

JANUARY 1983

# The Good News

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## OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



## Will You Win **YOUR SPIRITUAL RACE?**

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Were the 10 Commandments  
Nailed to the Cross?

Why the Christian Life?

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OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

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**COVER:** The Christian life is like a great race, and winning this race requires tremendous effort. Read "Run the Race of Your Life!", beginning on page 14. Photo by Focus on Sports.

## Letters

### Festival edition

The special Festival edition of *The Good News* with the beautiful silver cover was an absolute gold mine of instruction and inspiration!

I believe that a measure of extra inspiration was passed along to the writers and editors of the September issue.

It is just amazing to me that this complete package for Feast preparation — including the meaning and purpose of the Feast, advance news about what God's Kingdom will be like, instruction and advice on how the Feast can be a real joy for everyone, even ample pages for sermon notes — is all there in 52 pages.

Ed Stonick  
 Pasadena, Calif.

I wish to thank you very much for the *Good News*' Feast of Tabernacles edition.

I long for the wonderful world tomorrow. It will be great not to be in these physical bodies that long for sleep and food, where joy will be and true happiness will be a way of life.

Life is great when you realize how fortunate and how blessed we are to know the truth — to know what our potential really is!

We could never come upon this knowledge ourselves. God has removed the blinders from our eyes.

Judy Henry  
 Monroeville, Pa.

I especially appreciated Leroy Neff's "Special Bible Study: God's Holy Days in the New Testament." His thorough and detailed presentation of the biblical proofs of God's Holy Days will certainly help each of us to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" in regard to God's Holy Days.

Bob Antrobus  
 Lexington, Ky.

I have learned more about the Holy Days from the last issue of *The Good News*. I never could understand this. Now I understand better — also about the world system. It is not based on God's will for us.

I hope this will be made clear to other people as it has to me.

Louise Clay  
 Camden, Ark.

# Were the Ten Commandments Nailed to the Cross?

*Are Christians saved by faith without obedience to God's law? Does grace do away with the law? Are the Ten Commandments the "law of Moses"? Here's the truth about this pivotal question!*

**J**OHAN DOE is a Canadian subject. He was born, let us say, in Canada, and has resided since boyhood in Vancouver, B.C.

But now, because of a recent marriage to an American, John Doe wishes to become a citizen of the United States. He has been impressed with the country.

Mr. Doe, we will say, endeavors to attain this new citizenship by studying the laws of our country, and rigidly setting himself to obey them.

Our point is this: Can John Doe, *merely by observing the LAWS of our land*, become a citizen here? The question seems foolish. The answer is obvious. He cannot.

But it illustrates the point. A man does not become an accepted citizen in Christ's Kingdom merely because

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By Herbert W. Armstrong

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that man lives *within the law* and rigidly observes it.

## Does grace abolish the LAW?

The law, in other words, is not the means through which sinners of the worldly kingdom of Satan become converted into citizens of the spiritual Kingdom of Christ.

If John Doe is to become a U.S. citizen, he must undergo a certain prescribed process. This will include laying aside his allegiance to Canada, pledging his allegiance to the government of the United States, accepting ours as HIS and taking government out certain papers. And that is the manner in which a person must become a Christian. Before he

becomes a Christian, he is a subject of a different kingdom — the kingdom of this world — ruled over by Satan, who is described in the Scriptures as "ruler of this world" (John 14:30). If a man, born of the flesh and a part of this world and of Satan's rule, desires to attach himself to Christ's Kingdom — the Kingdom of the spirit, and of the world to come — he must undergo a certain prescribed process. We call that process CONVERSION.

It includes acknowledgment and repentance of sins, acceptance of Jesus Christ as his new ruler or Savior, renouncing his allegiance to Satan's kingdom and pledging allegiance to Christ's Kingdom. Since he was begotten and born of the flesh and of this world, he is thus now "begotten again" of the spirit

Photo by G.A. Belliche Jr.

## The ten commandments

Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them.

25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto

## EXODUS 20

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

and of the world to come — to be born again at the resurrection.

Now let us suppose John Doe has moved down to California, fulfilled the required process and has become a citizen of the United States. Does that mean that Mr. Doe is exempt from obeying the laws of our land, merely because he has become a citizen?

Not at all! If the man is going to live here, be one of us and enjoy the BENEFITS of United States citizenship, *he must obey our laws!* And unless he does, he will find himself before a judge, who will pronounce his fate!

### **Conversion means obedience**

When a man becomes a Christian, he receives great BENEFITS thereby, including everlasting life in the world to come. And now the question is: Can a man *remain* a Christian, and receive the blessings and benefits of Christian citizenship, *while he disobeys the laws of the Kingdom?*

Just a moment, some will say. Christ's Kingdom has no laws. Christ abolished the law, nailing it to the cross. We are now "under grace," and not "under the law." But let's examine that point very carefully.

Did you ever hear of a government being run without laws? Does it sound reasonable that the government Christ came to set up would be run in hit-and-miss fashion, WITHOUT ANY RULES OR LAWS? The Bible emphatically tells us that Christ's Kingdom has its laws, just as every civil government has its laws. It is time we understood what was nailed to the cross, and what is still binding upon us today.

### **God's basic LAW**

The laws of Christ's Kingdom are 10 simple, fundamental, universal Commandments, written by the very finger of God upon tablets of stone!

And what a contrast the divinely written code is from our woefully inefficient man-made codes! A hopeless mess indeed has man made of his lawmaking efforts.

Contrast it to God's ability as a

lawgiver. In 10 brief Commandments, so simple, so direct that a small child can understand and memorize the whole code, God gave all mankind a COMPLETE law that covers the whole duty of man toward, first, his Creator, and second, his fellowman.

So fundamental and universal — God's laws apply alike to the most sophisticated metropolitan civilization, and the most wild and barbarous jungle civilization.

They are, by their very nature, eternal, and never could become obsolete or out-of-date. NO MAN COULD WRITE SUCH A LAW. This law is NOT the law of Moses, but the law of God.

Most assuredly, as we shall see presently from the Scriptures, Christ's Kingdom has its laws. And unless Christians, the begotten citizens of His Kingdom, are willing to obey the laws of the Kingdom they have professed to enter, they, like our friend John Doe, will find themselves before the Judge, who, at the judgment day, will pronounce their fate! Remember, then:

The law is not in any sense the means through which a man obtains salvation. *We do not obtain salvation through the law — we observe the law through the process of conversion.* It is failure to understand this important distinction that is the cause of much misunderstanding upon the whole question.

The facts are these: Both those who maintain the Ten Commandments, God's law, are immutable and still binding upon Christians today, and those who assert this law was nailed to the cross, can quote much Scripture in an effort to prove their different contentions. *Why this apparent contradiction in the Bible?*

The Scriptures do not contradict in any instance. The Mosaic law WAS nailed to the cross!

Faith, the atonement, the gift of the Holy Spirit, DID take the place of, and therefore abolish, the old Mosaic law. That law was a law of physical ordinances, ceremonies and sacrifices that were "added" because of sin and as a reminder of sin (Gal. 3:19).

But the Ten Commandments are an entirely different, separate and distinct law. The Commandments are spiritual principles that define sin. Moses' laws were sacrificial and ceremonial.

Both laws were given by God, but they were given in entirely different manners, and for entirely different purposes.

The Ten Commandments were God's basic spiritual law *from the beginning*. It was sin to transgress its points from Adam to Moses. Death is the penalty of sin and "death reigned from Adam to Moses" (Rom. 5:14, 6:23).

The law of Moses was not added until the days of Moses. In his day the Ten Commandments were merely repeated because the children of Israel had forgotten God's spiritual law — just as the world today has forgotten it.

Let us now examine briefly the history of the law and of the real meaning of salvation. Let us stand off and visualize the subject from a distance, in its entirety, rather than having our viewpoint muddled by a too close familiarity with any one point or passage.

### **Salvation NOT offered under Old Covenant**

It may come as a surprise to you, but spiritual and eternal salvation was never offered under the Old Covenant to the nation Israel as a whole. The only promises were material and fleshly — for the present age. They were promised national dominance, power and wealth. But they were not promised eternal life.

The law of physical works — the law of Moses — was not given as a means of salvation, BUT AS A REMINDER THAT THEY NEEDED SALVATION. There has been one and only one means of salvation — through faith. No one has ever been or can ever be saved through the works or rituals and ceremonies of the law.

During Old Testament times only the prophets and a faithful few obtained a promise of eternal salvation. They looked forward to the shed blood of Christ, just as we look back to it. But the people  
*(Continued on page 27)*

# COULD YOU BE GUILTY OF MURDER?

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*Murder and violent crime are rampant in this world. Is there any solution in sight? And what is the Christian's responsibility regarding God's Sixth Commandment?*

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**D**id you know that in the time it will take you to read this article, if you are an average reader, at least one American will be murdered — have his or her life snuffed out in a deliberate, cold-blooded act of violence?

It's shocking, but true — a murder occurs every 23 minutes in the United States!

In 1981 alone, the most recent year for which complete statistics are available at this writing, 22,516 homicides were committed in the United States. That's 9.8 murders for every 100,000 people, one of the highest rates in the world.

And this, in a country that considers itself "Christian" — in a country that supposedly obeys God's Sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13, Authorized Version).

But the United States is not the only nation with a serious crime problem, including a spiraling increase in murders. In most of the world's industrialized nations, especially the more prosperous ones,

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By Raymond F. McNair

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violent crime is a major worry. The nations of Western Europe and the Mideast, Japan, Australia and New Zealand are all experiencing alarming crime rates.

The United States' shocking murder statistics serve to illustrate the seriousness of the worldwide crime problem. America's cities, in particular, are afflicted with an epidemic of murders, pointing up the horrible results of breaking the Sixth Commandment.

Says Houston Police Chief B.K. Johnson: "We have allowed ourselves to degenerate to the point where we're living like animals. We live behind burglar bars and throw a collection of door locks at night and set an alarm and lie down with a loaded shotgun beside the bed and then try to get some rest. It's ridiculous."

Every single day, year after year, Americans are forced to hear and or read about a constant succession of grisly crimes: the Tylenol murders (in which poisoned capsules of a commercial pain reliever were swallowed by

unsuspecting buyers), assassination attempts on our leaders — including the 1981 attempt to kill President Ronald Reagan, children slain by their parents or vice versa, the wanton murders of innocent children in Atlanta, Ga., the brutal slayings of police officers, gang murders, obscene rape-murders and macabre killings perpetrated just for "kicks."

The rising tide of violent crime and cold-blooded murder has caused many Americans to put multiple locks or iron bars on their doors and windows and install alarm systems. Many acquire watchdogs, learn martial arts, form patrols or take lessons in the use of firearms or chemical sprays.

Yet the fear of violent crime and murder remains all-pervasive.

## **The first human homicide**

When and how did man become so violent? What is it that causes him to callously murder his fellow humans? And, most important of all, is there a way that man can overcome his murderous impulses, or is he doomed to destroy himself by committing nuclear cosmo-

## HOMICIDE RATES — U.S. CITIES, 1981

CITY	HOMICIDES* PER 100,000 POPULATION	NUMBER OF HOMICIDES
Miami, Fla.	34.5	576
Houston, Tex.**	27.6	799
San Juan, Puerto Rico	27.1	290
New Orleans, La.	23.5	285
New York, N.Y.	20.7	1,893
Los Angeles- Long Beach, Calif.	19.6	1,500
San Antonio, Tex.	18.8	209
Dallas-Fort Worth, Tex.	16.4	507
Riverside-San Bernardino- Ontario, Calif.	16.3	258
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	16.1	171
St. Louis, Mo.	15.7	371
Atlanta, Ga.	15.6	324
Detroit, Mich.	14.7	635
Chicago, Ill.	14.2	1,012
Cleveland, Ohio	13.9	264
United States total	9.8	22,516

Source: *Crime in the United States: Uniform Crime Reports, 1981*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice

\*Homicide, for the purpose of this study, was defined as the willful killing of one human being by another. Not included in the definition are deaths caused by negligence, suicide or accident.

\*\* 1980 figures for Houston are shown; 1981 figures for Houston do not appear in the 1981 F.B.I. report.

## HOMICIDE RATES — SELECTED NATIONS

NATION	HOMICIDES PER 100,000 POPULATION	NUMBER OF HOMICIDES
Northern Ireland	30.67	472
El Salvador	13.50	607
Lebanon	12.03	361
Bahamas	10.48	23
Netherlands	8.32	1,149
Finland	4.86	231
Sweden	4.60	381
West Germany	4.18	2,564
Italy	3.48	1,972
Egypt	3.45	1,353
France	3.22	1,713
Australia	2.77	397
Denmark	2.77	141
New Zealand	2.48	78
Belgium	2.10	207
Japan	1.62	1,862
Israel	1.58	59
England and Wales	1.46	717
Scotland	0.93	48
Spain	0.71	265

Source: *International Crime Statistics*, Interpol, 1977-78

cide? Believe it or not, violent crime — murder! — began when mankind first appeared on earth.

The Bible reveals that the Creator God made the first man and woman, Adam and his beautiful wife Eve, and put them upon this earth only about 6,000 years ago (Gen. 1:26-27).

The all-wise Creator fully instructed this first man and woman in how to live successfully, prosperously, abundantly. But the first humans rebelled against the government of God and, as a result, were cut off from God's source of inspiration and knowledge — the Holy Spirit. They were driven out of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24).

Now they had to learn by trial and error — in the school of hard knocks — and make many mistakes in the process. Adam and Eve had children, and before long, envy and rivalry entered the heart of the

**Murder** — it's a worldwide plague! Many are turning to firearms for protection.

eldest son, Cain. Cain resented his brother Abel and Abel's blessings and, ultimately,

"Cain rose against Abel his brother and killed him" (Gen. 4:8).

This was the first human act of murder committed upon this earth. God saw it, and told the murderous Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground" (verse 10). Cain had to reap from his deed much sorrow and tribulation, which he felt was quite overwhelming (verse 13).

Soon Adam's descendants committed other murders, and a pattern began to be established (Gen. 6:5, 11-12).



The Scriptures reveal that all nations, generally speaking, continued along the path of strife, violence, murder and war until the coming of Jesus Christ. This humble, God-fearing carpenter — God Himself, in the flesh — was Himself murdered by ignorant and violent fellow human beings during the reign of Pontius Pilate, in the first century.

### The first murderer

It may come as a surprise to many students of the Bible to learn that Cain was not really the

Photo by G.A. Belluche Jr.

first murderer. He wasn't! But then who was?

Just before He was murdered by evil men who thirsted for His blood, Jesus Christ told the hate-filled religious leaders of His day: "You seek to kill Me . . . You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He [the devil, or Satan] was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him" (John 8:37, 44).

Satan the devil was the first murderer! He was created long before Adam and Eve were. In fact, it was Satan, in the form of a serpent, who slithered up to Eve and lied to her, tempting her to choose a way of life that would lead her and Adam to ultimate death (Gen. 3:1-24)!

Most of mankind does not realize there is a literal and very active devil who constantly seeks to deceive and destroy mankind (Rev. 12:9). But there is a great, invisible, spirit-composed being who is cunning, deceitful, lying and murderous, always seeking to murder and destroy humans, who unwittingly give themselves over to his evil way. For more information, write for a copy of our free booklet, *Did God Create a Devil?*

Satan injects thoughts, impulses, moods and attitudes into the minds of unsuspecting and willing humans, inciting people to murder, as when he inspired Judas to betray Christ, and as he also stirred up the Jews and the Romans to have a part in Christ's murder. Satan can stir up entire armies to kill and destroy (Rev. 9:1-11, 13:7, 20:7-8).

### **Human nature and Satan's nature**

Without what we call "human nature," there would be no crimes — no murders. But just what is human nature? It is simply the attitude or spirit of Satan injected into gullible humanity. The attitudes of envy, hatred, jealousy, competition, strife, revenge and murder come not from God but from Satan.

How can epidemics of violent

crime and murder be prevented? Mankind, under Satan's invisible sway, has his own solutions.

Man thinks he needs to put more policemen in uniform and to buy more police cars, more guns and various types of sophisticated equipment to enable him to cope with crime. He wants more penal institutions in which to house the burgeoning criminal population.

But these options will not ultimately work, simply because they do not get at the real root of the problem. The root cause of crime is man's heart. Crime can't be stopped until man has a complete change of heart! Human nature must be totally changed.

Few realize that God not only wants us to refrain from literally killing, but He wants His people to refrain from even harboring the spirit or attitude of murder. If murder is ever to be eradicated, mankind will have to learn to keep the spirit or intent of God's command, as well as the literal letter of the law.

We must learn to replace hate with love — Satan's way of *get* with God's way of *give*.

The Founder of Christianity taught us how to overcome the spirit of murder. He did not come to destroy the Ten Commandments, but to fulfill them (Matt. 5:17). He did not come to abolish or do away with God's law, but to "magnify the law and make it honorable" (Isa. 42:21)! How?

"You have heard that it was said to those of old," said Jesus, "'You shall not murder,' and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. 5:21-22).

Furthermore, said Jesus, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you . . . For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?

Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" (Matt. 5:43-48).

Christ's magnification of the law took it far beyond the letter. Our keeping God's law now requires that we take on God's very character — that we think and act as God Himself would. Not only must we not murder, we must not even hate.

### **Christ's instruction to Christians**

The Bible reveals that God gives lawfully constituted civil authorities the right to carry out capital punishment in certain instances (Gen. 9:5, Ex. 21:12-17, Deut. 7:1-2, Acts 25:10-11). These "governing authorities" do not bear the "sword in vain" (Rom. 13:1-4).

But the New Testament teachings of Christ and His apostles make it clear that true Christian believers are not to be part of the secular governments of this world. Those who don't know the true God should be the executioners of the wicked.

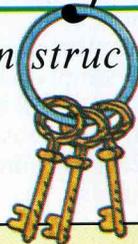
Here, then, is the New Testament teaching for true Christians: We are not to bear arms or use swords or guns to enforce Caesar's laws, avenge ourselves or punish evildoers. When the apostle Peter, with a sword, cut off the ear of a man, Christ rebuked him, saying, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt. 26:52, John 18:10-11).

To the Christian, Paul says, *(Continued on page 28)*



# Are You Using the Keys to Family Peace?

*God's Word is full of instruction for peacemaking.  
Here are three areas in which you can  
develop and maintain peace in your family.*



By Clyde L. Kilough

Could you sit down in your living room with a group of today's world leaders — Ronald Reagan, Yuri Andropov, Menachem Begin and Yassar Arafat, for example — and demonstrate how they could be at peace by showing them how your “kingdom,” your family, is governed?

Somebody needs to!

The family of man is certainly not at peace and our leaders continue to fail miserably at finding it.

World leaders giving speeches about peace often quote extensively from the prophet Isaiah concerning the world's need to “beat their swords into plowshares” (Isa. 2:4).

They avoid mentioning, however, Isaiah's vital conclusion: “The way of peace they have not known” (Isa. 59:8)! Nearly 6,000 years of human history have proven Isaiah's observation to be absolutely true.

People want peace and need peace. We sing about it, talk about it, hold summit conferences and proclaim it, yet we never seem to permanently find it. Why? Is peace that hard to find? The answer is yes!

Not only is it hard to find, it is impossible for man to find because this world has cut itself

off from the only source of true, lasting peace.

Christ made it plain in John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.” Analyze that. How much peace does this world give, whether in government, religion, families or even in people's minds? Very little. And what little peace there is from time to time is guaranteed not to be lasting.

## Peace in the family

What about, then, the peace that Christ said He would leave with us — those called, converted individuals — real Christians — who are not cut off from the source? How much peace, which is one of the basic fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22), do you have?

Is your little family kingdom a light to the world, showing how all the world could live in harmony? It should be, or at least you should be making it become such a light.

We cannot change much of the world now, but we can change our own lives, and this area of peace is something our individual lives, our marriages and our children need to show more of.

True peace comes from God and from no other source!

Does God cause confusion, tumult and instability? I Corinthians 14:33 clearly says God is

not the author of confusion, but of peace.

Let's call it for what it is, then: Fighting, bickering and disagreement in the home are authored by Satan. We cannot treat it lightly and pass it off by saying, “All marriages have fights, all kids squabble — that's just the way it is.” That certainly is the way it is in this world, all right, but that is not God's way.

## The basic, missing principle

It's a matter of cause and effect. Following God's ways will fulfill Isaiah 32:17-18 in our homes: “The work of righteousness [following God's laws] will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”

Does that describe your home? Is your home a refuge of peace? Or do you find yourself having to regularly settle arguments among your children? “Will you kids stop fighting?” — is this a common phrase in your house? Do your children hit each other, yell at each other and talk to each other in a mean way (“You stupid idiot! I'm going to tell Mom!”)?

Do you as parents argue with your children? Do you husbands and wives argue and yell at each other, or go to the other extreme and give each other the silent treatment for long stretches of time?

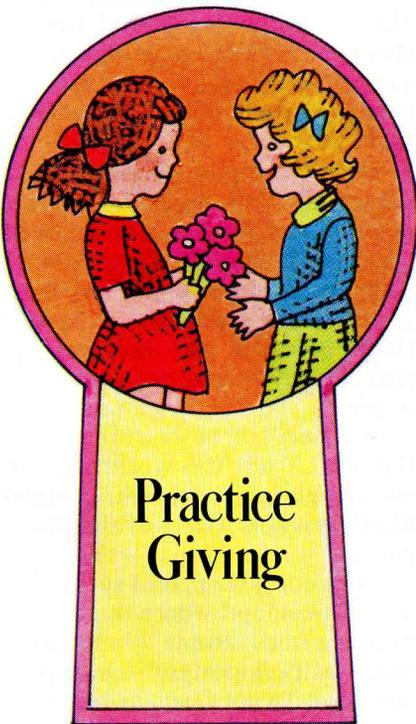
Don't underestimate the im-

portance of overcoming such actions. Satan will exploit those weaknesses to trouble you physically and spiritually.

How can we, then, improve in this vital area? How can we learn to be true peacemakers? By going to the revealed Word of God, the Bible, and becoming more thoroughly grounded in the prescriptions for peacemaking, principles this world has missed.

The most basic principle is found in Psalm 119:165: "Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble." The law of God, magnified and rightly kept in spirit as well as in letter, is designed to bring peace. Whenever your family situation is not peaceful, God's laws are being broken.

Let's examine three basic principles, based on God's law, that you can incorporate into your home. The Bible contains other specific points as well, but establishing these three fundamental areas will certainly put you on the road to peace.



First, learn — and really learn deeply — and then diligently practice the way of giving. The way of giving makes peace. The way of getting destroys it.

Make sure you teach your children the way of giving, too. Children tune in at a young age to the attitude of getting things for self. The *get* attitude destroys peace on any level of human conduct, whether among nations or among children. It is important to instill God's commandments, in simple ways, into your children early in their lives.

Teaching a toddler not to grab toys from another is helping to teach him or her not to covet and steal. If you allow your child to take things from others, it won't be long till peace is disrupted.

Opportunities abound to ingrain this principle of peace into your children. Make maximum use of those occasions to actively teach them.

For instance, if you see on television some starving children, take time to teach your own children the related lessons that apply to our lives.

"Those little boys and girls are starving because the grown-ups are fighting wars," you might say. "Wars are when a lot of people fight, usually because they are trying to take something away from the other country. God hates that fighting. That's why when you fight with your brother we have to correct you. Fighting only hurts people."

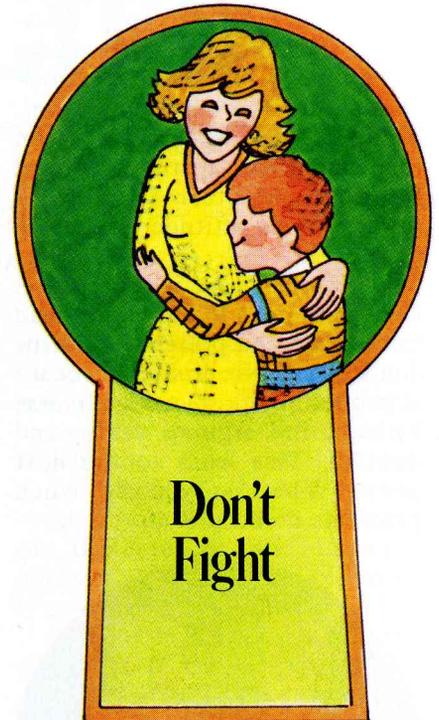
Such teaching can be very effective on young, impressionable minds.

Where does fighting come from? The *get* attitude — the way opposite to the giving way God intends for us to practice (Jas. 4:1-3).

How about in marriage? Can two people who are giving to one another 100 percent ever fight? Proverbs 13:10 tells us that by pride comes only contention. Selfish pride, in some shape or form, is at the root of any lack of peace in the home. Pride is self-centered, part of the way opposite to giving.

Learn to view life from these two standpoints, *give* versus *get*, and see how one way builds peace and the other destroys it. Think

deeply about it and see what can be changed in your family to better practice the giving way. Work together. Do favors, unasked, for each other. Be nice, be giving. Teach your children to do so as well and just see if peace does not begin to increase.



Second, determine that there will be no fighting in your home. Make it a rule. Granted, there will be times when someone may make you angry, frustrated or moody, but exercise some character and refuse to get into an argument. In times of disagreement, even if one is right and one is wrong, if both parties start fighting, that makes both of them wrong.

Simply put, good Christians don't fight.

Christ set the example, "that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, Nor was guile found in His mouth'; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten" (I Pet. 2:21-23). Why didn't He? Because it results in a wrong attitude, which leads to wrong actions.

Christ was enough in control of Himself that He would not, as

Illustrations by Terry Smith

I Peter 3:9 says, render evil for evil or reviling for reviling. It takes two to carry on a fight or argument, and Christ showed us it doesn't have to be done that way.

When children start fighting over something, regardless of the situation, all who are fighting should be corrected and disciplined. Teach children the source of fighting — lift human controversies to the spiritual level. Teach them how Satan can influence their attitudes toward fighting and steer them back toward God's attitude. It can be done.

Determine there will be peace. Does that mean to bury your head in the sand and pretend problems don't exist? No, it simply means to not let any problems get worse by bickering, arguing, yelling and fighting. This leads to the next point. What do you do when problems do occur?



Third, determine to solve problems in a quiet and peaceful manner, with God's help.

Do you go to God first with your family problems, then resolve them peacefully?

Psalm 34:14 tells us to "seek peace, and pursue it." What is the

first step? Verse 15 says: "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And his ears are open to their cry." You begin seeking and pursuing peace by talking to God about it. This should automatically be the first thing we do, not the last, as is often the case.

The effect that God's Spirit can have on a home when God is sought first is truly amazing. When your children are mean to each other and fight, march them into their bedroom and have them kneel down and pray about it and for each other, asking God to help them treat one another with love and care and a giving attitude.

Husbands and wives, the same thing applies. When dissension arises and one is spiritually mature enough to suggest: "Let's not fight. Let's go and pray about this" (and the other is spiritually mature enough to accept that sound advice), God enters the picture and can then begin to author peace.

Of course, your prayers cannot be from the self-righteous standpoint of, "God, make them see where they are wrong."

Pray in a repentant attitude of asking God to show you what you are doing, to give you the wisdom you need to avoid saying the wrong things that only inflame the situation, to put in your mind the traits of gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, longsuffering, love and the ability to show these fruits to your mate.

It's pretty tough to get up from heartfelt prayer, having humbly laid your troubles before God, and start fighting again.

We need God's help as well in restraining our carnal tendencies to avoid turmoil in the first place. It's easy to yell, easy to lash out, easy to snub, but we have to keep in mind that these actions do not establish the peace that Christ left with us.

Everyone has a hand in maintaining peace, but in the family kingdom, as in the nation, the example set by the leaders for the followers is all important. If the parents yell at one another, the children learn to yell at each

other. If the parents snub and stop talking to each other, so will the children. After all, that's the way they've been taught.

We teach by example, but also by instruction. Teach your children to avoid creating problems and how to solve problems correctly when they do arise. Bear in mind they will continue wrong practices only if allowed to.

Don't allow them to call each other names such as "Stupid" or "Dummy" (to say nothing of the much worse names used in the world today, even by small children). Mean or insulting names only arouse resentment. Resentment does not make for peace.

Instead of tattling on each other all the time, children should learn to come and say, "Mom, we have a problem that needs solving." Teach your children early in life the important lesson that everyone in the home is responsible for keeping the peace.

### **Dwell in unity**

These points are basic and simple. Yet name one nation today that is following even one of them. The kingdoms of this world just do not know the way to peace, but the kingdoms of our homes should.

David wrote in Psalm 133:1, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" It really is something to behold. Think how many homes you know of that are truly peaceful and harmonious. Sad to say, there may not be many.

We need to be learning to be different from the world now, if we are going to teach the world God's way in the world tomorrow.

So recognize where peace comes from and where the lack of peace comes from. Understand how vitally important it is to pursue peace with God, in our own lives and in our homes. Then, someday soon, we'll be able to show the entire world how to be at peace when we rule with Jesus Christ, the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). □

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# Why the Christian Life?

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*Few today understand the awesome purpose —  
the vital significance — of real Christianity! Do you?*

**W**hat exactly is the purpose of the Christian life?

Why does God leave His people in “this present evil age” (Gal. 1:4) after their definite commitment of repentance and baptism?

Why must we endure strains, tests, trials and even setbacks, all the while very much aware that we can stumble and fall and end up castaways (I Cor. 9:27)?

Few questions are more important!

They touch on vital issues for the true Christian: What is his code of conduct? How much does God expect of him? Why do some — even some who really repent and receive God’s Spirit — abandon the Christian life? How may we guard against the same tragedy?

## **God’s law in force**

God communicates unmistakably to us how we must live — by His every word. Christ put it clearly in Matthew 4:4.

“But doesn’t the New Testament totally supersede the Old?” some ask. “Didn’t Paul say that grace abrogates the Ten Commandments? Aren’t we only supposed to live by love?”

People have many different ideas about the Christian life. Speculation abounds. But people — fallible, fragile, erring mortals like ourselves — have no power in

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By K. Neil Earle

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the face of death. People cannot impart eternal life to us (Matt. 10:28). Only God’s opinions count on these vital questions. And there are some real shocks — some startling opposites to what people suppose — in the Scriptures:

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

“But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets” (Acts 24:14).

“So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God” (Rom. 7:25).

These are direct quotes from the apostle Paul, who purportedly taught against God’s law. Jesus Christ Himself stated, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets” (Matt. 5:17). Yet millions mistakenly think He did.

Furthermore, the New Testament defines the new covenant relationship thus: “‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah . . . For this is the covenant that I will make

with the house of Israel: After those days,’ says the Lord, ‘I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people’” (Heb. 8:8, 10).

At almost every turn, it seems, the Bible teaches the diametric opposite of what people commonly assume.

A real Christian lives by every word of God.

## **God’s Church exists today**

At the time we repent we awake to the mind-jarring fact that this is Satan’s world (II Cor. 4:4) and that we have all been willing accomplices of Satan, deceived by our own drives and desires as unwitting agents in his diabolical system of sin, hopelessness and death (Eph. 2:1-3).

Real repentance is responding to God’s call with conviction and urgency, answering God’s divine summons to flee spiritual Babylon (Rev. 18:4).

God’s representatives help bring us to real repentance. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Indeed, Christ’s ministry can discern serious repentance (John 20:23).

Here is where some people stumble!

A world suspicious of all authority is bothered by the fact that God uses human instruments to help reconcile the world to Himself (II Cor. 5:18). God uses

human agents (I Cor. 12:27-30). God insists that He has elected to save humanity through the "foolishness of the message preached" (I Cor. 1:21). Christ conferred authority upon His true ministers (Mark 16:15-16, Matt. 28:18-20).

God's true Church is indeed a spiritual organism, but a definite, literal, physical organization as well (Acts 8:3).

Do you know — and know that you know — where God's Church is today?

Christ said it would exist at the end time (Matt. 16:18). One must exercise prudence and caution in this era of religious confusion (II Tim. 3:13), but sincere seekers of truth would also do well to emulate Ethiopia's capable first-century finance minister. Notice:

"Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.

"Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go near and overtake this chariot.' So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' " (Acts 8:26-31).

What is the point for us today? Just this: The well educated, intelligent Ethiopian eunuch needed human teachers. Though he was a studious, diligent man, he was willing to submit to God's human representatives (John 13:20). He didn't know it all. He needed trained and accredited representatives of the living Christ to instruct him.

"So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the

water" — notice that baptism means complete immersion in water (Acts 8:38-39).

And we cannot baptize ourselves! We need the Church of God and the balanced, concerned teaching of God's ministers. This should be obvious, but some forget it after baptism (Acts 5:3-4). The priceless Holy Spirit that begets us as God's children comes through the laying on of hands by Christ's ministers — and only through them (Acts 8:14-17).

### Steps to salvation

The watery grave of baptism, symbolizing the death of the old self, and the laying-on-of-hands ceremony, which gives us access to the life-giving, energizing, Holy Spirit of power — these are fundamental steps to becoming a real Christian (Heb. 6:1-2). Yet God makes both ceremonies possible only through His Church, specifically through the ministry He has chosen (Eph. 4:11-12). For an in-depth explanation of the laying-on-of-hands ceremony, see the box on pages 12 and 13.

We surrender to God at baptism. In effect we say, "God, through your Word and your Church, please teach me the right way to live!"

And what does God tell us to orient our lives around? What is our life's new direction after baptism and the laying on of hands?

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13). The "one body" spoken of here is the Body of Christ, the Church, "which He purchased with His own blood" (Col. 1:18, Acts 20:28).

The Church's goals and purposes become our own. Only that one true Church possesses the keys to the kingdom of heaven — the essential spiritual knowledge we will need to grow, to endure, to qualify for our ultimate destiny — membership in the universe-ruling, royal Family of God (Matt. 16:19, Rev. 21:7).

Some forget this. They foolishly imagine they can achieve salva-

tion apart from God's Church. They forget where they learned the basic truths necessary to even comprehend the plan of salvation (II Tim. 3:14). Though we are called as individuals, we are at baptism plunged into a group, a small but highly motivated organization with an urgent task to accomplish in this world.

An individual Christian cannot accomplish the global work Christ commissioned to the Church. A group effort is needed under God's government, which is exercised in God's Church.

How can "Lone Ranger" Christians please God? "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house" (Matt. 5:15).

Growing Christians are zealous to attend Church services, Bible studies and, in the right measure, unifying and uplifting Church activities (Heb. 10:25). They are profitable servants, going above and beyond responsibility (Luke 17:10).

Others carelessly relax after baptism. They forget the urgency and commitment of real repentance. They settle into a comfortable rut. Few oversights are more deadly!

Yes, baptism forgives past sins. Yes, the laying on of hands gains us access to God's Holy Spirit. Yes, that is the right beginning.

But there is much more to real Christianity, even yet!

### Stir up the Spirit

The plain truth is that a real Christian can quench the precious Holy Spirit of God (I Thess. 5:19). Even Timothy was admonished, by Paul, to "stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (II Tim. 1:6).

Some run out of steam. The urgency, the interest, the enthusiasm that produced real changes before baptism wanes. They are easy victims for discouragement. Depression and despair are fertile ground for Satan (II Cor. 2:11). Discouragement is often triggered by the letdown we feel when we know we're not making

the progress we should. Some, feeling condemned, go from this to the next step: slowly slipping away from Church activities, fellowship, Bible studies and even Church services (I John 2:19).

Others cover up their lack of progress by adopting a hostile, aggressive attitude. They resent the concerned correction of the ministry (Heb. 13:17). They turn bitter, resentful, critical (Heb. 12:15). Plagued with guilt and self-pity, they gradually feel awkward and uncomfortable around God's people. The all-out commitment of repentance and baptism gradually weakens under this slow, debilitating bombardment (verses 5-6).

God never forsakes us! We forsake Him. We can actually "neglect so great a salvation" (Heb. 2:3). It can happen to any of us.

### **Baptism only the beginning**

Real overcomers know that baptism marks only the beginning of the Christian life. They deeply treasure the minute portion of the Holy Spirit imbued by the laying on of hands and proceed to diligently and singlemindedly ask God for more of it in fervent prayer, Bible study and fasting (Luke 11:13, Jas. 5:16).

Yes, sad to say, some people make only certain outer changes at baptism (I Cor. 3:3). Some merely switch days from Sunday to Saturday as their time of religious observances. Some smugly take pride in the fact that they generously boost their religious contributions to 10 percent. Not a few feel quite superior that they see through the foolish spectacles of Christmas and Easter. They are those who have trouble understanding why others miss the plain meaning of the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles.

All of this — Sabbath keeping, tithing, Holy Day observance — all of these obvious fruits of the Christian life are absolutely necessary to please God (I John 3:22). But real Christianity goes beyond that. Remember the Pharisees? They punctiliously performed external shows of obedience to God but hadn't even begun the tremen-

dous task of changing their human nature (Matt. 7:21).

Christ offered this witness against them: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Matt. 23:23).

### **A living sacrifice**

Baptism only begins the Christian life — a "race," Paul calls it, something we should work at, get better at (II Tim. 4:7). The precious and exquisite gift of God's Holy Spirit gives us the power to make real progress on overcoming our problems. But the Holy Spirit must be continually stirred up, increased, used.

And how is that done? By prayer — much prayer. In deep, meaningful, personal Bible study. By regular fasting, searching our lives for the lacks and deficiencies.

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If there were not an elect, a group writing God's laws inside their hearts by the power of God's Spirit . . . then, Scripture reveals, God would allow human life to be utterly obliterated . . .

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Paul magnificently crystallized the Christian life in two powerful sentences: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2).

### **Our part in God's Work**

Can anything be plainer? Real Christianity is deep, inner change. It is a lifelong calling to renew the mind (Phil. 2:5), recast the thoughts (II Cor. 10:5), rework the personality (Acts

9:21), restructure the emotional responses (Acts 20:35).

The prophet Amos asked, "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3). You cannot agree with God until you find out what is uppermost on His mind. To walk with God, you must actively pursue His goals.

So what is No. 1 on God's mind right now? What is it that all of Scripture pivots around? Can we know? Yes, we can — definitely. The answer is in Acts 3:19-21:

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

There it is! The No. 1 thing on God's mind right now is the imminent return of Jesus Christ to set up the Kingdom of God!

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The key, then, to thinking like God thinks and to walking in harmony with Him is to do our part in helping establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

Do we have a part in that? Absolutely. Dozens of scriptures reveal that a real Christian is actually in training during this physical life for divine rulership in the Kingdom of God (Luke 22:29-30, Rev. 2:26, 3:21).

Right now, God wants the announcement of Christ's soon coming Kingdom trumpeted to the ends of this earth (Matt. 24:14). God will not pour out the awesome plagues of the book of Revelation unless humanity is warned first (Amos 3:7).

This enormous task can only be

accomplished by a group, a small (Luke 12:32) but well organized and highly dedicated body of people, a group reaffirming their commitment to their calling every day through the power of God's Spirit (II Cor. 4:16). Just as the early apostles needed the backing and zealous support of a highly motivated Church of God, so does Christ's modern-day apostle (I Cor. 12:28).

This is the whole purpose of the Christian life!

Yet how few understand the awesome, mind-splitting significance of this way of life! Listen: If there were not an elect, a group writing God's laws inside their hearts by the power of God's Spirit (II Cor. 3:3), a tiny nucleus of believers amidst a dying civilization who prove to God that, with His Spirit, overcoming is possible, interpersonal relationships can work (Mal. 4:5-6), human nature can be changed and people can become pleasing

to God — if there were not such an absolutely crucial project being accomplished — then, Scripture reveals, God would allow human life to be utterly obliterated (Matt. 24:22).

We are part of that monumental Work! Every growing Christian knows this! It is his motivation, his consuming interest in life, his real vocation (Eph. 4:1).

### Living real Christianity

Without this energizing, clear-

# 'Laying on of Hands'

The doctrine of the "laying on of hands" is of critical importance to real Christians. It is through this ceremony that God imparts His Holy Spirit to those truly called, repentant and in the process of dedicating their lives to God's service.

In the Bible, this ceremony was used in a wide variety of circumstances. It was generally performed by an individual ordained or commissioned by God.

The ceremony centered around God's servant praying aloud as he placed his hands on the recipient of his petitions. It was a formal request to God, usually for a specific blessing, gift or authority, as in an ordination. It was usually a simple, short ceremony, but filled with meaning.

Let's notice some of the interesting and varied ways in which men of God have used the laying on of hands.

### Ordination

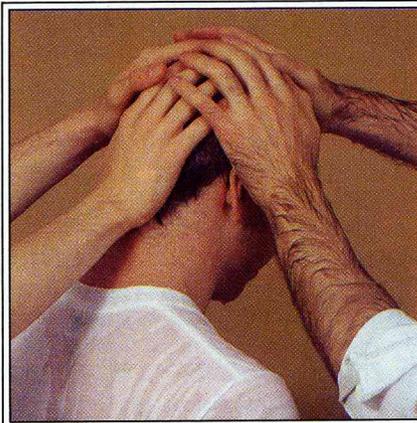
One of the earliest recorded biblical examples of this doctrine is found in Exodus 29. The occasion was an ordination ceremony. Interestingly enough, hands were laid on animals by the persons being ordained.

In Exodus 28:1 God commanded Moses to set apart Aaron and Aaron's four sons to be priests.

In Exodus 29:10-11 we read: "You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull. Then you shall kill the bull before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting." Verses 15-20 state that

they were to do likewise with the two rams.

Why did they do this? Aaron and his sons were commanded to lay their hands on the animals' heads to sym-



bolize their sins, their guilt being transferred to the animals, which then suffered the penalty of sin Aaron and his sons should have received — death.

Of course, this all had symbolic meaning, since only Christ's blood really atoned for sin.

The laying on of hands in this example symbolized the cleansing and purifying of the priests through the transfer of their sins to the animals. The laying on of hands often symbolizes a transfer, transmittal or granting of special gifts, blessings or authority — elements that are literally priceless — things that are only God's to give.

"And you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of meeting, and

you shall gather together the whole assembly of the children of Israel. So you shall bring the Levites before the Lord, and the children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites; and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord, as though a wave offering from the children of Israel, that they may perform the work of the Lord. . . .

"Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine. After that the Levites shall go in to service the tabernacle of meeting" (Num. 8:9-11, 14-15).

Of course, the leaders' hands had no magical or mystical qualities. They merely symbolized and formally emphasized that God, not man, gave them authority and set them apart for a particular job.

This demonstrates one of the great lessons of the laying on of hands — that God works through man, even in ordaining His own servants.

The Worldwide Church of God practices this doctrine today in ordaining qualified men to be deacons and ministers, and qualified women to be deaconesses.

Notice the New Testament example of ordaining deacons. The 12 apostles had been presented with seven men who were to be deacons, "whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them" (Acts 6:6).

Acts 13:2-3 records the ordinations of Barnabas and Paul: "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to

cut purpose, we can lack the zeal and enthusiasm necessary to constantly drive ourselves before God's throne in daily prayer, in regular fasting, in claiming the strength to defeat our frustrating, ensnaring problems.

Blinded to these awesome stakes, some begin to retrogress (Heb. 2:1). God doesn't forsake them. They, through neglect, discouragement, defeat, bitterness, have forsaken the great God, the ever living, all

powerful One who offers in His Word a hope stronger than the steady drip drop of petty annoyances and personal irritations, a hope even stronger than death (I Pet. 1:3).

How much better to continually reinforce in our minds what the baptism covenant was all about: only the first pioneering steps in a new way of life — a disciplined life wherein our allotted span is spent serving God's purposes, not our own — a life dedicated to

furthering God's grand and global Work rather than spinning off into our own shortsighted, temporary pursuits.

Jesus Christ, our Example, said, "I must be about My Father's business" (Luke 2:49)!

That is real Christianity!

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). □

Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."

### Receiving the Holy Spirit

Christ gave the ministers of His Church the authority to baptize those who have truly repented of their sins. Along with the physical act of baptism is promised the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands.

Notice the example in Acts 8. Philip went to the city of Samaria to preach the Gospel. Many believed and were baptized. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the Gospel had been preached at Samaria, they sent Peter and John, "who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (verses 15-17).

Notice: These disciples had been baptized days or even weeks before and had not received the Holy Spirit. God withheld it until Peter and John laid hands on them. God respected the order and authority He vested in His ministers. He granted His Spirit when they laid hands on them. For more information, write for our free reprint, "How You Can Be Imbued With the Power of God."

### Healing

The ceremony of laying on of hands is also used in cases of healing. Christ set the example: "Now when the sun was setting, all those who had anyone sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid

His hands on every one of them and healed them" (Luke 4:40).

Mark 6:4-5 relates another example. When Christ came to His own community, He found such little faith that He remarked: "'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.' Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them."

Concerning His true ministers, Christ stated, "They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:18). While many professing Christians know nothing of God's promise to heal, others make a public mockery and display of what they think is the healing power of God.

James 5:14 is a command from God to those who are sick: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

No minister's hands are special or holy. No olive oil has any mysterious power. It is God Himself who heals through His Holy Spirit, but He has prescribed a physical act for us to follow to show our faith and trust in Him and to show our acceptance of the authority He has placed with His servants.

### Setting apart

The book of Genesis contains a moving example of the laying on of hands — the time when Jacob blessed his two grandsons. Jacob was an old man and knew his time was short. He asked his son Joseph to bring the two boys to him.

"Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced

them. And Israel said to Joseph, 'I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!'

"So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.

"And he blessed Joseph, and said: 'God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth'" (Gen. 48:10-16).

Jacob went on to bless the boys individually, handing down the blessings promised to Abraham. The laying on of hands was symbolic of this transferal by God's authority.

The laying-on-of-hands ceremony is relevant to this society — to you and me! God is alive and actively dealing with mankind today through a group of human beings, a Church doing His Work. And He has provided in this day, as the Bible records He always has, spiritual guides, ministers, to represent Him, to oversee His Church. And He has given them jurisdiction to carry out their jobs.

The laying on of hands is the outward ceremony used in the delegation and use of that authority. God respects it and we should, too! □



# ***Run the Race of Your***

*Will you finish this Christian race and claim the prize of eternal life?*

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By Brian D.L.R. Smith

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**T**he Monaco Grand Prix stands out as one of auto racing's most challenging, exciting and treacherous events.

Run on the narrow, twisting streets of Monte Carlo, the race is always difficult, and the 1982 version was no exception.

This was the 40th time the annual event took place. Many competitors started the race, but

the demanding nature of the grand prix claimed numerous casualties and retirements. Some competitors simply ran out of steam and fell by the wayside.

This is normal in this race; a large number of those who start do not finish. After more than 90 percent of the distance, though, a respectable number of competitors were still involved.

Then bad weather struck, creating all sorts of problems and almost impossible driving conditions. The temptation to give up was almost irresistible. But having come so far and being so near

the end, most of the drivers struggled on, hoping to finish.

But some competitors misjudged the conditions, which became so bad that many went off the track — even some of the favorites. Then, on the last lap, the two leading drivers ran out of fuel, and the third-place man found himself not only winning the first prize, but also being the only finisher!

## **The Christian race**

By analogy, we as true Christians can draw many spiritual lessons from this race. Let's look at



**Spectators** line Monte Carlo streets, above, during annual grand prix. Many who start the race fail, for various reasons, to complete the course (below).



# ir Life!

some of them.

We all have problems — in our marriages, in our families, at work or school and in our spiritual lives. But we have a goal — a prize well worth winning — that keeps us going! That great goal — the perfect prize — is the one offered by God to every human being — the incredible human potential of becoming part of God's spiritual Family.

In the Bible, the number 40 signifies trial and testing, and the 40th Monaco Grand Prix was certainly that. But life itself is a difficult period of trial and testing in which we are to build character and learn right ways.

In what is known as the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus Christ summed up the purpose of life for us when He said, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). We couldn't be given a more difficult task!

The Monte Carlo racing circuit is far from the fastest in the world. It is one of the slower races because it takes place on the town's roads (closed to ordinary traffic, of course!). Yet the Monte Carlo raceway is one of the most difficult in the world. It is narrow, uneven and tortuous, with hairpin curves and even a dark tunnel. Progress is difficult and total concentration is vital to avoid accidents that could easily prove fatal.

Isn't life like that? To win our race and gain the prize of eternal life, we are told to "enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

Many competitors started this grand prix, but by the race's later stages some had fallen out. That sounds like

what happened in the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:4). And those grand-prix participants who ran out of fuel may well remind us of the story of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. This parable shows that we can fail to reach our life goal because of lack of forethought and planning. God's Spirit is essential fuel for Christians, and we need, so to speak, a reserve supply on hand at all times for emergencies.

Even at this late stage at Monaco, with all the retirements, the race still appeared to be running much as it had in previous years. There was no hint of what was to come. Perhaps some competitors were complacent, satisfied with their positions. The Bible warns us not to have a complacent, self-satisfied attitude near the end of our spiritual race, or we will miss out in a most agonizing way (II Pet. 3:3-4).

## Adverse conditions

At Monte Carlo, the worst problems did come near the end of the race, when it started to rain.

It's difficult enough to drive a racing car equipped with dry-weather tires on a circuit already carrying a lot of worn-off rubber plus the residue of oil leaks. Add rain to the track and the surface becomes as treacherous as ice, and it becomes extremely difficult to stay on the track, even at reduced speed. Steering becomes almost inoperative and the car is likely to slip and slide

*(Continued on page 29)*



Photos: Thomas Zimmermann, FFG, Sigma, Bertrand Laforet, Gamma



# A Question of Attitude

*Living the Christian life demands that we develop right attitudes and motivations. Here are some attitudes that we should definitely not develop.*

**H**as anyone ever accused you of being in a “bad attitude”?

What, exactly, is a “bad attitude”?

It’s easy, of course, to tell when others are not rightly motivated — not thinking as true Christians should — isn’t it? After all, you can hear their nasty remarks. You can see the wrong things they do and the selfishness they display. You may wonder, How can anyone be so bad?

Good question! But how about you? Aren’t you, at least and maybe more than occasionally, in a similar frame of mind? Do you abhor your own behavior as much as you do others’? Do you always recognize when you are in a bad attitude? Are you deeply, honestly aware of it?

Perhaps you mislead someone — or maybe cloud the issue or exaggerate the facts. Or you are harsh toward a friend. Or you turn down an opportunity to help. Are you converted enough to repent of your mistake, to try to repair the damage and to do what you are supposed to do?

Some people are only in a good

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By Dibar K. Apartian

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attitude when everything goes well with them — when their needs are fulfilled to their own satisfaction. But is there any merit in that? Can you still be in a good attitude when you are sick or when you lose a job or when people spread false rumors about you? Can you still fully live the Christian way when things get really tough?

Attitude spells success or failure, depending on whether the attitude is good or bad. A good attitude can mean a happy home, a pleasant job situation, genuine friends — certainly a closer relationship with God. But a bad attitude can result in a broken home, unhappy surroundings, frustrations and loneliness!

For the true Christian, having the right attitude is all-important. God judges us according to our attitudes! Having the right attitude is our key to God’s Kingdom.

## **After God’s heart**

Consider the criterion God used to choose David to be king over Israel.

When God told Samuel to go to the house of Jesse to find out which of Jesse’s sons God would select to replace King Saul, Samuel first looked — as we all do — at the sons’ appearances.

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart’ ” (verse 7).

And God chose David. But why? What made David, and not his brothers, a man after God’s own heart? The Bible clearly reveals the answer in one single verse: “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will” (Acts 13:22).

Notice it! David was a man after God’s own heart because he was ready and willing to fulfill all God’s will. Not his will, but God’s. Despite his many sins — and none of us is without sin — David’s heart was right.

This mental frame of wanting to obey and serve God is the essence of a right attitude — and it’s the opposite of a bad atti-

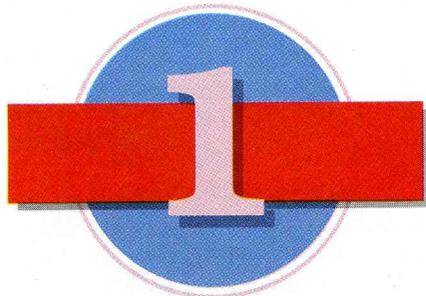
tude. When you are wrong, are you willing to admit it? The hardest thing for any human being to do is admit that he is wrong. But a willingness to see and correct error is an important part of a right attitude.

Christ gave a striking example to illustrate the importance of correcting wrong: "A man had two sons," Christ said, in parable, "and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go" (Matt. 21:28-30).

Which one of the two sons resembles you? The decisions you make may not always be wise, but after thinking things over and examining the facts, are you Christian enough to change your mind and do what you should have done in the first place?

If you are not willing to recognize your mistakes and change, then Christ will give you the same answer He gave those who heard this parable, saying, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you" (verse 31).

Let's briefly examine four major aspects of wrong attitudes. We all have wrong attitudes from time to time, and we need to overcome them. When we do, we will have made a giant step toward the Kingdom of God.



## Constantly finding fault

Some people constantly look for faults in their neighbors. They criticize and condemn, making themselves judges. This always-

wanting-to-find-fault attitude makes them feel superior — fills them with self-righteousness.

Do you realize that you can never enter God's Kingdom until you get rid of this attitude?

Christ said: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?" (Matt. 7:1-3).

Satan was the first to develop and exercise this fault-finding attitude. As the archangel Lucifer, before he became Satan, he found fault with God's government and began to want to take God's place (Isa. 14:12-14, Ezek. 28:12-15). He influenced a third of all the angels to develop this same rebellious attitude toward God, convincing them to join him in an unsuccessful attempt to knock God off His throne (Rev. 12:3-4).

Then, after God created the first man and woman, Satan convinced Eve that God was wrong to forbid Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The couple believed Satan and disobeyed God. Consequently, they were afraid when they heard the sound of their Creator's voice in the garden of Eden. They hid themselves.

When God asked them why, Adam answered, "I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Gen. 3:10).

"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" asked God (verse 11).

Adam's answer is typical of one who wants to justify himself by accusing someone else. He didn't think that he should be blamed for his disobedience. According to Adam, it was the woman's fault! "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate," he told God (verse 12).

Did Eve, then, accept any

blame? No. Her answer was just as self-justifying and accusatory as Adam's: She, too, put the blame on someone else, saying, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (verse 13).

All things considered, Adam probably thought that the fault for the whole incident was God's, since God made the serpent who, in turn, deceived the woman who convinced Adam to eat the fruit.

This reasoning, strange but familiar to us all, is called human logic: It enables us to blame others for our own shortcomings or wrongdoings. Rather than admitting and correcting our mistakes, we declare ourselves innocent and expect others to repent of having been instrumental in our misbehavior.

Before it's too late, we need to get rid of this always-wanting-to-find-fault attitude.



## Being unwilling to forgive

Do you easily forgive others? For instance, if there is a misunderstanding between you and another member of your family, are you willing to recognize your faults and to forgive his? Suppose one of your friends does you wrong and, afterward, tells you he really is sorry. Would you forgive him, or would you hold a grudge against him?

Most of us don't have a forgiving attitude. We want to get even with people, vindicate ourselves, prove our own righteousness. But one thing is sure: If we don't forgive our neighbor, God will not forgive us our sins.

In the model prayer Christ gave, He taught us to ask God to "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). Christ added: "For if you forgive

men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (verses 14-15).

God is love. He is always willing to forgive us if we truly repent of our sins. He wants us to develop this same forgiving attitude. Remember Christ’s answer when Peter asked Him how often he should forgive his brother? Was it seven times? “Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven’” (Matt. 18:22).

Afterward, Christ spoke of a servant who owed a considerable amount of money to his master. His master, filled with compassion and showing mercy, forgave him — and canceled the debt.

Shortly thereafter, the same servant was unwilling to write off a small debt someone else owed him. He “went out . . . and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all’” (verses 23-29).

But he would not. He threw his fellow servant into prison. Upon hearing this his own master called him and said: “You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?” (verses 32-33).

Of what value are these parables if we don’t learn the lessons they contain for our growth?

What would your attitude be if you were arrested on false accusations and sentenced to die? Suppose your persecutors even mocked you and spat on you. Would your attitude be one of forgiving those who falsely condemned you?

This actually happened to Stephen. He was arrested, persecuted and falsely accused. His attackers cast him out of the city and stoned him. But he knelt and “cried out with a loud voice,

‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep [died]” (Acts 7:60).

A true Christian should have this type of forgiving attitude at all times. This is the attitude Christ Himself had toward His own murderers! He said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34).

When you repent, God completely forgives and forgets your sins. You cannot enter God’s Kingdom unless you learn to forgive your brother’s sins.



## Feeling sorry for yourself

Some people are perpetual mourners — they can’t stop feeling sorry for themselves. Suffering from self-pity, they consider themselves victims of circumstance. They seem to be burdened with questions like, “Why me?” and “Why did it have to happen to me?” Somehow everything always seems to go wrong for them, and they convince themselves that they have no reason to be happy.

Are you like this? Think of all the seriously handicapped people on earth who have succeeded despite adverse circumstances. These people have worked hard in order to, in many cases, achieve simple things that those of us who are more fortunate take for granted. But whatever their trials, they had one thing in common: They never pitied themselves — never let themselves be discouraged or overcome by their physical handicaps. They didn’t waste time complaining about their misfortune.

Are you like this?

Think: If people in the world

— without God’s Spirit — can succeed despite their handicaps, how much more reason do you and I — we who have God’s Spirit of power — have to succeed?

God loves you even if you are crippled or handicapped. Those are only temporary physical hindrances. He will never forsake you. Therefore, be courageous and grateful for what you have. Stop complaining about what you don’t have! Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Greatness was never attained through self-pity.

No one will enter God’s Kingdom until he learns to appreciate life.

The apostle Paul suffered more than most people. He endured hardship, persecution and all kinds of false accusations. He would have had good reasons, humanly, to pity himself. After all, before his conversion, he was a well-respected, powerful individual, filled with zeal for a task he did (Phil. 3:4-6).

When he became a Christian, Paul just about lost everything he had, including his friends in the world. For a long time even those in the Church doubted his conversion and turned away from him. Also, he continually suffered from a thorn in the flesh — some physical handicap (II Cor. 12:7).

Wouldn’t you think that Paul had enough reasons to complain and to pity himself? But he didn’t. Instead, he wrote for our instruction: “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Phil. 4:4).

When you rejoice in the Lord you cannot pity yourself — rejoicing and pitying are opposites. How did Paul endure suffering and still remain in a good attitude? What formula did he use?

Under God’s inspiration, he reveals it to us: “Whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

The greatest curse in life is when you are cut off from God —

*(Continued on page 29)*

## Qualifying to Rule With Christ

Prepared by Richard H. Sedliacik

In the previous two ministudies we learned that we were born to rule. We are destined, if we overcome and grow in God's character, to rule this earth with Christ during the Millennium and afterward to rule the rest of the universe for eternity!

But some doubt that they could ever rule over people, while others have no desire to rule at all. Perhaps you have thought: I don't want to rule in the world tomorrow. I just want to serve God.

Jesus Christ was God incarnate — God made flesh (John 1:1-2, 14). Before Jesus became a human being He was the Creator of the universe and of mankind (Eph. 3:9). At His return to earth He will occupy the greatest position of rulership under God the Father in God's coming Kingdom (Rev. 19:16).

Yet while Jesus was on earth, He was a servant to His fellowmen. He came to serve, not to be served (Luke 22:27, Matt. 20:27-28). And even now, exalted again at the right hand of the Father, Jesus continues to serve us as our High Priest and Advocate (Heb. 4:15-16) and as Head of His Church (Col. 1:18).

Let's understand exactly how and why service to God actually entails rulership.

**1.** How can a Spirit-begotten Christian express service to God? Matt. 25:31-40.

We serve God when we serve our fellowman. Christ said, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (verse 40).

This wretched world is filled with needy, sick and lonely people who desperately need help. Hundreds of millions in today's world would benefit from even basic instruction in how to improve the quality of their physical lives, including their basic nutrition and everyday hygiene. Above all, they need to know the truth of God — God's purpose and plan for mankind. This whole world desperately needs to understand God's Word.

A deeply converted Christian will want to

help change this world and teach others God's wonderful way of life. This is, in fact, what the return of Christ and the establishment of His ruling government on earth are all about. All Spirit-begotten Christians are now in training for significant roles in helping to teach the world God's way and to administer the government of God for the good of all mankind.

**2.** What does the Bible say resurrected saints will be doing in the Kingdom of God during the Millennium? Rev. 3:21, 2:26, 5:10, 20:4-6.

We read of "thrones," "judgment" and "reigning." These scriptures clearly tell us that in the world tomorrow Christians will receive positions of rulership — opportunities to do great good in serving this world. All who are Spirit-begotten and overcoming now will become kings and priests (teachers), various administrators and administrative assistants in the Kingdom of God.

And so the Christian life today is one of overcoming, growing, preparing and developing spiritually for great service through rulership in tomorrow's world.

**3.** In the course of living their physical lives, are God's children to be learning to rule and judge? I Cor. 6:1-3.

Born-again Christians will be able to carry great responsibility with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God. That is because they will have learned a great deal about rightly applying the laws of God to many different situations during their mortal lives.

**4.** By what great principle can a person of ordinary ability and humble opportunity in this life qualify to take on far greater responsibility in the Kingdom of God? Luke 16:10. (Notice also verses 11-12.) What will Christ say to those who have been faithful over the little that He entrusted to their care? Matt. 25:21. (Read verses 14 through 30.)

We learn to rule by being faithful — con-

# MINISTUDY

scientious — in whatever we do, living the principles and laws we learn from God's Word. Even the person who considers himself or herself as having only little ability and natural talent can qualify to rule — serve — in God's Kingdom.

5. Notice further the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. In what way did the rich man (Christ) divide up his goods? Verse 15.

Notice that the quantities were not equal. He gave responsibilities according to each servant's natural ability. (The word *talent* in the King James Version refers to a measure of weight having a certain value.) Similarly, not everyone has been given the same ability. God knows some have more education, greater innate aptitudes, more personality or more physical strength than others.

But the important lesson Christ intends to teach us by this parable is that God expects us to increase our talents and abilities, no matter how small we may think they are. God wants His Spirit-begotten children to grow, both in spiritual character and their inherent abilities. He knows that in order to fulfill our purpose for being called into His ruling Family, we need to be using and developing our aptitudes now.

We learn to rule and successfully carry responsibility for the good of ourselves and others in the world tomorrow by learning to better manage the affairs, responsibilities and powers in our control today, no matter how small they may be.

Unfortunately, all too often we overlook or fail to appreciate the opportunities to grow and develop right on the job, at school or in the home — in whatever circumstance we may find ourselves.

6. Does this parable reveal that each servant who is faithful "over a few things" — that is, over his or her limited talents and opportunities of this life — will be rewarded with "many things"? Verses 20-23. Isn't it clearly rulership that Christ promised? Verses 21, 23.

Notice how fair God is. In verses 21 and 23, even though each person was originally given responsibility based on his natural abilities, both of the first two servants grew 100 percent. Christ therefore puts both essentially on an equal level in rewarding them. The Bible here reveals the principle that God will judge and reward us according

to how well we do with what we have to do with.

7. To whom has God promised rulership over the reunited nation of Israel? Ezek. 37:21-22, 24. What positions of rulership did Jesus promise to give each of His 12 apostles under David? Matt. 19:27-28. Has God alluded to others who will be in His Kingdom? Heb. 11:4-40.

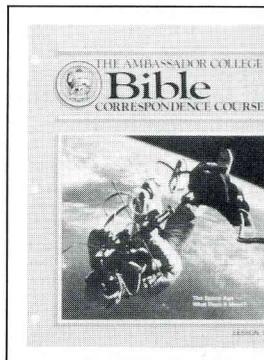
Other overcomers have gone before us and are to be in God's Kingdom. Having lived and died in the faith, they have already qualified and will be rewarded with responsibilities in God's ruling Family, though God has not specifically revealed most of their positions to us in the Bible. But every individual will have a significant and rewarding job to do, for an entirely new civilization in harmony with God's law must be built on earth during the Millennium.

8. But will there really be enough opportunities to serve for all who will have overcome? John 14:1-3.

The phrase "My Father's house" refers to the same house spoken of by Jesus when He drove the money changers and the animals out of the Temple (Matt. 21:12-13).

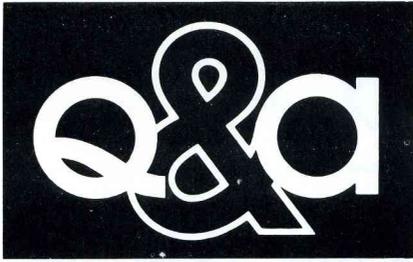
By speaking of the Temple having many "mansions" ("rooms" in the Revised Standard Version and other translations), Jesus illustrated the concept that there would be places for many assistants in the government of the Kingdom of God on earth, when Jerusalem will be the millennial capital of the world. "I will come [back to earth] again and receive you to Myself; that where I am [headquartered in the Temple of God on earth], there you may be also" (John 14:3).

Christ assures us that there will be ample opportunities and challenging, interesting positions of responsibility for all who are born into God's ruling Family! □



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**I have heard reference made to the "19-year time cycle" in the Hebrew calendar. Would you please explain what this time cycle is?**

The Western world is accustomed to a solar year of approximately 365¼ days, since the Roman calendar in common use is solar. The months of the Roman year are not related to the phases of the moon, but are of arbitrary length.

On the other hand, the Hebrew year is a solar-lunar year, and differs significantly from the length of the Roman solar year. Each month of the Hebrew calendar is related to the phases of the moon. Twelve such months, each 29 or 30 days long, result in a year that has about 354 days, or about 11 days less than a solar year of 365¼ days. A common Hebrew year is thus shorter than a Roman year. This is regularly balanced by leap years with 13 months. Leap years in the Hebrew calendar have about 384 days, which is longer than a solar or Roman year. How, then, are lunar months to be related to the natural solar year?

Every 19 solar years (of 365¼ days) the moon revolves around the earth 235 times, each lunation being about 29½ days. This remarkable astronomical relationship makes it possible to combine 12 common years (of 12 months each) and seven leap years (of 13 months each) together every 19 years. These 235 lunar months equal about 19 solar years. That is, every 19 years the sun, moon and earth return to their approximate positions with respect to each other.

Nineteen-year patterns can also be seen in history. For example, ancient Israel spent 38 years (19 x 2) extra wandering in the

wilderness. Or, as Pastor General Herbert W. Armstrong has pointed out, a "century" of time cycles or 1,900 years (19 x 100) passed from the time the Gospel had been suppressed in A.D. 53 until the Gospel began reaching Europe and other areas of the world as a whole in 1953 on Radio Luxembourg.

**How did the different races originate?**

The Bible teaches that God "made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). God's Word also tells us that Eve was the mother of all living (Gen. 3:20).

Therefore, God must have created Eve with the capability to produce children with the varied characteristics that are now manifested in the different races. There must have been great diversity in Eve's offspring.

Normally, individuals of similar characteristics are attracted to each other. The children and grandchildren of Adam and Eve would have naturally separated into families of racially similar people, and as they continued to marry within their own groups, distinct racial traits would have become established.

It is apparent, then, that God intended that there be different races. God considers all humans His children through Adam and intends that all who repent will ultimately receive sonship in His Kingdom (I Tim. 2:4, II Pet. 3:9, Rev. 21:3-7).

**Should women be ordained as preachers?**

The apostle Paul instructs in I Timothy 2:12, Revised Standard Version, "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent." See also I Corinthians 14:34.

Paul is explaining that it is not proper for women to exercise administrative ecclesiastical authority over men within the Church. In other words, women are not to become Church elders and should not give sermons.

Based upon Paul's teachings,

the Worldwide Church of God does not ordain women speakers.

The New Testament does, however, give a precedent for the ordination of deaconesses (I Tim. 3:8-11, Rom. 16:1). Apparently Aquila and Priscilla, who served under Paul's administration, were deacon and deaconess.

In the Church at that time was a powerful, effective teacher named Apollos. Apollos' knowledge was imperfect, though, and "when Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). Here we find a woman and her husband together teaching a man the way of God more perfectly. Notice also Paul's instruction in Titus 2:3-5.

So there are biblical examples of women teaching outside a formal church situation. Parts of the Bible were contributed by women — for example, Hannah's prayer, Miriam's song and the teachings of Lemuel's mother. These were included in the Bible to be read by men and women alike.

**Does Mark 16:18 mean we must handle deadly snakes to prove our faith in God, as some groups practice?**

No! This verse is a promise of protection, not a command, to those God has called to preach the Gospel (notice verse 15).

For example, God fulfilled this promise when the apostle Paul, gathering firewood, was bitten by a poisonous snake (Acts 28:1-6). It is important to realize that Paul was not purposely handling the snake. The incident was completely unexpected. God miraculously protected His servant.

Deliberately handling poisonous snakes or drinking deadly liquids, expecting God's protection, is contrary to the teachings of Christ, who said, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (verse 7).

Our booklet *What is Faith?* explains what real faith is and how to exercise it. This booklet will be sent free to any who request it. □

# STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

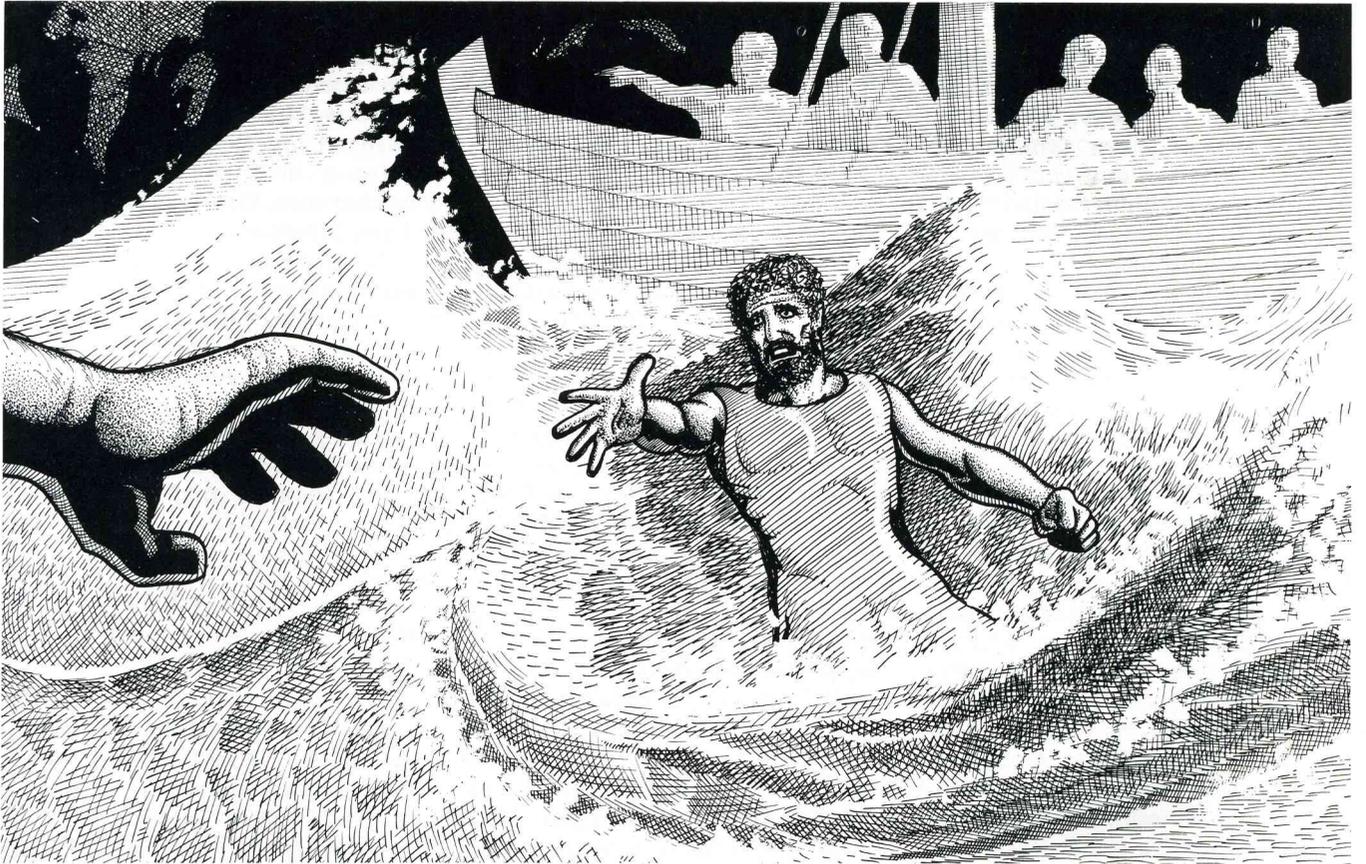


Illustration by Monte Wolverton

## Chapter 13

# Christ Walks on Water

By Shirley King Johnson

**T**he 12 disciples completed ministering in their appointed villages and returned to Capernaum. They were actually more than disciples or learners now. They were apostles. They had been sent forth with the authority of the one who sent them — Jesus — and they had used

that authority (Mark 6:30, Luke 9:10).

### John's disciples bring news

One evening two disciples of John the

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*Impetuous Peter* was walking on the Sea of Galilee's turbulent waters, just as Christ was — that is, until his faith crumbled and he began to sink. "Lord, save me!" Peter cried out.

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Jesus broke the bread and dried fish into pieces . . .  
to distribute to the thousands. For a long time He passed food  
to the apostles, yet food remained in the basket.

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Baptist came and asked to see Jesus, who greeted them warmly. "Do you have news of John?" He asked.

"Yes, sir, we have news. Bad news." The man stopped and shook his head in an expression of sorrow.

The other disciple of John stepped forward. "We're sorry to tell you, but he's dead. He was put to death."

Several of Christ's disciples uttered exclamations of dismay, but Jesus made no outward show of emotion. He asked, "What happened?"

"He was beheaded by King Herod. We buried the body and came straight to you" (Matt. 14:12).

Jesus nodded and gave each of them a silent embrace of comfort. "Thank you for all you've done. Sit down with us now and eat and rest."

Jesus soon retreated to a private place with His apostles (Matt. 14:13, Mark 6:32). Taking a boat, they crossed the lake to the rugged hill country beyond the district of Galilee.

But it was impossible to escape the crowds. Hundreds of Jesus' followers skirted the Sea of Galilee on foot and found the place where Jesus was relaxing with the disciples. Putting His Father's Work ahead of any personal desire for privacy, Jesus went to the multitude and taught them about God's Kingdom.

### **The miracle of bread and fish**

As the afternoon shadows lengthened, Jesus realized that the host of men, women and children who had listened to His sermon needed food. They had come without provisions when they heard that Jesus was in the area.

"Where are we going to get food to feed all of these people?" the disciples asked.

"It's getting late, and there's no food to be had out here anyway. You should send them to the villages so they can buy something to eat."

But Jesus replied, "You give them something to eat."

"But it would take a fortune to feed such a mob! Why, there are probably 5,000 men in this crowd, plus the women and children" (Matt. 14:21, Mark 6:44, Luke 9:14, John 6:10).

Andrew had been listening, and he broke in: "There's a boy here with a basket of food. His mother packed it for him to give to you, sir. He has five loaves of barley and two little fish. But that won't go very far with so many to feed."

"Thank you very much." Jesus accepted the basket and turned to the apostles. "Would you go among the people and ask them to sit down in orderly groups of about 50 people each, please?"

The crowd soon settled itself on the deep, green grass.

Looking upward, Jesus asked God to bless the food and the fellowship. Then Jesus broke the bread and dried fish into pieces and gave it to the apostles to distribute to the thousands. For a long time He passed food to the apostles, yet food remained in the basket. Finally everyone was served. All uneaten food was collected afterward and enough was left over to fill 12 baskets.

### **Another storm at sea**

Jesus turned to Peter. "All of you go back to the boat and cross the sea. I'll join you later" (Matt. 14:22, Mark 6:45).

As soon as the crowd had dispersed and the disciples had departed, Jesus ascended a steep hillside and found a quiet place where He could pray and be alone.

Peter led the others along one side of the

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Peter, in the bow, looked back . . . But what he saw made him freeze. There, behind the boat, was the . . . shadowy figure of a man coming toward them across the water.

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valley to the shore of Galilee where their boat was moored.

“Are you sure we should leave Him?” protested John as they began to shove off in the boat.

“He said He’ll meet us later,” Peter explained.

James motioned toward the sky. “A storm’s coming up!”

The rowing began in earnest. There was no conversation. The choppy waves developed into high swells of water that, swept by wind, smacked into the sides of the boat and threatened to drive the boat down the coastline instead of across the sea.

#### **The apostles are frightened**

Darkness fell as the heavens became cloaked in black clouds that rumbled with thunder and thrust out jagged lightning.

“We shouldn’t have come without Him,” Philip shouted against the wind, remembering another storm in which they had nearly drowned.

They took turns rowing steadily on, the storm battering their craft.

Peter, in the bow, looked back to reassure the others that Capernaum’s shore must not be far away. But what he saw made him freeze. There, behind the boat, was the faint outline of something moving. It was the shadowy figure of a man coming toward them across the water. A man? On the water? Peter couldn’t believe his eyes. The figure walked on the water, coming up rapidly to overtake them (Matt. 14:26, Mark 6:49, John 6:19). Peter shrieked.

Annoyed, James glanced up. “What’s the matter with you?”

Peter’s hands covered his face. “I can’t look.”

“Look at what?”

“Behind us.”

James and the others turned to see. Jesus Christ came up alongside the boat and He seemed to be about to pass them. All the disciples choked out a cry. “It’s a ghost!” The rowing stopped. The buffeting wind howled about them but the apostles did not notice. All eyes were on the man outside their craft.

Jesus spoke to them. “Have courage, men, it’s I. Don’t be afraid.”

The familiar voice calmed Peter’s rattled nerves. Lurching to the side of the boat, he said, “If it’s really you, sir, tell me to walk on the water to you.”

“Come.”

Peter climbed over the side and stepped down onto the troubled sea. Finding that he did not sink beneath the surface, he took another step, then another. A wave slapped against his knees. Sucking in a sharp breath at the coldness of the water, he suddenly noticed the roaring wind and the churning waters about him. Quickly his faith crumbled — it was, after all, impossible to do this, wasn’t it? Peter began to sink, and cried out, “Lord, save me!”

Jesus’ hand grasped Peter’s shoulder and Peter bobbed to the surface. “How little faith you have,” Jesus said with a shake of His head. “Why did you doubt?” He gave Peter a boost into the boat and climbed in after him. The wind died away immediately and the storm was over.

Seeing Peter’s distress as he stood dripping before the other apostles, Jesus embraced the impetuous man. Peter began to smile; then he gave a great laugh. Jesus joined in.

Unable to grasp the humor of the incident, with their minds on the miracle of Jesus walking on water, the other apostles bowed in worship, exclaiming, “You are the Son of God!” □

**I**t's going to happen sooner or later — probably sooner than later!

It's inevitable when people get together — husbands and wives, bosses and employees, business associates, friends who have known each other for years, people who have just met.

Someone is going to be offended — get his feelings hurt because of what someone else does or says, misunderstand a message, misinterpret a situation.

And, sad to say, offenses can destroy loving relationships and create long-lasting enmity and hard feelings. Even seemingly insignificant misunderstandings can, unless handled properly, fester into deep wounds that permanently divide people.

Offenses that go unresolved between two Christians can adversely affect the spiritual development of both. Notice the importance that God places on resolving interpersonal difficulties: "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23-24).

Your relationship with God depends on your obedience to this command. You can actually cut yourself off from God because of your failure to show love for another person in

the manner God prescribes (I John 4:20-21).

When you are offended, or when you offend someone else, how do you handle the problem? Do you confront it or avoid it? If you deal with the situation, how do you do so? Do you really know how to handle offenses?

#### What to do when offended

A major key to handling problems between people is found in Matthew 18:15: "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his

fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother."

While this command of God — and it *is* a command — applies specifically to members of God's Church, the principle is clear: God wants people to do something about offenses, not ignore them. He doesn't want real or imagined barriers between people.

How do you "go to your brother"? Make sure your attitude is right beforehand. Draw close to God in prayer about the situation. Evaluate the hurt you feel. Has the person really wronged you or are you overreacting? Don't let your pride get in the way.

When you approach the person, show respect for the hurt he himself feels. Be careful about accusing him of being too sensi-

tive. To you it may seem that he is making an issue out of nothing, but what may be relatively unimportant to one person can be a major consideration to another.

You must understand that admitting error will probably be difficult for the other person. Isn't it for you? The other person may offer many justifications for his actions, but give him a chance to tell his side (Prov. 18:13). You might discover that you have been wrong in feeling offended!

Be sure to choose your words carefully (Prov. 25:11-12). Don't let the hurt you have suffered ruin your communication. Restrain your emotions, consider the other person's point of view and objectively present the

# Can You Go to Your Brother?

*Your relationship with another person can be ruined by an offense. Here is God's way of dealing with offenses.*

By George M. Kackos



Photo by Hal Finch

problem. It is hard for the mind to stop justifying itself and acknowledge wrongdoing. Approaching another person with a proud, demanding and harsh attitude can keep him from seeing himself. He will become defensive and start accusing you rather than examining himself.

Be patient and gentle. "By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks a bone" (verse 15). As Proverbs 15:1 says, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." It is critical that the situation be handled with tact, sincerity and concern for the other person.

Here's another important principle to remember: Keep the dispute between the two of you at this point. Instead of going to the person himself, it is easy to discuss his real or imagined fault with others. What good does this do? None! It ruins his reputation and doesn't make you look so good either.

Not only will you still have a problem with the person, but you'll infect others with your negative feelings and information. And if the person finds out that you have discussed the problem with others, he may become even more bitter toward you. "Debate your case with your neighbor himself, and do not disclose the secret to another" (Prov. 25:9).

God wants you to keep the problem between the two of you in the hope that it can be resolved without adversely affecting others. So restrain yourself from telling others unless, in an extreme case, you would want to counsel with a minister to determine a way to approach the offending person.

### **Be willing to apologize**

Don't desire revenge or blow out of proportion your role as the wounded party. Be willing to admit your own faults. God says: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit

with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud" (Prov. 16:18-19).

Our humility is tested when we need to admit that we are wrong, but admitting our own error is a major part of solving interpersonal problems.

Healing a relationship that has been ruptured by offense is not easy. "A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle" (Prov. 18:19).

Have the mind of God when you go to your brother: "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Col. 3:12). These ingredients will enable you to do a much more effective job of talking to your offended acquaintance. If you are wrong, these qualities will enable you to apologize. The apology is vital to restoring the relationship.

And when you have resolved a problem with someone, completely forgive and forget it. Don't harbor resentment about it or bring it up later. Avoid developing bitterness over the situation (Heb. 12:15). God forgives us, after all, according to how we forgive others (Matt. 6:12).

Praying together — even fasting in some cases — may be necessary to restore the breach in your relationship.

### **What if it doesn't work?**

What should you do if your efforts fail? You go to your brother as God instructs, but the problem isn't resolved or the person reacts in a hostile manner. Should you quit trying to solve the problem?

What does God say? "But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established'" (Matt. 18:16).

Now is the time to include others. Choose these individuals carefully. They need the same right attitude as you have. All of

you need to pray and perhaps fast about the situation to receive God's guidance and strength. Go to the person with the same humility, love and truthfulness. Try to reason with him about the problem.

If your efforts fail, then, in the case of a dispute within God's Church, you will need to involve God's ministry: "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector" (Matt. 18:17).

The ministry will carefully work with the offending person in hopes of correcting his fault. However, if the fruit of repentance is not borne, stronger action must be taken (Rom. 16:17).

### **Try not to offend**

As Christians we should at all costs avoid being offensive (I Cor. 10:32-33). Still, as we noted earlier, it's not always possible to avoid offenses (Matt. 18:7). In some instances, offending people in the process of obeying God is unavoidable (Matt. 15:12-14). Being human, we will offend people. Others will offend us (Jas. 3:2).

So who's perfect? No one, yet! But perfection is the objective of those now learning to live the Christian way, in the process of qualifying to become part of God's Family (Matt. 5:48).

In the process, be careful how you conduct yourself. Be considerate of all with whom you come in contact and try to avoid giving a bad representation of God's way of life (I Thess. 5:22). Try to avoid giving someone even the impression that you are sinning. All of us have God-given emotions, but not all of us control them in the same way.

Going to your brother is a biblical, God-ordained requirement to insure that right character and relationships will be built. If we practice this principle, we will enjoy much more peace, unity and harmony in all of our relationships. □

# Commandments

(Continued from page 2)

as a nation were given the rituals of Moses to begin to develop within them a habit of obedience to God's spiritual law — the Ten Commandments.

The shedding of the blood of a lamb was a reminder that Christ would come to shed His blood to pay for our sins. Notice Hebrews 10:1-4:

“For the law” — of Moses — “. . . can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? . . . But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. FOR IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND GOATS COULD TAKE AWAY SINS.”

How plain! Salvation was not through the works of the law. Paul's whole argument throughout the New Testament was against the teaching of Judaism that salvation could be gained without faith in Christ, but through the works — the hard physical labor of offering sacrifices — of the law of Moses.

The Ten Commandments never contained ordinances prescribing sacrifices. They are an entirely separate and distinct law.

The Mosaic ordinances were, in other words, substitutes and shadows for the reality of Christ's atonement and the Holy Spirit. They were wholly subordinate to the spiritual law of God. Paul warned the Galatians that whoever sought to be justified by the works of the law — whoever sought salvation through animal sacrifices — was rejecting the sacrifice of Christ.

It is important that we understand here that *Judaism* is not the teaching of the Old Testament but an interpretation of it. Judaism is a mixture of the ordinances of the Old Testament with the false doctrines of the Jewish elders. While in Persian and Greek captivity, the Jews were influenced by the pagan idea that salvation could be

gained through penance — through giving a physical sacrifice to pay for sins, through enduring the hard physical labor of offering animal sacrifices. The pagans thought that God would be pleased by human suffering — that salvation came through denying ourselves the right and honorable pleasures of life.

The Jews took over this idea and applied it to the sacrifices that Moses had commanded merely as a reminder of sin.

## The Ten Commandments define RIGHT from WRONG

Let us, first, clearly understand just what the law of God is, and what it means.

No one will say that Christians today are to continue in sin. But how can sin be avoided, unless defined? WHAT IS SIN? John tells us — and John wrote this definition of sin about A.D. 90, in the very closing days of apostolic times. Turn to I John 3:4, and you will read that “SIN IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW.”

WHAT law? It could not be the Mosaic sacrificial and ordinance law. That could never define sin. It is, of necessity, God's law — the spiritual law. Thus, about A.D. 90, the apostle John established the fact that God's law was not, in that late day, abolished — for an abolished law could never be the definition of sin!

In A.D. 56, Paul made it clear that the definition of sin is the transgression of the law. In Romans 4:15, he says, “Where there is no law there is no transgression,” and he amplified this in the seventh chapter, seventh verse: “I would not have known sin, except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’”

Here Paul makes clear WHICH law defines sin. It is the Ten Commandments — the law that includes “You shall not covet.”

Paul could not have written that, had the law been abolished.

And certainly he did not consider it abolished when he wrote, in the 12th verse of chapter 7, “Therefore the law is holy, and

the commandment holy and just and good.” And the idea that the Ten Commandments were abolished is emphatically rejected in Romans 3:31 — written in A.D. 56, long after the crucifixion! — “DO WE THEN MAKE VOID THE LAW THROUGH FAITH? CERTAINLY NOT! On the contrary, WE ESTABLISH THE LAW.”

In Romans 8:4, Paul, in making it plain that the New Testament Church is to fulfill the righteousness of the law — that is, right doing ordained by the law — says: “That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” It is THROUGH the Spirit that Christians are to observe the law, and not through Mosaic ordinances, which were abolished.

Still later, in A.D. 60, writing to the Ephesians, Paul said: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:1-3).

Thus another of the Commandments is named, preached and represented as offering a promise if observed, by the apostle Paul in A.D. 60. Paul could not have written that had the law been abolished.

That ought to establish the fact that the apostles did not abolish the Ten Commandments, or understand them to be abolished. But, on the other hand, the apostles did understand that the typical rituals — the physical “works” of the law of Moses — were nailed to the cross!

Now let us examine one special passage, to see whether it contradicts those already quoted.

We will examine Acts 15:23-24. It says: “The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and

keep the law' — to whom we gave no such commandment."

Certainly here is one law that was not in effect. But WHICH law? Why, as the passage says, the law of physical ordinances — *the law that included circumcision!* The 22nd verse indicates the message quoted was written by Paul and Barnabas, and it was written in A.D. 49 — years before its coauthor, Paul, distinctly wrote that the Ten Commandment law was NOT void.

Certainly the Mosaic laws of ordinances and sacrifices were nailed to the cross and abolished. The reason for this is quite evident. Christ's example, faith and sacrifice and the Holy Spirit gave us a far superior aid and help and atonement. There could be no further possible need of that law of ordinances and sacrifices. That IS REASONABLE.

But can you think of any REASON under the sun for doing away with the law that defines sin — the law that establishes our relation to God and to our fellowmen? Can you think of any sane reason for abolishing the law that says "You shall have no other gods before me" — "You shall not kill" — "You shall not commit adultery" — "You shall not steal" — "You shall not covet"? Are THOSE laws out-of-date, obsolete, unnecessary?

No, there is no sane REASON for abolishing them, and there is nowhere in the Bible a passage of Scripture that says THOSE laws were abolished.

The laws abolished were the carnal, physical laws associated with sacrifices and offerings, which were reminders of sin to teach the habit of obedience. Now we have the *Spirit of God* to enable us to form the habit of obedience.

As Paul said, "For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the DOERS OF THE LAW will be justified" (Rom. 2:13).

Salvation, like national citizenship, is a free gift, BUT IT GOES ONLY TO THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO BE LAW-ABIDING MEMBERS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. □

## MURDER?

(Continued from page 5)

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh" (II Cor. 10:3). Exodus 14:14 says, "The Lord will fight for you."

The deceived billions on this earth "fight and war" but are unable to attain true peace (Jas. 4:1-2, KJV), because "the way of peace they have not known" (Rom. 3:17). But the true Christian "must not quarrel but be gentle to all" (II Tim. 2:24). He must set the proper example to the world.

What about mercy killings (euthanasia), capital punishment, killing in self-defense, taking revenge, "just" wars, abortions (killing of unborn infants) and suicide?

God, the giver of life (Gen. 2:7, Deut. 32:39), has the right to take any life if and when He chooses. But man does not have that power, unless God grants it to him. In numerous instances, God not only permitted His servants (prophets and civil leaders in the nation of Israel) to take life, but He actually commanded it under certain circumstances (I Sam. 15:3-33).

Christians should never avenge themselves, but let God do it in His own time and way (Rom. 12:19).

Are "mercy killings" permissible, since they are, supposedly, acts of mercy? No example in the Bible shows any people of God taking the life of another or their own, with God's approval, either in acts of euthanasia or suicide.

God does not, however, say that we must give our loved ones drugs or oxygen or do all within our power, such as using various machines, to force them, contrary to nature, to live as long as possible, even when they are in great pain or totally unconscious.

Though God permits capital punishment to be carried out by those duly authorized, it is wrong for those in authority to abuse this power. They should not use this power to kill the just, as

Herod did in the case of John the Baptist (Mark 6:14-29).

What about abortions? Using abortion as an alternative form of birth control is tantamount to the practice of the ancient Canaanites and others, who slew their infants in sacrifice to pagan gods such as Baal in the mistaken belief that their gods would bless them for doing so.

What about suicide? God gives us life, and only He can legitimately take it from us. Is it wrong to take one's own life, thereby violating God's Sixth Commandment? It certainly is!

### No more murder

This world does not know how to eradicate violent crimes such as rape and murder. But God not only knows how this can be done, He is going to do it, and tells us how, in biblical prophecy.

After Jesus Christ returns, "He Himself will rule them [the nations] with a rod of iron" (Rev. 19:15). The nations will then learn of "His ways" and "walk in His paths": "He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. . . . And no one shall make them afraid" (Mic. 4:2-4).

At that time the law of God will be paramount, and God's Word will be obeyed (verse 2). This will produce abundant peace.

Once Satan, the first murderer, and his demons are bound and restrained for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3), it will be possible for mankind to receive the truth, knowledge and love of God.

God will then write His laws in the minds and hearts of men (Heb. 8:8-11). Then and only then will men cease to struggle, compete, hate and murder.

At last, we shall have total peace and safety when we learn to love, fear, obey and serve the great God, keeping His laws. Then there will be no more murder on this beautiful planet! □

# Run the Race

(Continued from page 15)

at random and without warning. The urge to give up is powerful, and continuing at all — let alone with the intent of winning — requires 100 percent concentration.

The Bible says we will be faced with big problems of all sorts near the end of this age. When problems arise, people who seemed all right racing when under good conditions will drop out (Matt. 13:21, 24:10). They are only fair-weather drivers. There will be little love of fellowman left in the world (Matt. 24:12, II Tim. 3:1-5).

Philippians 3:13-14 warns us not to think we've already won. We should forget what is behind us and push forward to what's ahead. We "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." That goal is eternal life.

## Finish the course

In any race, the only way to obtain your prize is to finish the course. In the Christian race, to obtain the "prize" of salvation and eternal life, we must endure to the end (Matt. 10:22, 24:13).

How can we endure adverse conditions and resist the temptation to give up? In I Corinthians 9:25-27 the apostle Paul tells us that, just as an athlete exercises self-control in all things, he fought his body to conquer it. That is our battle day in and day out — controlling our bodies and minds and winning the struggle against Satan and his influences.

And the way we do it is the same way that Jesus Christ did it as a human being — by calling on the power of the Creator of the universe to help.

The winner of the 1982 Monaco Grand Prix had to endure to the end in order to win. And make no mistake: We as Christians are in the race of life, and to win the prize we must run the race of our lives, not giving up, to the end. □

# Attitude

(Continued from page 18)

when you are left without His Spirit. But there is no reason for you to be cut off from God. You are not alone. If you are a true Christian, you have His Spirit. Therefore, whatever your problems, you — a begotten child of God — must never feel sorry for yourself, never pity yourself (I John 3:22). You will always have the courage to go forward in life in the right attitude.



## Feeling "holier than thou"

Some people suffer from an inferiority complex; others have a vain sense of superiority. How about you? If you pity yourself, it may be that you suffer from an inferiority complex. On the other hand, if you think of yourself as being better than others — if you are boastful — then you are manifesting a "holier-than-thou" attitude.

Examine yourself! Do you think of yourself as better than others — a little more right — more generous — more Christian? When you are proven right and someone else is shown to be wrong about something, do you feel superior to them as a human being?

"Whoever desires to be first among you," said Christ, "let him be your slave" (Matt. 20:27).

The book of Proverbs gives us many admonitions regarding vanity, conceit and self-righteousness. For instance, we read in Proverbs 26:12: "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him." Or, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the

Lord weighs the hearts" (Prov. 21:2).

In other words, you might think that you have more going for you than someone else. You might consider yourself a better person — perhaps a more valuable helper! But whatever your achievements, however great they may be — if you have conceit in your heart you are in the wrong attitude. And unless you repent of that wrong attitude with all your heart, you will never enter the Kingdom of God.

"Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips" (Prov. 27:2).

Read the parable Christ gave about the prayers of a publican and a Pharisee. The Pharisee, disdainful of the publican next to him, had nothing but good to say about his own attitude, his praiseworthy deeds and his willingness to sacrifice. But the publican, realizing how insignificant he was before God, would not even raise his eyes while praying (Luke 18:9-14). God accepted the publican, but not the Pharisee!

Are you a Pharisee or a publican? Where is your greatness? What do you have that you have not received from God? Every blessing comes from God. All the glory is His (II Cor. 10:17-18).

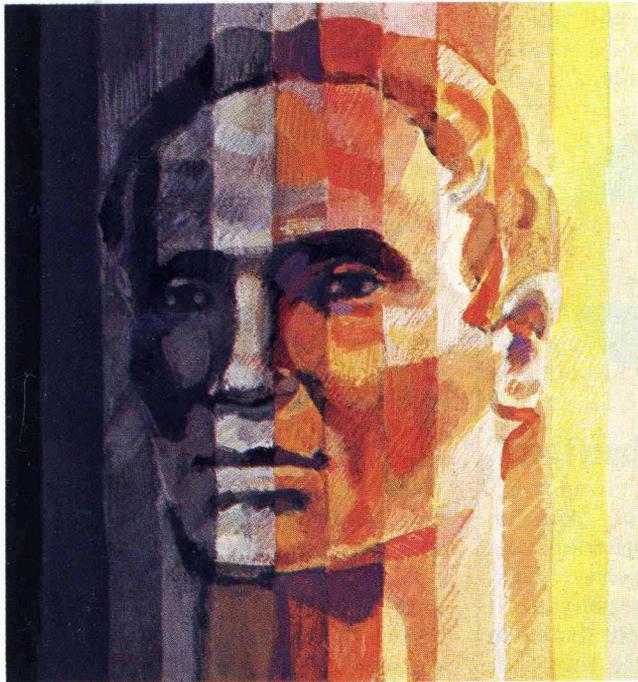
If you want to be a Christian after God's own heart, then you must get rid of conceit and boastfulness. You must serve in all humility, counting others better than yourself (Phil. 2:3). You must help without seeking glory.

God is not a respecter of persons. He loves us all and wants us all to be great. But remember: The greatest among us is the humblest of all — and the servant of all!

In this area, as well as in the case of every one of God's commandments, we need to strive mightily to have right attitudes pleasing to God.

Start the change now — don't put it off! Your attitude is the key to making you a Christian after God's own heart — and will unlock before you the door to the Kingdom of God! □

# THE EVOLUTION OF MAN.



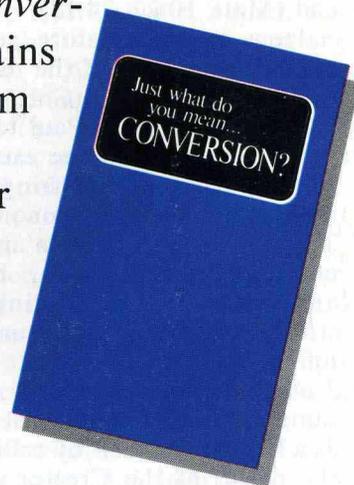
How many think a Christian is supposed to be perfect, never doing anything wrong? Suppose a Christian sins. Does that mean he is a hypocrite — not a Christian after all?

The startling truth is that few people understand the process of conversion. And conversion *is* a

process of gradual development — a person's real evolution, if you please, from a carnal human being who has no relationship with His Creator to a literal, spirit-born child of the great God!

Satan the devil has foisted upon the world a false doctrine of evolution to explain the origin of life. But God has ordained a real evolution process — one integrally involved with man's ultimate purpose!

Our free booklet, *Just What Do You Mean . . . Conversion?* clearly explains repentance, baptism and the Christian way of life. For your copy, mail the request card in this issue or write to our office nearest you.



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