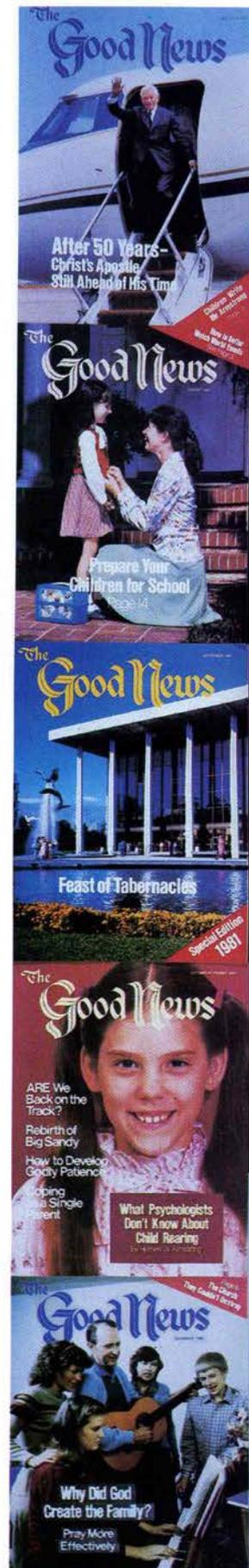
Even though the NATION is under a curse, *you*, as an individual, may come under GOD'S BLESSING! It's your BEST assurance of getting and holding a job — of *continuous* and *increasing* INCOME! □

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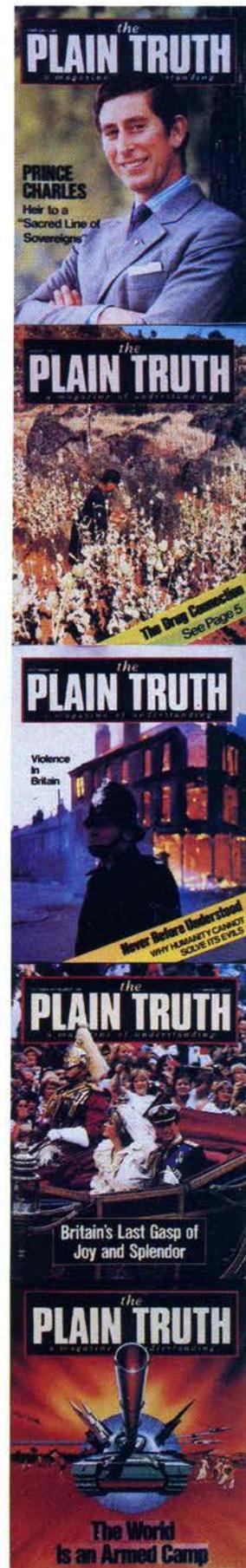


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and more routine in our modern world. My secretary will soon take my rough, preliminary copy of this article and type it on a computerized word processor. This wonderful machine lets her see on a television screen what she has typed. She can move words and even whole paragraphs around, until the article is how I want it.

Then, by pressing a button, she can have the computer transfer the electronic image to paper, perfectly typed, faster than the eye can follow. Soon we will be able to add to our word processor a feature that automatically checks and corrects the spelling.

There are already computer-generated letters. You feed in the problem or question. The computer selects the appropriate answer, plus a suitable opening and closing, and there you have it — a personal letter — untouched by human hands!

## **Avoid depersonalized prayer**

But prayer for the Work, for Mr. Armstrong and for each other must never become depersonalized.

How can we avoid it? Here are some ideas:

- Think about what you say. Plan your prayers carefully. Have you really thought through what you want to ask God? Is what you are asking logical?

(I remember praying for Mr. Armstrong when he was visiting Australia once. I asked God to help him when he spoke to Church members at Sabbath services.)

But then I remembered that, although it was only 10 a.m. in Pasadena, Sabbath services had long since finished "down under." It was by that time early Sunday morning in Australia. I don't think God took that prayer too seriously.)

- By all means have a prayer list, but don't let the list be a ball and chain. Keep it updated and specific. Make your list reflect the actual needs of the Work, your church and yourself from day to day. Check it out before you start.

Have you ever found yourself pray-

ing for the healing of people who have already gotten well — or perhaps even died?

Some such mistakes are unavoidable, but today we as a Church are better informed than ever before. We have *The Worldwide News*, the *Pastor General's Report*, church announcement bulletins and so on. So don't let your prayer list become a "prayer wheel."

- Think about where you are when you pray. You are going boldly before God's throne of grace, with Jesus Christ by your side, to talk to

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---

your heavenly Father about important matters (Heb. 4:16).

God's throne is the center of power of this entire universe — a far more strategic center of power than the Oval Office at the White House or the throne room at Buckingham Palace.

If you had been granted some time with U.S. President Ronald Reagan or Great Britain's Queen Elizabeth, you would choose your words carefully. You wouldn't dare waste the person's time, and you certainly wouldn't fall asleep during the interview!

God is not short of time, and He wants us to think of Him as a loving Father rather than as a busy executive. He will give us all the time we need.

But we should show the proper respect toward His high office.

As begotten children of God, we should never abuse the privilege of being able to have the undivided attention of the Supreme Ruler of the universe whenever we ask for it. We must make the time we spend in God's presence count.

- Ask God for help. Prayer is difficult sometimes — the words just won't seem to come. Some thoughts are hard to express. You feel like saying to God, almost in exasperation, "You know what I mean!"

Yes — He does! If we are really trying to communicate, God will give us of His Spirit to help us. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

And Christ our Intercessor, who knows what it's like to be human (Heb. 4:15), will see what is on our minds and help us get the messages across (Rom. 8:27).

## **Important messages to God**

What would you do if you had to write to God instead of speak to Him?

You would use your very best stationery and your neatest handwriting. If the prayer was to be typed you would see that it was perfect. You would make sure the message was addressed properly and that your return address was written clearly on the envelope.

After all, it would be an important message, and if for any reason it could not be delivered, you would want to know about it.

Fortunately, we can talk to God. But the same rules apply. In Hosea 7:14, God says He is angry with Israel because "they never put their heart into their prayers" (Moffatt translation).

It isn't that God is hard of hearing. He wants to help. His ears are open to our prayers (Ps. 34:15), and He delights in the prayers of people who are trying to live His way (Prov. 15:8).

God enjoys getting important messages from us. How disappointing it must be when our messages turn out to be junk mail. □

# The Six Great Doctrines of Hebrews 6

In the book of Hebrews, six specific doctrines are listed as representing the FOUNDATION upon which all the rest of the principles of Christianity are based. It is with these *first principles* of the doctrine of Christ that one commences his Christian life. And it is these fundamentals that help establish the rock-solid foundation Jesus said would make one's "spiritual house" able to withstand the trials and tests of this life.

Is your faith—your Christianity—founded on the rock? This series will help you examine your own spiritual foundation and make sure it is able to endure! To receive your free copy of this series, see card inside.

