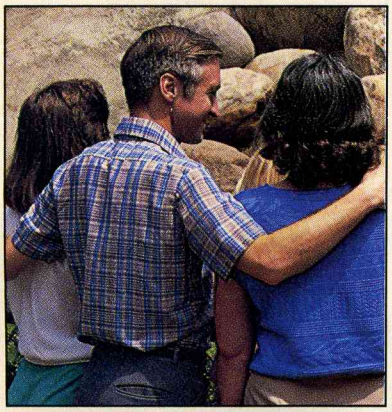
SEPTEMBER 1986

The Good News
OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



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OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

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Miracles — Are They Happening Today?
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COVER: Who among us hasn't at one time or another dreamed of "striking it rich" in some game or contest? But what does God say about gambling in all its various forms? The article beginning on page 14 explains. Illustration by Ron Chironna.

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GOOD NEWS PERSONAL

How to Convert Lemons

In this month's "Good News Personal," Publisher Joseph W. Tkach asked Editor Dexter H. Faulkner to write on the subject of facing trials in life.

Perhaps you have seen the bumper sticker that reads, "When life hands you a lemon, turn it into lemonade!"



Photos by Hal Finch

It is easier to smile at that simple statement than to practice it, but its basic wisdom is sound. The Bible records numerous examples of people who turned defeat into victory and trial into triumph. Instead of being victims, they became victors. They tasted sweet success and so can you.

To live successfully in this age and develop as Christians, we must know how to face up to trials (lemons). Over the years I have referred to a scripture in the book of James as a real source of encouragement and instruction on this subject.

"Count it all joy when you fall into various trials" (James 1:2).

Joy? Ordinarily we count it all joy when we escape trials and temptations, right? But are we missing something when we think this way? God tells us to expect trials. He doesn't say *if* you fall into various testings, but *when* you fall.

The person who expects his or her life to be easy is in for a big shock. Christ warned His disciples, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Paul wrote that "we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

These are powerful examples for us to follow!

Trials occur in numerous forms. Some trials come according to our age. Young people, teens, for example, face trials that accompany their physical growth and maturity into adulthood, and tests that come through learning to keep in check their natural human desires and bodily cravings.

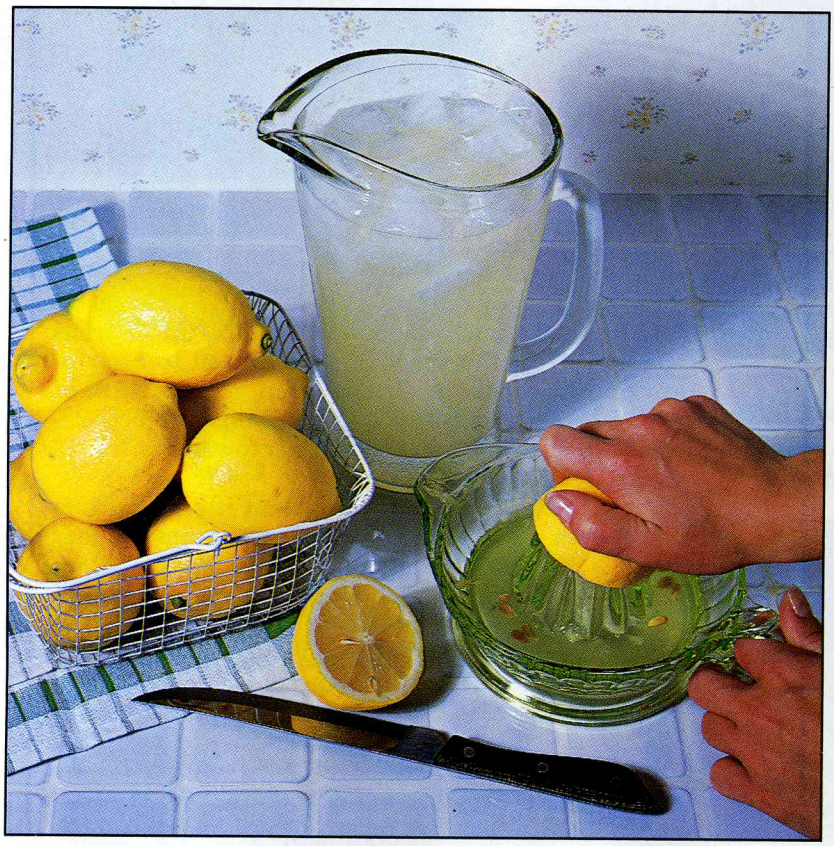
Older people are not exempt from these same tests, since the battle against sin does not grow easier as we grow older. Additional trying experiences come with old age, when things we were once able to do we can do no longer.

Specific trials come also with various responsibilities of life. Parenthood, for example, is delightful and exciting in prospect, but in reality it brings its own particular tests and difficulties when children are ill or do not respond readily to child

rearing. As one famous author put it, "To those people with no children but who think they'd like to have them someday to fulfill their lives, remember: With fulfillment comes responsibility."

Job advancement is a tremendous encouragement, but along with the added responsibilities come headaches and heartaches.

Some trials come simply because we are still human — sickness, accidents, disappointments, family tragedies. Other trials come because we are God's children. Satan, the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4), fights us daily and the world opposes us, and this makes for a lifelong battle.



In James 1:2 the phrase "fall into" does not suggest a clumsy accident. Commentaries render its meaning as "encounter, come across unexpectedly, so as to be encompassed by them [trials]." As intelligent people we certainly should not manufacture trials for ourselves.

Trials are referred to as "various" — they are as manifold and varied as the designs and colors you might view in a kaleidoscope. Peter uses the same word in I Peter 1:6: "You have been grieved by *various* trials." The trials we face are not all alike; they are like many-colored yarn that a weaver uses to make an expensive Oriental or Persian rug. God arranges and mixes the colors and experiences of life. The final result is a beautiful product for God to view and use for all eternity.

My family and I once visited a factory in India where weaving was being done. We watched several men and women work on the looms. Our children noticed that on the undersides of the rugs the patterns were vague and undefined, and the loose ends of yarn hung unattended. I explained to the children not to evaluate the workers or the product by looking at the wrong side of these beautiful rugs.

A fine Oriental or Persian rug is an original piece of craftsmanship. Each rug is knotted on a loom. The more knots per square inch, the better the rug. A fine wool rug has almost 400 knots per square inch. It takes a skilled weaver up to three months — and lots of patience — to make a typical 9- by 12-foot rug. One way to tell if the rug is genuine or not is to look for the small but obvious flaws that are a valued characteristic of a hand-knotted rug. Machine-woven rugs appear perfect.

The visit to the rug factory helped us learn a valuable lesson. We humans sometimes look at the wrong side of life. Only God sees the finished pattern. Let's not judge Him or His Work from what we see in this life today. God's handiwork with us is not finished yet!

The key word in James 1:2 is *count*. It means to consider, to think over carefully, to evaluate what is happening. Paul used it several times in the book of Philippians.

When the apostle Paul was converted he evaluated his life and set new goals and priorities. Things that were once important to him became worthless garbage or, as he put it, dung. When we face the tests and trials of life, we must evaluate them in the light of what God is doing with us. He is the master weaver.

This explains why the dedicated Christian can have joy in the midst of trials: He or she lives for the things that really matter.

Trials, therefore, properly understood, cause joy. We can now appreciate James' opening words: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials" (James 1:2).

Perhaps the most important lesson we must learn from what James says is that the benefit we receive from trials depends to a large degree upon how we look at them and the spirit with which we handle them.

When God tells us to be happy and count it all joy, He is telling us to look at problems from the positive side; those wretched problems we have can be turned into real profit. We simply cannot lose.

Ask God for a positive attitude toward your trials. He will respond. Reread the book of James. Turn your lemons (trials) into lemonade (triumphs)!

Dexter H. Faulkner
Editor

YES! God Will Answer Your Prayers

God will hear and answer your prayers. But there are conditions you must fulfill first!

By Norman L. Shoaf

What's your problem? Many readers of *The Good News* right now may be having marriage difficulties, loneliness, financial deprivations or poor health. Perhaps there are difficulties on the job, troubles with children, worries about the future or simply unfulfilled life dreams.

You don't have to remain helpless in the face of any of these troubles!

The great God who is in control of this entire universe — the God who has unlimited power to *change the very circumstances* in your life — invites you to cast "all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (I Peter 5:7).

Jesus Christ promised, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

The door to the throne room of the God who rules all creation is open to you — through the power of prayer. God is ready and willing to intervene, to direct and inspire events even in seemingly minor areas of your life.

Yet how many people today — even professing Christians — have never really prayed, let alone received miraculous, thrilling, direct answers to their prayers?

How many view prayer as merely a memorized chant, or wishful thinking, or lofty words read out of a book, or sleepy-time mumblings that rise no higher than the ceiling of a bedroom?

It's time we all recognize the awesome power that is ready to be unleashed to help us, through fervent, believing, persistent prayer to God. And it's time we understand the *conditions* God Himself places on the spiritual tool of prayer — conditions that can be fulfilled, upon which He is bound to answer us!

Would you answer you?

Look at it this way: If you were God, would you answer the prayers of someone who prays the way you do now?

How often do you pray? Do you personally know the One to whom you are praying? Do you put your whole heart into your prayers, or do you pray "just in case" someone up somewhere might be listening and answer? Are you asking God to do things that would be harmful to you or others? Do you only pray as a last resort, or do you include God in your plans from the beginning? Are you praying according to God's will?

Some respond that one can't know God's will. Wrong — God has recorded His will in His Word, the Bible. It is the infallible source of instructions for living successful lives now and qualifying for eternal salvation. That's why we must study it to know everything it tells us.

Some will respond that God most often answers "No" to prayers in this life. But these people are plainly overlooking the miraculous positive answers to prayers received by God's servants as recorded in the Bible. Have they overlooked Proverbs 10:24? "The desire of the righteous will be granted."

Some will respond that one has no right to demand (in a respectful, humble way, of course) that God fulfill His promises. Then what good are God's promises? What practical good does it do us to believe in Him?

Titus 1:2 says God cannot lie. God has promised to "fulfill the desire of those who fear Him" (Psalm 145:19).

Now let us look into the Word of God to see what conditions God says we are to fulfill, upon which He will answer our prayers. When we meet these definite conditions, God is bound to hear and respond, or else His promises are not to be believed!

Specific conditions

• *Obey God's commandments.* I John 3:22 tells us, "Whatever we ask we receive from Him, be-

cause we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." The first condition God requires to answer our prayers, then, is that we obey Him.

That shouldn't be surprising. Yet many today expect God to intervene in their lives and help them even though they refuse to keep God's laws, sometimes claiming that God's laws have been done away!

The apostle Paul wrote that God's law "is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12). Deuteronomy 28:2 promises, "Blessings [including the blessing of having God hear and answer your prayers] shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God."

If you are not obeying some point of God's law even though God has shown you He wants you to, then Isaiah 59:2 says to you, "Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

• *Ask according to God's promises.* Consider the case of a parent and a child. If the parent promises the child some special outing or gift, what loving parent could bear to go back on his or her word and break the child's heart by not fulfilling the promise? The child has a right to request that the parent fulfill his or her word.

It is the same with God. Throughout the Bible God makes hundreds of statements about what He is willing to do for His people. He promises to heal (James 5:14-15). He promises to bless the tither (Malachi 3:10). He promises to protect from physical harm those who obey Him (Psalm 91:7-10).

Has God specifically promised the item or the action that you desire from Him? Then, if you are fulfilling the other conditions for answered prayer, you may go boldly before God's throne in prayer and confidently claim His promise (Hebrews 4:16). As a loving parent, He must answer!

Notice I John 5:14-15: "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will [according to His promises recorded in the Bible, which is God's will in writing], He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

• *Ask unselfishly.* You should always ask for God's blessing so that you will be better able to serve others, not just for your own selfish satisfaction.

As James 4:3 says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."

God's way is the way of giving — of being as concerned about the interests of others as you are about your own (Philippians 2:3-4). God will act powerfully on the prayers you make on behalf of other people's needs.

Do you need money for education? Ask God to give you the money so that you may learn skills that you can use in the service of others. Are you having marriage problems? Ask God to give you more patience and wisdom and outgoing concern so that you may help your mate.

Would you like to be married? Ask God to send you a mate so that you may develop more of God's character through the rich experiences marriage provides. Would you like to be healed of some illness or disease? Ask God to give you better health so that you may become more active in the service of His great worldwide Work of preaching the Gospel to all nations.

Is someone treating you wrongfully? Ask God to intervene for that person's own good. Jesus commanded us to love our enemies and to pray for them (Matthew 5:44).

If you need God to bless you in some way, think of how you can turn the blessing not only to your good but to the good of others.

• *Ask in faith.* Jesus said: "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). What is your mountain?

There is tremendous power in believing prayer — it produces stupendous answers that cannot be produced or explained by physical means alone. If your prayers are to be answered, you must believe that God will answer them. You must have faith.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

If you waver in faith, God is not obligated to answer (James 1:6-7). If you lack faith, do what the concerned father did when he asked Jesus to heal his demon-possessed son. When Jesus asked him whether he believed, he cried out, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Ask God to give you strong, unwavering, mountain-moving faith!

• *Ask in Jesus Christ's name.* Jesus Christ gave His followers the privilege of praying to God the Father in Jesus' own name. He promised, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you" (John 16:23).

To ask in Jesus' name means that you ask as one who is dedicated to the same purposes Jesus Himself was dedicated to, as one who is allowing Jesus Christ con-

If God doesn't answer a prayer, don't blame God or assume that "it wasn't His will." Ask *yourself* if you have fulfilled all of God's conditions for answered prayer.

tinually to work through him or her, as one who is striving to live the same way of life Jesus lived.

God the Father respects the name of His Son! There is no other name under heaven by which we may be saved (Acts 4:12). When a true follower of Jesus Christ makes a request to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, God the Father takes notice and will respond.

• *Be persistent and fervent in prayer.* While God promises to answer faithful prayers, He reserves to Himself the decision as to *how* and *when* He will answer.

Sometimes He may not answer immediately, because He wants to make sure you are really committed to what you are asking Him for. He wants to know you seriously want Him to act. So another condition to answered prayer is that you be persistent and fervent in your request.

Jesus illustrated the need to be persistent when He gave the parable of the persistent widow. This widow ceaselessly petitioned a certain judge for justice, until the judge was forced to act (Luke 18:4-5).

God, of course, is not an unjust judge who does not wish to act on behalf of His people. He wants to respond and help (Matthew 7:9-11). He wants us to "prosper in all things and be in health" (III John 2). He is more than willing to answer our prayers — if we fulfill all the conditions He has set, including persisting and being fervent in prayer until He responds.

God promises, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). "Pray without ceasing," commands I Thessalonians 5:17.

• *Be thankful.* One of the most common sins in this end time is ingratitude (II Timothy 3:1-2). Do you give God thanks for all He has already done for you and, in advance, for future opportunities to present Him with various requests?

Paul told the Thessalonians, "In everything give thanks" (II Thessalonians 5:18). Thank God for showing you how to pray properly. Thank Him for hearing you. Thank Him ahead of time for answering, because you know, through faith, that He will.

And especially when God has finally answered, be sure to thank Him for being a reliable, generous, loving Father who wants to help you with every problem and see you succeed now and enter His coming Kingdom.

Fulfill the requirements

Have you prayed to God for guidance in decisions, for help in trials, for success in life ambitions, and not received a clear answer, or no answer at all?

Don't blame God or jump to the conclusion that "it wasn't His will." We have already seen that we can know what God's will is. It's all written right there in the Bible.

If God doesn't answer, begin by asking *yourself* if you have fulfilled all of God's conditions for answered prayer.

If you haven't, you have no one to blame but yourself. God stands ready and willing to dramatically and miraculously answer your prayers, when you meet His stated requirements.

This is not to say that there are *not* some isolated, special circumstances when God would answer "No," or when He would wait for an extended period before answering. God sees far more than we humans do. He has a perfect overview of all the factors that affect anything we might pray to Him about.

Paul, for instance, beseeched God several times to heal him of a certain physical infirmity, but God answered, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9).

God had a special purpose in mind for not granting Paul's request — perhaps to strengthen Paul's own character, perhaps to move the Church to more fervent prayer, perhaps to show us now an example of why He might act in a way we might not expect.

Moses asked God to allow him to cross over the Jordan River and see the promised land of Canaan. But Moses had earlier disobeyed God by striking the rock, rather than speaking to it as God commanded, to obtain water. He had thus dishonored God in the eyes of the congregation of Israel.

"Then I pleaded with the Lord . . ." recorded Moses, "I pray, let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan . . . But the Lord was angry with me . . . and would not listen to me. So the Lord said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter' " (Deuteronomy 3:23-26).

In this case, to show that disobeying Him produces a penalty, God did not give Moses what He had requested in prayer. Moses had actually failed to follow the first condition of answered prayer, which is to obey God's commandments.

The point is that on some rare occasions, God may answer "No" or wait longer than we might expect to answer one of our prayers. But such cases are in the extreme minority.

When we fulfill all God's conditions, praying in faith, God must answer — usually immediately. If He doesn't, either we have failed somewhere or God is performing an extraordinary act that we may not understand until much later. He sees far more than we do.

So remember: You needn't struggle alone. God holds all power and has all knowledge. He stands ready and willing to help you overcome, upon your believing prayer according to the conditions He has set forth in His Word.

God will move mountains for you if necessary!

So learn of the awesome power unleashed by fervent prayer, and come boldly before the throne of God about every matter, great or small.

As Paul wrote, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6)! □



ANGER
Escaping the Curse

Unbridled anger is a hallmark of our time. We need to learn about this potent force and how to control it.

By K. Neil Earle

"The manifestations of the emotion of anger are so numerous that Dr. W.B. Cannon of Harvard required an entire printed page to merely list them," wrote Dr. John Schindler in *How to Live 365 Days a Year.*

"The chief *external* manifestations are: a reddening of the skin, bloodshot whites of the eyes, etc. But the *internal manifestations* are much more profound. Your blood immediately clots a whole lot quicker . . . the muscles at the outlet of the stomach squeeze down so tightly that nothing leaves (one reason some doctors label 99 and 44/100 percent of 'gas' attacks as emotional reactions).

"The entire digestive tract becomes spastic, triggering severe abdominal pains. The heart rate goes up markedly . . . the coronary arteries squeeze down hard enough to produce angina or even a fatal coronary" (pages 25-26).

Now note this excellent prescription, almost 3,000 years old, from the world's best-seller: "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret — it only causes harm" (Psalm 37:8). Modern research helps us understand Solomon's shrewd counsel: "He who is slow to wrath has great understanding" (Proverbs 14:29).

Overt anger

Few want to suffer the penalties of rampant, misdirected anger, but, alas, millions of us get entangled with it every day. Even today's slang is emotionally charged, threatening, dangerous: "He makes me sick!" "He burns me up (gastric pain?)!" "I really blew my stack (maybe some blood vessels as well)!" "I could kill him!"

Sound familiar?

Our own bodies are the big losers in uncontrolled anger, but sometimes innocent bystanders get hit with the emotional spillover as well. The Bible even cautions us about the hate-filled words that reduce our inhibitions to performing some tragic acts (Proverbs 16:27).

Of course, one of today's most common erroneous assumptions is that all anger is wrong. It's not. Just as there are beneficial kinds of fear (Proverbs 1:7), so there are positive uses of anger.

God gets angry — often (Psalm 7:11)! But God's anger is constructive, solution-oriented, under the control of His overriding intelligence and perspective.

The apostle Paul confirmed it: "Be angry, and do not sin," he taught in Ephesians 4:26. Christ blazed at the slander, the bitterness, the spite and jealousy of the Pharisees, especially when it hurt others (Mark 3:5). He was angry when He cleared the money changers from the Temple (John 2:13-17).

This is controlled anger. God encourages us to grow in this (Ezekiel 21:14-17, Jeremiah 20:9).

But most anger in the world today is *not* beneficial. It is the uncontrolled explosion from the steady barrage of negative or threatening life experiences: teachers finally "blowing up" at pupils, parents exasperated with children, husbands upset with wives and vice versa.

We need to clearheadedly pinpoint the causes of friction and apply sound remedies. But the wrong type of anger blocks sound thinking. It is the easy way out, the cheap, characterless way, the way that intimidates and bullies but doesn't courageously and intelligently tackle the real problems. Overt, explosive anger only tenses the atmosphere, polarizes the parties involved, stifles meaningful feedback and leaves wounds that sometimes last a lifetime. It is the enemy of sound thinking (Ecclesiastes 9:17).

And it doesn't make you feel better. Why? Because the overstimulation of the bloodstream produces toxins that course through the body, leaving the whole organism enervated and agitated. Worse — the problem still remains.

How wise the Scriptures are: "The merciful man does good for his own soul [Hebrew *nephesh* — total being], but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh" (Proverbs 11:17).

Latent anger

Millions of people suffer from depression in our society, unaware that depression, like anger, develops its own dynamic. This is because depression is often anger turned inward: We'd like to vent our frustrations on someone, but often we don't dare. We seethe inwardly instead, harboring the hostile, aggressive feelings deep down inside our human spirit.

Result? The resentments and envyings that we don't want to admit we have, the hostility we don't want to let slip out (especially against authority figures who can retaliate), these negative, fetid emotions eat away at us inside.

In time they can distort our whole spirit. Emotional spite, unrepented of, eats away at us deep inside (Matthew 15:19, James 4:1).

Sound farfetched?

Neurologist Mortimer Ostow, in his study *The Psychology of Melancholy,* reported, "Depression *at every phase* of its development includes a component of anger, whether visible or invisi-

Illustration by Dan Dowd

ble, whether conscious or unconscious."

The latent anger and resentment often rise to our consciousness as baffling waves of negativism — depression. In time the depression becomes such a virulent force that *it* is diagnosed as the *cause* of the problem when, quite often, it is the *effect*.

And this is not the happy way to live. The depressive isn't usually aware of what is happening. Jeremiah put it eloquently: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). And, "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

Even the closest friends of the one suffering from latent anger usually can't spot it. Judas Iscariot, seething with bitterness at Christ's style of ministry, was not suspected by the other disciples (John 13:26-29).

Understand now why, in our day, a man who murdered four victims was a model citizen until he was bypassed for promotion at work. Eighteen months later he finally exploded.

Latent anger is scary. Try to spot it, admit it, face up to it and, with God's help, wrench yourself from it (Romans 7:23-24).

The way to overcome anger is to train ourselves, with God's help, to see the benefits in quickly forgiving offenses. We don't need to play amateur psychologist or engage in tedious confrontations that solve nothing. Instead, be more willing to forgive offenses than the other party. Try to soften the rhetoric and keep it unemotional. Try to have Jesus' attitude of agreeing with the adversary quickly (Matthew 5:25).

This goes a long way in reducing conflict, that spirit of murder that seethes and festers inside. So many of our conflicts are unintentional or accidental. And if we believe that people are lying awake at night trying to make our life difficult, then we do have problems!

In most cases it just isn't so — life is usually much less complicated than that.



Modern false doctrines

Unfortunately, a deceptive teaching today encourages people to ventilate their anger. "Don't hold it in, it'll harm you — let it out!" says this popular school of thought. "Don't suppress it, or you'll explode later on."

But why wait for tensions to get to this point?

Learn to enjoy therapeutic talks with a close friend from time to time. Here, irritations or frustrations can be talked out in a nonthreatening environment. The Bible upholds this kind of friendship (Proverbs 17:17). What is a friend? "Someone who knows all about you but likes you anyway," a wise man answered.

One spin-off of a happy marriage is the emotional release from unburdening oneself of frustrations — a beautiful blessing in a good marriage, where each mate can act as trusted confidant, consoler and stabilizer.

Dr. James Dobson perceptively condemns the "let-it-all-hang-out" school of thought. There are alternatives:

"I have no desire to return our culture to the formalism of yesterday, when father was a marble statue and mother couldn't smile because her corset was too tight. But if our grandparents represented one extreme of emotional repression, today's (adults) have become temperamental yo-yos at the other.

"Reason is now *dominated* by feelings, rather than the reverse.

"The pop psyche movement . . . encourages us to get in touch with our feelings . . . to open up . . . to tell it like it is . . . The past 10 years people in the 'helping sciences' have been obsessed by the need to express anger and resentment: 'Hatred is stored-up anger. Therefore, getting mad is a loving thing.'

"We must harmonize the finding that anger should be ventilated with the biblical commandment that we be 'slow to become angry' (James 1:19). I do not find these objectives to be in contradiction. Why else did the apostle Paul tell us to settle our irritations before sundown (Ephesians 4:26), preventing an accumulation of seething hostility?" (*Emotions: Can You Trust Them?,* pages 9-10, 94).

Don't be deceived. Rampant anger is a destructive force in its own right, regardless of the trigger. It can lead to tragedy. The Bible is very clear on that:

Cain lost control and in berserk, jealous rage at his brother became the first murderer (Genesis 4:1-8).

Moses lost the chance to enter the promised land for indulging in one temper outburst too many (Numbers 20:1-12).

David, a man after God's heart, got carried away in unbridled anger at times (II Samuel 8:1-2). It cost him the blessing of building the Temple (I Chronicles 22:8).

James and John were rebuked by Christ for a vindictive, hardhearted attitude toward a despised group of people (Luke 9:51-56). They changed greatly later on (I John 4:20). So can we.

Let's study two case histories illustrating the kinds of anger we have been discussing. Let's learn to spot the enemy inside us.

Overt anger: the exploder

Explosive anger is usually short-term, extremely passionate

and often deadly in its effects. People who indulge it pay a price (Proverbs 5:22).

King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon was a classic exploder, steamroller and Sherman tank rolled into one. Notice Daniel 3:

"Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed . . . Therefore he spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded certain mighty men of valor . . . to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. . . . Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego" (verses 19-22).

What a temper tantrum!

Destructive, uncontrolled, unbridled anger is not indulged without a price. The mighty men were part of Nebuchadnezzar's general staff, soldiers of proven worth and loyalty to the king.

But who is safe before rampant rage?

Not even the ones you love. Are some of our fights and frictions exacerbated by "harsh words" that "stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1)? Everyone gets upset and nothing is solved. Is this happening in your home, business, school or team?

God promises, "A soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1).

Latent anger: dangerous depressives

King Ahab of ancient Israel never did grow up emotionally. Look at his reaction when his neighbor wouldn't accept Ahab's real-estate offer:

"So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased . . . And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food. But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, 'Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?' " (I Kings 21:4-5).

This is classic disappointment, dejection and depression stemming from frustration. But frustration is often thwarted self-will. Ahab couldn't even eat. We've all known people like that. They turn their anger inward; misery and paralysis result. The more Ahab wallowed in self-pity, the more deeply embedded the anger and resentment became.

Anger is a virulent, raging force. God pleads with us: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32). Rather than lashing out, we should all learn to handle anger.

It distorted his reasoning process till he was putty in wily Jezebel's hands (verses 7-14).

See how anger and depression are linked? They are virulent raging forces in their own right. God pleads with us: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

Ahab, sniveling assassin that he was, cold-bloodedly murdered his neighbor. God was so angry He pronounced a curse on the dynasty (I Kings 21:20-24).

Rather than destructively lashing out, it would be far better for us all to learn the biblical prescriptions for handling anger.

A biblical strategy

First, if possible, drop to your knees the moment you see resentment, bitterness and anger welling up. Ask God to rebuke your wrong thoughts (II Corinthians 10:5). Remember: Most anger is sin (James 1:20).

Second, keep the big picture of human existence in mind. Ask yourself: Will this really matter 1,000 years from now? Suppose your adversary died, and you still had a grudge on your conscience. How would you feel then?

Third, try sincerely to see the other person's point of view. Where is he coming from? Remember the Indian motto: "Help me not to speak evil of my brother till I have walked a day in his moccasins."

Fourth, sow peace (James 3:18). Do you have an antagonist at odds with you? At the very least, if you are a true peacemaker (Matthew 5:9), you can be sorry that you and your adversary are having a problem. That attitude all by itself softens tensions. Why not send a gift, a card or some other small token of goodwill? Solomon said much about the wise use of gifts (Proverbs 17:8, 18:16).

Fifth, when in conflict review the points covered in this article and others like it in *The Good News*. Seek wise counsel. Cement in your mind how nonproductive anger is. See it as a sheer waste of time. Tell yourself you need all the clearheaded thinking you can muster. Why waste time going on the warpath?

Sixth, consider this: Does God need us to police His universe? Do we really believe that people who offend us can violate God's laws with impunity? Read Psalm 73 and stay calm.

Seventh, pray for your adversary. At least then the problem will come up for review before the great God, and this will help far more than you think. You will be investing spiritual energies that can revitalize the relationship. This will soften your approach (Matthew 5:43-44). Since God loves both of you, His Holy Spirit will give you more objectivity toward your persecutor. God will enter the relationship if you ask Him (James 4:1-2).

With God's help we can master anger. And what a blessing if we do. Life is so short, and anger disrupts, dislocates and distracts us from the abundant life God wants us to have! □

Ancient Coin Depicts

Satan's Master Plan!

See, here, the plottings of Satan's twisted mind as reflected in pagan mythology!

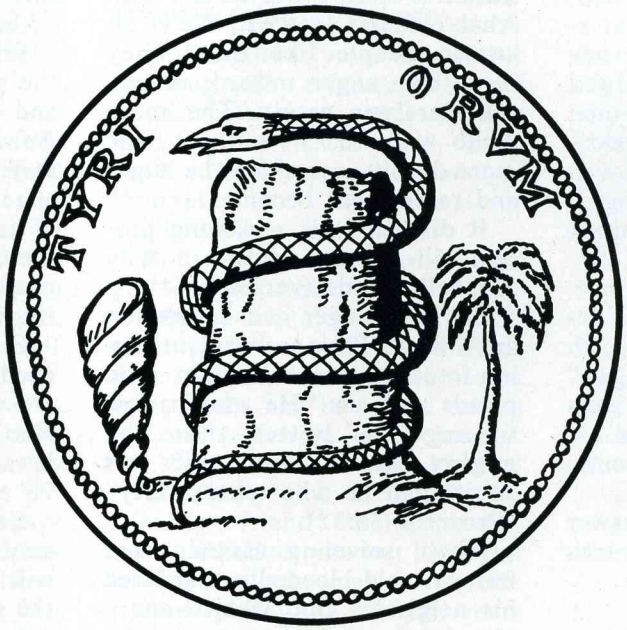
By Keith W. Stump

This ancient Phoenician coin, which was minted long ago in the bustling commercial city of Tyre, bears a curious image.

The coin shows a serpent entwined around a tree stump. To the left of the stump stands an empty cornucopia. To the right, a flourishing palm tree.

Curious, yes. But is it significant?

Amazingly, the story these symbols tell is of great relevance to our time!



The man-instructing serpent

To classical scholars, the symbols on the coin are familiar ones. They are found in the art and mythology of many civilizations through the millennia.

What do they all mean? First, consider the snake.

The snake on the Phoenician coin, classical scholars point out, is the symbol of a powerful god whom the Romans called *Aesculapius,* the Greeks *Asklepios.* Who was this personage?

Aesculapius was an ancient pagan god of healing. His healing powers are reflected in the meaning of the Greek form of his name, *Asklepios* — "the strength-restorer." But consider the meaning of the Latin form of his name, *Aesculapius.* It means, literally, "the man-instructing serpent."

Now we see a significant biblical tie-in!

The serpent who sought to teach mankind is mentioned, of course, in the third chapter of Genesis, where he seduced our first parents, Adam and Eve. It is none other than man's adversary, "that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world" (Revelation 12:9).

In mythology, Aesculapius was believed to be the child of the Sun, and thus the "enlightener" of mankind. He was often represented in art by a serpent or as an old man holding a staff around which a snake is entwined. (Even today, the snake-and-staff is the well-known symbol of the medical profession.)

Throughout the ancient Mediterranean world, Greeks, Romans and others kept sacred snakes in the many temples dedicated to Aesculapius, temples where the "man-instructing snake" — actually Satan himself — was worshiped as a god.

On an island in the Tiber River (the *Isola Tiberina*) near the Ponte Garibaldi, the Church of St. Bartholomew today stands atop the ancient ruins of Rome's

once-flourishing Temple of Aesculapius. Traces of a relief of the snake-and-staff can still be seen on the remains of an old wall there.

As the legend goes, Aesculapius was ultimately struck down by a thunderbolt thrown by an angry Zeus, king of the gods, and cast into the underworld. (Compare this with Luke 10:18, where Jesus declared, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.")

Hewn tree

But what about the tree stump on the coin?

In the mythologies of many ancient civilizations, we find the imagery of a great tree being cut down. The hewing down of a stately tree symbolizes the cutting off of a great god or hero — a mighty one being cut down prematurely in the midst of his power and glory. The stump thus represents the fallen god and his ruined kingdom.

Many ancient nations had legends about sacred trees. A familiar tale found in civilizations of past ages describes a full-grown tree springing overnight from a dead tree stump, symbolizing the coming forth unto new life of a fallen god or hero. Such stories have been associated with a variety of "god-men" through the ages, including Osiris in early Egypt and, later, Nimrod in Mesopotamia.

During the Saturnalia — the December feast of Saturn (a name of Nimrod) — the Romans anciently decorated trees with red berries and trinkets. The trees — precursors of today's "Christmas trees" — symbolized their slain god come to life again. (Classical sources identify Saturn with Kronos, the first king of Babylon — the deified Nimrod.)

With the understanding that the hewing down of a great tree symbolizes the cutting off of a mighty one, we can now comprehend the empty cornucopia to the left of the stump on the Phoenician coin.

The cornucopia — the "horn of plenty," which is usually emblematic of abundance — is empty because the great god (symbolized by the dead stump) has been cut off!

New life

But remember — the Aesculapian snake has encoiled the stump. Classical scholars tell us this pictures the *life-restoring serpent* exerting its supernatural powers on the dead stump to revive it.

The result?

The tree stump now springs forth unto new life — by the power of the man-instructing serpent. At its side, on the coin, sprouts a young tree — a palm tree, the well-known symbol of victory. The god, fallen before his enemies, has now risen triumphant over them, never to be cut down again.

Or so declares the symbolism on the coin.

The great Babylonian tree

The Bible also employs the symbol of a hewn tree. Satan, the world's great counterfeiter and plagiarist, has appropriated many biblical symbols, including the serpent and tree stump, and introduced them into pagan mythology and worship.

Notice, now, the biblical usage of tree imagery. Later we will see how Satan has added his own perverted twist to it.

Daniel 4 records a dream experienced by King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon. In the dream Nebuchadnezzar saw an enormous tree occupying a central position on the earth. Its height "reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth" (verse 11).

This tree, it was later revealed to Daniel, was Nebuchadnezzar himself (verses 20-22). The tree also represented Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, Babylon. In the Bible, a kingdom and its king are treated as synonymous (compare, for example, verses 38 and 39 of Daniel 2). Nebuchadnezzar personified Babylon.

In the dream, the beasts of the field — subject nations — rested in the shadow of the great Babylonian tree and were fed by its fruit (verse 12). Most of the known world lay under the scepter of Babylon.

But suddenly, in the dream, an angelic being came down from heaven and cried aloud: "Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds from its branches" (verse 14).

The tree was to be cut down — but not completely destroyed. The stump was to be preserved: "Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven" (verse 15).

Dual prophecy

Consider, now, the dual application of this prophetic dream.

The haughty Nebuchadnezzar was to be personally "chopped down" if he persisted in denying God's supremacy — yet, as Daniel explained, not permanently. "And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you" (verse 26).

As prophesied, unrepentant Nebuchadnezzar, intoxicated with pride, was smitten with madness and driven as an animal from men (verses 30-33). But, "at the end of the time," his sanity returned and he was briefly reestablished in his kingdom (verses 34-37).

But that is only the first fulfillment of this dual prophecy! Nebuchadnezzar's personal experience was but a type or picture of a similar fate for the kingdom of Babylon itself. Ancient Babylon, too, was to be "chopped down" — as it was at the hands of Cyrus the Persian. But, as with Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon was not to be utterly destroyed. The "stump and roots" would be preserved in the earth — and later sprout and flourish again!

As students of Bible prophecy understand, "Babylon" has an important figurative or symbolic

meaning in prophecies for the "latter days." Ancient Babylon is spoken of as a type of the economic and politico-religious world system to arise at the end of this age of man's civilization — the very days in which we are now living.

The vision of Daniel 4 revealed that a protective and restrictive band of iron and brass had been placed around the dormant stump of the great tree, to be removed in the latter days. And then what?

The tree would be free to sprout again!

Notice the observation of Job: "For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again . . . Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant" (Job 14:7-9).



***Aesculapius, the pagan doctor god,** as depicted in a Roman statue. The Latin form of his name means "the man-instructing serpent." The serpent who sought to teach man is none other than Satan the devil! Photo: The Bettmann Archive.*

The Babylonish system of ancient times is prophesied to yet again "bring forth branches." With the restraints removed, it will be free to emerge once again in its full, final grandeur — and corruption.

The apostle John warns us of an end-time "Babylon" that will be both an apostate religious system — heir to the ancient mystery religion of Babylon (Revelation 17:1-6) — and also a great political and economic system (Revelation 18:7-18, 24). It will be centered in the territory of the ancient Roman Empire, but in character will epitomize the spirit of Babylon. (Write for a free copy of our booklet *Who or What Is the Prophetic Beast?* for more details.)

Satan's desperate hope

The parallels of classical symbolism with biblical imagery are too clear to be missed.

The stump — dormant Babylon, the evil system of the god of this world — sprouts again. The Satan-inspired imagery of the Aesculapian snake coiled around the stump reveals the power by which the sprouting occurs — the power of the "man-instructing serpent."

Satan will exert his full powers in one last, desperate attempt to impose his rule over all mankind. Symbolized by the life-restoring Aesculapian snake, he will cause the chopped-down tree — the Babylonish system — to sprout again. But will the result, as the coin depicts, be a palm tree, symbol of victory and triumph, a tree never to be cut down?

That is what Satan desperately hopes will occur. That is his plan, devised in his twisted mind. But it will not be! In classical symbolism, Satan pictures himself and his empire (the victorious palm tree) coming out on top in the end. Satan thinks he can yet win.

But Satan's reborn Babylonish empire will be short-lived.

The good news is that the government of God will triumph over it (Revelation 11:15). Just as the sins of ancient Babylon drew down God's judgment upon her, so will the atrocities of this end-time Babylon bring down God's divine wrath. The apostle John vividly pictures the destruction of the power of Babylon at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, in Revelation 18 and 19.

Babylon will become a great world empire in our day, only to fall a second time. That is the explanation of the angel's cryptic repetition in Revelation 18:2: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen."

Satan's days are numbered!

We are living in climactic times. The end of this age is upon us. Biblical prophecies of a final revival of a modern Babylon, to arise in the area of the ancient Roman Empire, stand poised, ready for fulfillment in the headlines of your daily newspaper.

It is time to watch world events more closely than ever before (Luke 21:36), and to prepare for the glorious new age that lies just ahead — the very Kingdom of God on earth! □

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

My child recently asked me, "Where did God come from?" Could you please help me with the right answer? I remember asking the same question when I was young.

After we understand that God does exist, a natural subsequent question is, "Where did God come from?"

People throughout history have pondered this question, searching their minds for the answer. Yet most have not thought to look to the only source of true knowledge, the Holy Bible. It is not that they have not read the Bible or looked into it, but they have refused to believe what the Bible plainly says.

The almighty, ever-living, all-knowing God, as Creator of heaven and earth and Author of His Holy Word, is certainly in a far better position to tell us where He came from than we as His created beings are to figure it out for ourselves, apart from His divine revelation!

So for the answer to the question of God's origin, let us turn to the Bible and see what it has to say.

The Bible tells us that God is ever living and eternal — the beginning and the end (Revelation 1:8). When we humans begin to use words such as *ever* and *never* and *always,* we are using words that our limited, finite minds cannot really comprehend.

When we read and try to comprehend that God has always been, our minds will go just so far, as we stretch our imaginations to the limit. Then we come to what seems like a concrete wall and find we cannot understand further.

Eternity into the past is impossible for us to fully comprehend. And yet, beyond the farthest reaches of our imagination, God has always been (John 1:1-2).

But if God has always been, where did He come from? The answer is simple. If God has always been, He didn't come from anywhere — He has just always been!

If we overcome and are accounted worthy by God of being born into His Kingdom as His very own children, composed of spirit as He is and very God ourselves, we will be able to understand many of the things that are mysteries to us now.

Nowhere in the Bible does God reveal to us where He came from. He just tells us that He is ever living and eternal.

God has revealed all we need to know at this time to qualify for salvation. The things we don't know and can't understand belong to God for Him to give to us when He wants to. Our duty now is to act on what we *do* know, keep God's law and grow to perfection so we can enter God's Kingdom. There God can teach us the answers to many of our human mysteries.

God says through Moses: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

If God changed His mind about destroying Israel (Exodus 32:9-14), how can I be completely assured that He won't change His mind about healing me?

Let's look at some of the examples in the Bible where God changed His mind.

In Exodus 32 we find God planning the destruction of all Israel. In fear of the entire nation being destroyed, Moses beseeched God for mercy. Then, in verse 14, we find, "The Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people."

Another example is in Jonah 4. God had decided to destroy the entire city of Nineveh for their wickedness. But the prophet Jonah began to preach God's Word there and the people repented. Again, God changed His mind (Jonah 4:11).

In II Kings 20 is the account of Hezekiah, who was on his death bed and cried out to God for help. He did his part; he exhibited the faith he needed. God not only healed him of his immediate illness, but went above and beyond and added 15 years to his life (II Kings 20:6).

God only changes His mind about preserving and destroying a person or nation (Jeremiah 18:7-10). Even then He leaves the decision up to the particular person or nation. If the nation repents of its evil practices, God will forgive and preserve it. And since God plans this change upon certain conditions, it is not a change in the way we refer to a human being who changes according to whim, for no apparent reason. It is a planned change based on specific prerequisites.

Notice what God says in Exodus 15:26: "If you . . . give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you." If you obey God, He will watch over you and heal you of any disease you may have.

Nowhere in the Bible do you find an account of God's changing any promise He had made, as long as you do your part. He is not slack about His promises (II Peter 3:9).

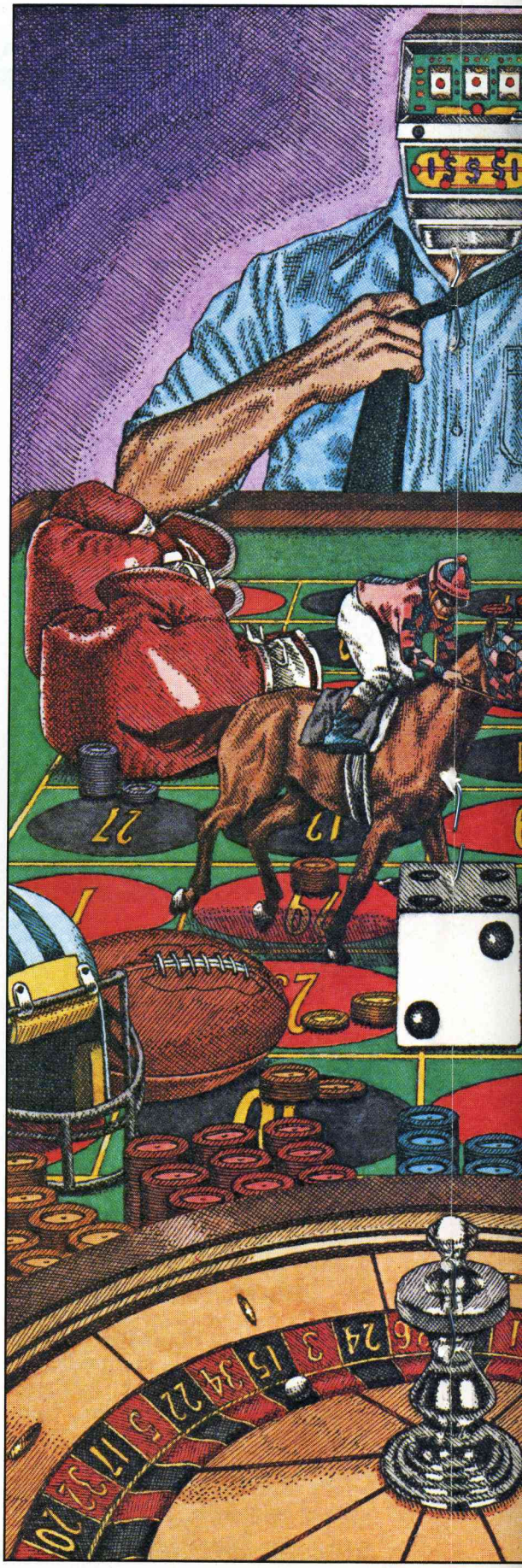
God never forgets His promises to heal you. But you must come to Him and ask as the Bible instructs, and also obey Him (James 5:14-15). Even then, you may not be healed instantly, because God doesn't promise *when* you will be healed — only that you surely will be.

Your own faith — the faith of Christ in you — is a vital factor (Matthew 9:29). If you aren't healed, examine yourself, not God. God's promises are faithful (Hebrews 11:11). Be faithful to God and He will always be faithful to you. □

Is It Worth the Gamble?

This article could well be one of the most controversial we have ever published. It lays out, in plain language, what the Bible says about gambling!

By Jon Kurnik



Forty million dollars! That's how much Chicago printer Michael Wittkowski, 28, won two years ago in the Illinois lottery, making him the largest single winner in lottery history.

Twenty-one factory workers, along with two other people, shared a $41-million jackpot in New York's lottery last year, the largest pot in North American history.

California is regularly crowning new millionaires in the United States' largest lottery. Barely a year old, the California contest produced revenues of nearly a quarter of a billion dollars in just its first month of operation.

In all, more than a score of states plus the District of Columbia have set up lotteries to produce funds for public services.

Earlier this year, two welfare recipients shared a ticket worth $7.6 million in Quebec's "6-49" lottery. Two years ago, an Ontario couple claimed Canada's largest lottery pot of $13 million.

Worldwide, lottery-style gambling also flourishes. In Australia it's "Tattslotto," to the tune of $1.7 million a week. The Panamanians have their "Loteria Popular" and in Poland it's the weekly "Duzy-Loteh" ("Great Lotto").

Enormous spending

The amount of money spent worldwide each year on all forms of gambling — legal and illegal — is impossible to calculate. But even figures on legalized gambling are astounding. The Public

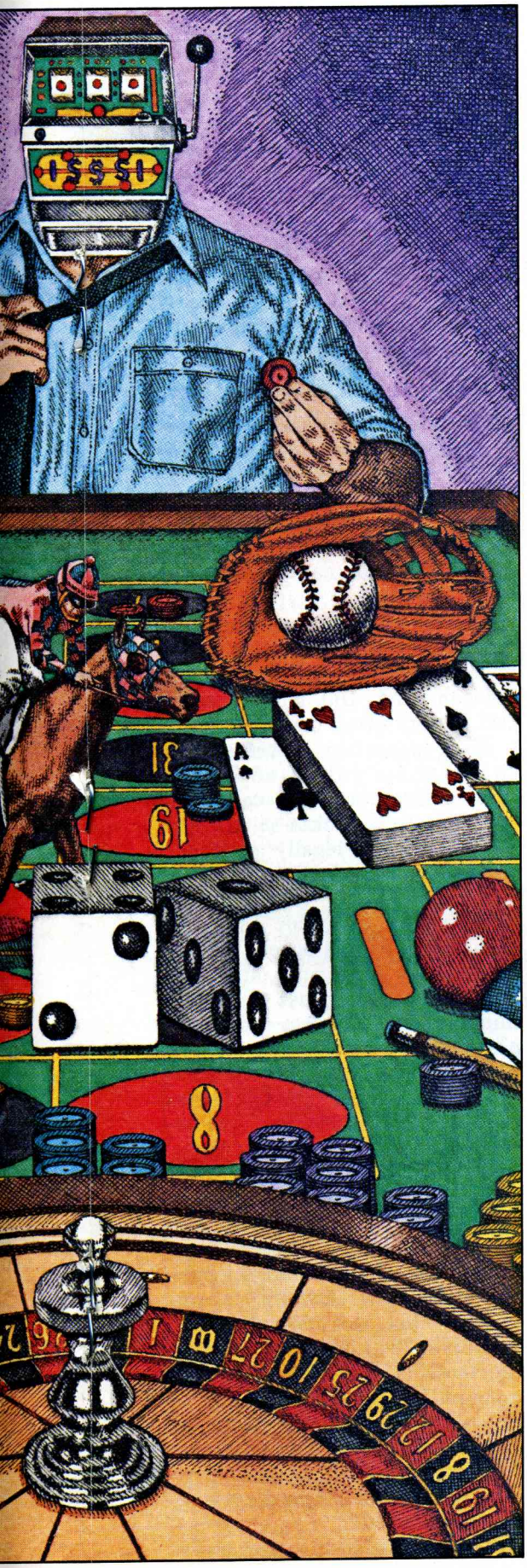


Illustration by Ron Chironna

Gambling Research Institute estimates legal gambling in the United States amounted to $24 billion (or about $100 for every American) in 1982!

Legal gambling comes in many forms: casinos, bingo games, office pools, lotteries, horse racing, jai alai. On lotteries alone, Canadians spent $60 a person, Britons $200 per person and the Japanese $225 a person in 1983.

One authority estimates that U.S. professional gambling interests pick up $50 billion a year, and that the amount for all legal and illegal gambling in the United States each year ranges from $500 billion to nearly double that figure.

In a 1982 Gallup poll conducted in the United States, some 60 percent of adults polled reported indulging in some form of gambling themselves, and 80 percent of all polled endorsed legal gambling. No wonder, then, that even government-sponsored gambling is skyrocketing.

An insidious lure

Who among us hasn't at one time or another dreamed of "striking it rich" in some game or contest? How wonderful it would be, we think, to win a pile of money. All our worries would be solved, wouldn't they?

But what does God say about gambling? Since gambling has such an effect on the world today, surely the Bible makes some comment on the subject.

With so many societies today in economic decay, the stability of one's income is increasingly uncertain. Massive unemployment in many industrialized nations has led some to seek a one-time solution to their monetary woes.

The answer? Instant wealth in a jackpot!

This lure exposes a strange impulse of human nature. As Arthur Shafer, philosophy professor at the University of Manitoba, observed: "The whole impulse to improve one's life through gambling is dubious. It is a kind of magical thinking."

This innate desire can obsess people to seek huge benefits that require minimal effort. Joseph Dunn, director of the National Council on Compulsive Gambling, stated: "People who are worried about the factory closing take a chance on making it big. Once they win anything, they're hooked."

It is estimated that between seven million and 10 million people in the United States alone are compulsive gamblers, rivaling the scourge of alcoholism.

We hear so many stories of ordinary people striking it rich that we may think our odds of winning are pretty good. But the odds of losing, especially in certain types of gambling, are astronomical. Three tickets won a huge payout in New York's "Lotto" game, for example, but there were *72 million* losers!

And polls show that the majority of the "ordinary people" who play lotteries, especially, are the poor and less educated — those who can least afford to spend their money this way.

A Maryland study found that the poorest one third of state households bought half of all weekly lottery tickets and 60 percent of daily game tickets.

Said one gambler: "If people put the same $4 or $5 they spend each day on the lottery in a drawer for a year and realized how much they'd spent, they'd blow their brains out."

Motive is the key

One woman stated: "I'm not going to bet all my money away or anything like that. All I do is use some money playing bingo once a week. Surely there's nothing wrong with that."

Statistically, the odds are she will not become a gambling addict. Even if you approve of gambling, most of you reading this article are not addicts, either. But even minimal amounts of wagering in whatever form carry with them the big question of motive.

Gambling by definition is the act or practice of betting, the act of playing a game and consciously risking money or other stakes on its outcome. As a game,

it involves little or no effort; rather, chance and "luck" become the controlling factors.

The lure of effortless, fast profit is just another manifestation of the *get* way of life.

The founder of this magazine, Herbert W. Armstrong, clearly described the basic character problem that gambling in any form exploits. He wrote: "Coveting MONEY and that which money will buy is merely the manner of manipulating Satan's WAY OF LIFE — 'GET' instead of 'GIVE' — TAKE and COMPETE instead of COOPERATE — *self*-concern and self-gain with desire to WIN, instead of LOVE toward GOD and LOVE toward neighbor."

The basic problem behind gambling is the idea of acquiring some material gain at the expense of someone else. With this in mind, we would all do well to consider our *attitude* in participating in even contests such as raffles, drawings used to promote magazine subscription sales and television game shows. This is not to condemn these activities, but the *attitude* is what is important.

Proper business practices do involve a profit return, but not because of someone else's loss. Rather, both sides should gain by the transaction. Likewise, the principle of insurance coverage promotes the sharing of expenses to cover accidental losses — again, the *give* principle.

A simple test is to honestly evaluate whether your motive is one of *get* for self or to *give* and *share* with others.

What God says

God's Word is filled with advice on handling questions of all types, including this one. We are to use wisdom in applying the Bible's principles, based on God's law.

Proverbs 28:20 tells us, "A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished." Verse 22 adds that the attitude of greed will end up producing poverty.

How many times in the chronicles of human history have people reaped destitution while gambling for that elusive pot of gold!

The apostle Paul was inspired to write to Timothy a warning that many fail to heed: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10).

So is being wealthy sinful, then? Absolutely not. Some of God's chosen servants, Abraham and Job among them, were fabulously wealthy. The apostle John even wished the blessing of prosperity on God's people (III John 2). But godly character must be used to properly gain and control money.

That is why the principle behind gambling is ungodly. The very motive of *get* for self destroys or prevents the building of God's own nature of *give* into our minds.

There is no risk involved in the *give* way of life. A certain businessman built his automotive shop on this very principle, without even knowing that it was biblical. By trying to do a little extra for his customers, he succeeded where competitors, out for profit alone, failed. The business is still flourishing after 30 years.

Jesus taught that the *give* way produces sure returns: "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom" (Luke 6:38). If we seek and live by the principles of God's way of life, all physical *necessities* will be provided for us (Matthew 6:33).

In the area of entertainment, there are so many areas to consider that we must apply one overall principle: Simply, will the money spent produce a predetermined return, or is there only a *chance* of some return?

Skill-testing games or contests that improve your skills or talents in some worthwhile area give a predetermined, measurable return. Paying a game fee with merely the chance of winning a physical or monetary prize is gambling.

The principle of risking loss also applies to the 1,001 varieties of sweepstakes, draws and contests sponsored by business and media. Again, if nothing is wagered, nothing can be lost. Dropping your name into a box for a store draw involves no risk of money or stakes on its outcome. All customers have already collectively paid for whatever prizes are awarded. It is used as a bonus incentive to draw more customers into the store.

Worthy causes

One subtle way that gambling is promoted is through the diversion of some of the intake to so-called "worthy causes." Lotteries and raffles are the most common promoters of this scheme. Many charities and service groups have been receiving vast sums of money through government lotteries that advertise the fact. This is seen by many as justification for gambling. But let's consider two factors often overlooked.

First, a certain percentage of the money collected never reaches the charitable causes at all. Promoters, ticket sellers and winners all may legally take their share before the remainder is allocated.

Giving to charitable causes is fine as long as it is purely that — giving with no strings attached. The Bible is profuse with reminders not to neglect those who are needy and destitute (Matthew 25:34-40, I John 3:17-18). Example also clearly teaches that such concern is far more effective on a one-to-one basis.

On the other hand, a primary selling point governments use to promote lotteries is that a percentage of the proceeds from ticket sales will go to worthy public causes. But they fail to emphasize that this doesn't mean the money will be added to existing budgets, but will reduce the amount the government has to allocate from its overall budget to the particular area. So the budget for, say, education remains virtually the same as before the lottery was introduced.

Second, the motive for giving

must be seriously considered. Worthy causes have been with us for a long time. But interestingly, with the addition of lotteries in North America, for example, the public has become so much more generous!

Yet David Hanson, director of marketing for the New York state lottery, observed that charitable urges are "not why people buy the tickets. The chance at the big money is the motivating factor." Yes, one's motive is what really counts. As God told the prophet Samuel, "The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

In other words, supporting gambling for a supposedly altruistic motive is usually just a false excuse for letting greed run amok.

Pounds and talents

One principle that gambling stifles is the character trait of productive effort. Jesus taught, through the parables of the pounds (Luke 19:12-27) and the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), God's way of developing and increasing that which is entrusted to us.

In Luke 19, for example, spiritual growth is compared to the proper use of money that was "gained by trading" (verse 15). Those who had produced wisely were rewarded.

Whether physically or spiritually, the unmistakable lesson is that character gain necessitates personal effort. Gambling teaches us to rely on blind "luck" to acquire increase. Here there is no guarantee on investment, rather enormous odds against any return at all.

It is far better to direct your hopes and efforts at acquiring the true riches of the soon-coming Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:19-21).

For every sensational story about the world's latest "instant millionaire," there are millions of unheralded losers who will never recover their lost wagers in an entire lifetime.

Worse yet, the selfish motive of *get,* the attitude of gain at someone else's expense, blocks the character growth needed to be in God's Kingdom.

When you look at it that way, is it ever worth the gamble? □

And Now . . . It's Even Easier

By Ronald D. Kelly

Gambling, once thought to be an activity for the rich and famous, has become available to practically everyone. It is no longer necessary to jet off to Monte Carlo, Las Vegas, Reno or Atlantic City to roll the dice of chance.

Hardly a week goes by when millions of Americans don't receive some form of solicitation in their mailboxes. Offers to subscribe or purchase are made more tempting by including a chance (or five chances or 10 chances) to win a million dollars or more.

Now in several states, in the comfort of your neighborhood grocery store, you can purchase a lottery ticket with chances to win $5 to $100 right on the spot. A lucky few qualify for the really big prize money of $10,000 on up to two or three million dollars.

Some states have turned to lotteries and other forms of legalized gambling to finance state projects. For example, voters in California approved Proposition 37 in November, 1984 — the state lottery.

After some delays the lottery was instituted and has been an overwhelming financial success to state coffers.

In California some 17 million people are eligible to play the lottery. During the first eight months of the lottery Californians spent the staggering sum of $1,640,000,000 on lottery tickets, an average of more than $96 a person. To

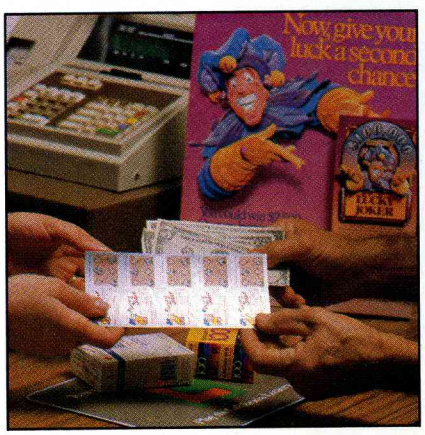


Photo by Hal Finch

phrase it another way, the average eligible Californian spends more than $10 a month on the lottery.

No statistics are available regarding how many do not play the lottery. But no doubt a large percentage don't. Thus the average person who does play probably spends $15, $20 or even more every month.

And who plays the lottery? The more affluent middle- and upper-class wage earners? Well, many might. But an unusually large percentage of those who can least afford it, play often. Lower-wage earners eagerly yearn for the fame and fortune that hitting the jackpot would conceivably bring them. With top winners becoming instant millionaires, the great temptation is to play often. It seems almost insignificant to spend an extra dollar or two at the grocery checkout stand, when making a department store purchase or when buying gasoline.

For some reason people just don't seem to stop and think that any form of gambling has only one sure winner — the state, the sponsor, the casino or the track operators. For every winner there are perhaps hundreds of thousands of losers. The posted odds on some gambling activities are laughable!

Sure, the big winner gets a lot of money. But what about all those losers? Is it really worth it to risk hard-earned money on the highly improbable chance you will strike it rich? Many adults have taken food from their hungry children just to get one more chance.

You should carefully consider the consequences of investing those extra few dollars each time you are tempted. You'd be much better off improving your skills to obtain a better job. Then invest in a savings program to finance whatever you have longed for, perhaps your children's education.

With gambling, millions will lose and only a very few will win. You won't lose if you work hard, save diligently and spend wisely. □

LETTERS

"A Tribute to Herbert W. Armstrong"

I have just finished the May issue of *The Good News* and right now am in tears. I miss Mr. Armstrong's Sunday television program very much.

Midge McGlocklin
Decatur, Ala.

Oh, how I appreciated the tribute to Herbert W. Armstrong! I just had to cry! I miss him so much.... There has been no other man like him. God could not have chosen a better one. He really stood faithful to his last breath.... I still listen to *The World Tomorrow* on TV. I'm glued to the TV at that time.

Avis V. Musgrave
Robinson, Ill.

That was a good tribute to Mr. Armstrong in the May issue. We thought it was well put together. He was the only one who told me where I came from and where I was going, that we were one of the 10 Tribes of Israel. I always wanted to know the answer to that question.

Mike Manning
Pinnacle, N.C.

I have just finished reading your tribute edition of *The Good News,* which was beautifully put together and very informative about both the wonderful gentleman Mr. Armstrong and his successor Mr. Joseph W. Tkach. I, too, like thousands worldwide am deeply saddened at Mr. Armstrong's demise.

Mrs. Al Bauer
Burlington, Wis.

I have been receiving *The Good News of the World Tomorrow* for quite some time and enjoy each issue very much. I am 78 years young and teach a Sunday school class. I receive a lot of good information from all the materials received from Mr. Armstrong.

I want to extend my appreciation and thank you for the wonderful *Good News* magazine I just received for May. The wonderful photos, including his lovely wife. Also the list containing the milestones of his life. I remember hearing him on radio when I lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the '50s. We are all going to miss him.

We pray that Mr. Joseph W. Tkach will be blessed in all his endeavors and I will remember him in my prayers.

Lillian Glazier
Sarasota, Fla.

What a beautiful memento of our late pastor general. Our prayers are for Mr. Tkach and all you employed in God's end-time Work.

Paul Farrier
Troy, Ohio

Herbert W. Armstrong truly was an ambassador for world peace, and I have the greatest admiration for him. I also appreciate sending me *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News.* To the last one, "A Tribute to Herbert W. Armstrong," I would like to add my sincere "Thank you" for his unselfish effort of spreading the truth throughout the world. Mr. Armstrong has left his work in good hands.

Eda K. Christos
Philadelphia, Penn.

I am truly and deeply sorry to hear of Mr. Armstrong's death.... I feel that I know him well.... It seems like everyone who was in contact with him, even his readers, were a part of him. No words can describe the feelings I have for this man.

Vickie Lumpkin
Gadsden, Ala.

Readers comment

I want to thank all the co-workers who are doing this profound and eye-opening Work to the whole world.

As one of your older subscribers, I want to express my appreciation to you. I always read your magazine and booklets. They guide me spiritually. One example is the recent article by Clayton D. Steep, "But Why Isn't God Blessing Me?" (March). I think most of the people in the Third World would ask exactly this question. It helped me and I think it will help thousands.

Joseph Muzondo
Harare, Zimbabwe

Having received *The Good News* for quite some time now, I am truly grateful to you for such awe-inspiring publications. In my constant search for truth and understanding in this often-troubled, hostile world of ours (conveyed daily by means of competing and gimmick-ridden newspapers), I have found the answers in the authentic, Bible-related words of *The Good News.* I look forward with anticipation and enthusiasm to every well-researched article. Your marvelous publications should be made compulsory reading for everyone.

J. Galloway
South Humberside, England

It was very fine to be able to again receive a form from you for a new subscription to *The Good News.*

It is clear and truthfully based on the Book of all books, the Bible, the guide in our life for every day. Every month I again look forward to receiving your magazine. It gives one inspiration and courage to face life in this turbulent and misleading world.

W.H. v.d. Beukel-Barra
Apeldoorn, Netherlands

This magazine is much more current, accurate and reliable than the great majority of newspapers, in English, French, Spanish or Portuguese.

I'm always reading with joy and goodwill in my heart and mind, and I'm becoming much more aware of the great importance of God's words, rules and am learning many things. I'm young, aged 27, and this experience is a valuable asset to my path and behavior!

Carlos M.G. DeCunha
Lisbon, Portugal

My aunt told me that it would be incredibly exciting and educational to invest time in your publications. However, she won't give me any of her copies! Please send me my own. Thank you.

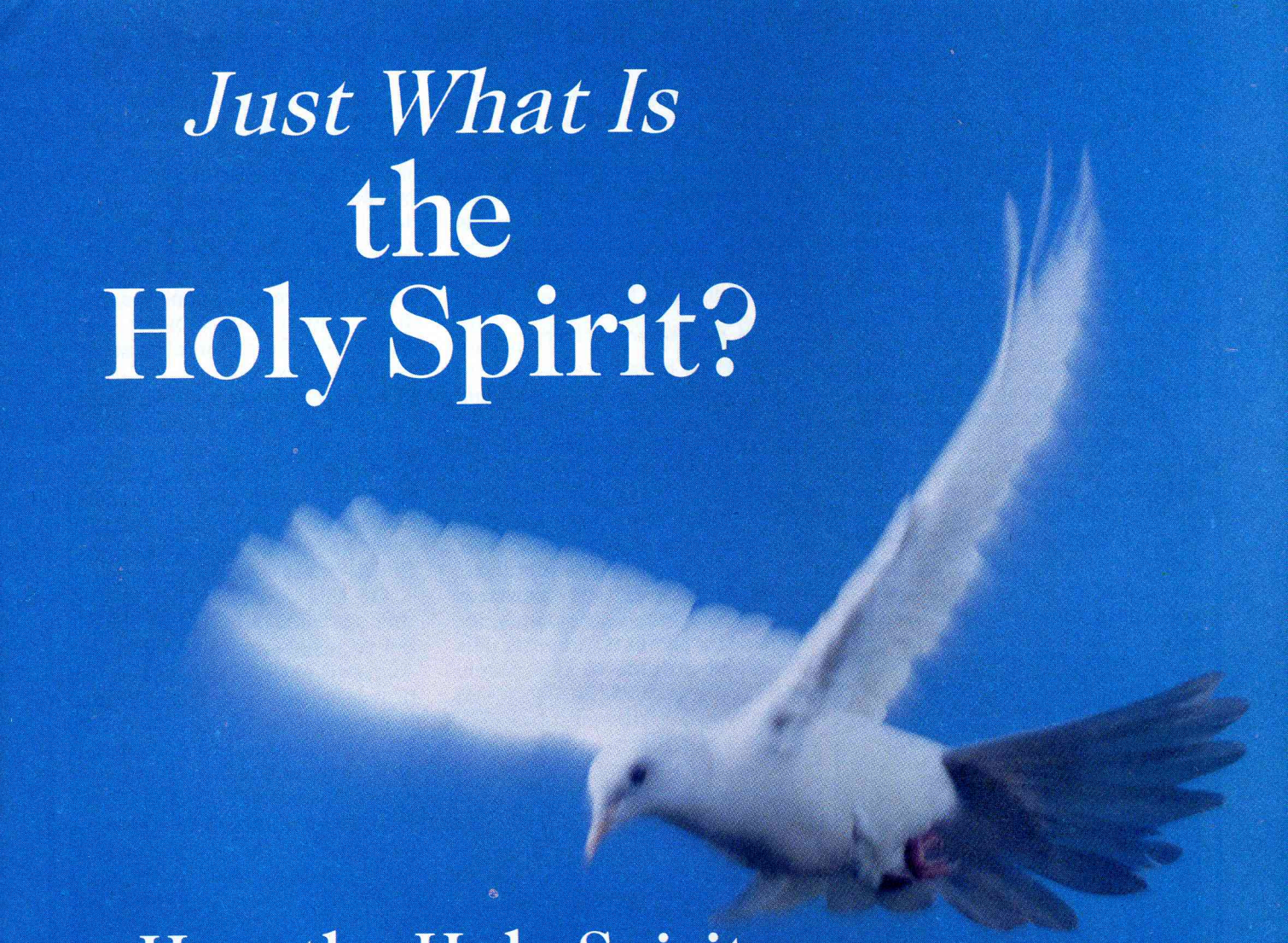
T.A.
Dusseldorf, West Germany

I am 14 years old and, like many people, I've had enough! These weapons of death will wind up exploding everything if we don't say stop! Stop this human madness! Stop and let's start over. Stop and let's share everything. Stop and let's think about each other. Stop and let's love each other. Wouldn't that be wonderful? I realize I know very little about the world tomorrow. That's why I would like to receive the booklet by that title. I am sure it is an eye-opening booklet that should be read by all those who have chosen not to see.

Madoly Duchesne
Flemalle, Belgium

Our free booklet The Wonderful World Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like *offers a detailed look at the soon-coming utopia God will establish on earth after the return of Jesus Christ. Interested readers may request this booklet by mailing the literature request card in this issue or by writing to our nearest address (see inside front cover for a list).*

Just What Is the Holy Spirit?



How the Holy Spirit Can Change Your Life

Millions are deceived by the trinity doctrine! What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit? Here is part two of this important article.

By Bernard W. Schnippert

The Spirit of God — its identity, its nature, its form and value — is simply not understood by most people — even most sincere and professing Christians!

Many assume they know, but they are deceived!

Last month we learned that there is no biblical basis for the trinity doctrine — that the trinity belief was synthesized from pagan and Jewish philosophy and thrust upon Christianity in the fourth century by a council called at the direction of the Roman emperor, who was not a Christian. We saw that the Bible itself shows the Holy Spirit is not a person, and we discovered the astounding truth that God is actually a family composed of, at present, God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son.

But who or what, then, is the Holy Spirit? And how can we know? We must let the Bible interpret itself.

What about the Holy Spirit?

God's Spirit is the *power* that emanates from God — from the Father and the Son.

Look at John 4:24 and understand. Here it says, "God is Spirit." Compare this with us humans. We are flesh, not spirit. And there is a vast difference

Photo by Warren Watson

between flesh and spirit. In our case, our minds are fleshly and so are our bodies. We are made from the dust of the earth (Genesis 3:19). We know the things flesh can know. We have the powers flesh has. We operate within the limits of the flesh. When we act, such as when we move an arm, we act with an arm of flesh and do the things a fleshly arm can do.

But God is spirit. And spirit is superior to flesh. For one, God is holy (John 17:11, Revelation 3:7). God is also immortal. God thinks and operates on a completely different level than we do. God, composed of spirit, can move in ways our arms and bodies cannot move.

In talking to the Pharisee Nicodemus, Jesus compared spirit to the wind: "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8).

God can reach out and extend Himself in ways that we humans, composed of flesh, are hard pressed to understand. How? Through His Holy Spirit, the power by which He acts.

God's Spirit responds to His will. It serves His needs and desires, and so is like a remote arm or agent He uses. The Holy Spirit, as God's means of thought and action, is His mind, His energy, His motivation, His attitude, His power and His nature. God's Spirit works in the human mind to produce conversion.

Science has determined that within the chromosomes of each cell of our bodies are locked the key codes for all of our essential characteristics — eye color, height, facial features. In short, if science knew how, it could construct a twin of any person by looking at the code contained in one small cell. Each of our cells carries all our characteristics.

In the same way, God's Spirit carries His qualities of power, character and mind — His very nature!

It is supremely important, then, to notice the sharp differences between spirit on one hand and flesh on the other. It is the key to understanding how and why the Bible speaks as it does of the Holy Spirit. When the Bible mentions God's Spirit — the Holy Spirit — it usually does so to emphasize some characteristic of God unique to Him.

God's power in action

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as the power or mind of God: "And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2, Authorized Version).

Notice also II Timothy 1:7, which states that God's Spirit is not one of fear, "but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

The Holy Spirit is the power or energy by which God creates, inspires His servants, imparts His mind and attitude to His people and performs, in this physical realm, works that would be physically impossible — even resurrection from the dead!

When God acts, the power of the Holy Spirit carries out His desires. To be sure, His Spirit is far more powerful than the physical arms and strength we might use, say, to build a bookcase. Some of God's powers defy our abilities to understand or describe, yet all the actions He takes can be ascribed to His Spirit. So, for example, the Bible tells us that "by His Spirit He adorned the heavens" (Job 26:13).

In addition, God is able to take His Spirit and actually put it within us humans. When He does so, He puts some of Himself, and thus some of His power, or mind, or character, or nature, into us.

God's Spirit, His power or nature, emanates from Him and can thus be said to be "poured out" (Joel 2:28), "shed" (Titus 3:5-6, AV), "breathed" (John 20:22), to "fill" someone (Acts 2:4) and to "anoint" someone (Acts 10:38) or "proceed" from the Father (John 15:26).

None of these verbs in reference to the Holy Spirit could describe a person. They are used to describe actions taken by God's power!

Some people puzzle over verses that represent the Holy Spirit in symbol. Believers in the trinity seem to think that God's Spirit would not be so represented unless it were a person. Hence they view Matthew 3:13-17, where a dove, as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, descends upon the baptized Christ and a voice from heaven speaks, as proof that God is three persons.

But consider this: Spirit cannot be seen by humans unless it is given a physical form or shape. God used a dove, a symbol of peace, to symbolize the Holy Spirit at the baptism of the Prince of peace! Certainly, God's Spirit is not a dove.

On this occasion God the Father revealed His Spirit in symbol so people could see that God was present in spirit and approved of His Son and His Son's baptism. The Holy Spirit was here represented as a dove, and in other places as fire (Acts 2:3), water (John 4:14), oil (Psalm 45:7), wind (John 3:8) and a seal (Ephesians 1:13), among other symbols.

But why does God represent His Spirit in symbol? Because these symbols illustrate the attributes of God. God uses different symbols at different times to convey different aspects of His character. Remember, though, that neither God nor Christ is literally water, a dove, fire or wind. These are mere symbols.

An extension of God

Look at Acts 13:2. It states, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' " If the Holy Spirit is not a separate person of the God Family, how can this verse be understood?

Such verses, in part, may be examples of a figure of speech known as *personification.* Personification is the practice of attributing human qualities to inanimate objects to add color or life to description.

The Bible uses such a device from time to time, but consider

also this: The Holy Spirit is at times spoken of as if a person because it is the extension of a person — the person of God the Father or of the Son, but not of a *separate* person or being from the two. When the Bible says the Holy Spirit spoke or moved or remembered or in some other way acted like a being, it is telling us that either the Father or the Son did something by means of their spiritual power — the Spirit of God.

Let us now see some places where God's Spirit is spoken of in a way that shows other of God's qualities — that is, that illustrate other differences between righteous spirit and carnal flesh.

Misunderstood verses

In some Bible verses, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are mentioned together in one phrase, verse or closely related series of verses. Notice, for instance, Matthew 28:19, I Peter 1:2, II Corinthians 13:14, John 14:26 and I Corinthians 12:4-11.

Consider one of the scriptures most often quoted in support of the trinity, Matthew 28:19. It says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in ["into" in the original Greek] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Trinitarians say this verse proves God is a trinity. If the Holy Spirit is not a being, why be baptized *into* it?

The answer is simple. When we are baptized, we are baptized into the Family of God in the name of or by the authority of Jesus Christ.

When we are baptized *into* this Family, we are promised the Holy Spirit ourselves. The Spirit of God is what adds us to the God Family (I Corinthians 12:13). Hence, by directing that we be baptized into that Spirit, God calls attention to this important point.

Notice also Matthew 12:31 and Luke 12:10, where Christ says that blasphemy against the Son will be forgiven, but not blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Why the distinction, if the Holy Spirit is not a person? Look at the context. The Pharisees didn't want to believe that Christ was God, but they couldn't deny His power. So it is today. When most people curse God or otherwise blaspheme, they don't really know what they are doing, for they don't know the true God — they have not been converted and begotten with God's Spirit. Therefore, if they blaspheme, they do so against a false conception of God. The true God they do not recognize. Hence they can be forgiven.

But the time comes when they learn of the true God. This occurs when they have received the Holy Spirit through conversion, or have at least truly been touched by its power through being called by God, or having God's truth clearly revealed to them. If they then reject God, with full, willful knowledge of what they are doing, they are indeed blaspheming.

Hence, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is mentioned because to blaspheme, one must actually reject and fight against the true power of God, and not against a mere mental image one holds based upon some deception.

John 14:15-21 deserves special comment. These verses speak of the "Comforter" (AV) or "Helper" (Revised Authorized Version), which Christ promised to send the apostles after His death. Plainly, that Comforter was to be the Holy Spirit (verse 17).

These verses seem to imply the Spirit is a being because 1) the language in the English translation is language we would use to describe a being, and 2) the Comforter is referred to with the pronouns "He" and "Him."

But again, the trinitarians are in serious error.

Who is the Comforter?

The pronouns "He" and "Him" in John 14:15-21 refer to the word *Comforter,* a word that in the Greek language demands a male pronoun regardless of what it refers to. Some languages assign gender to all nouns, which must be referred to by pronouns of matching gender.

Even in English we sometimes assign gender to objects, such as when we name a hurricane after a man or woman and then refer to it as a "he" or "she." But some languages require such assignments for many nouns. Greek is one of these. The use of "he"



The Bible symbolizes God's Holy Spirit as a dove, water, fire, oil, wind and a seal, among other symbols, to illustrate different aspects of God's character and power.

Good News photos

here instead of "it" is therefore an idiosyncrasy of grammar and nothing else. The male person does not imply that the Comforter is actually a person.

(Note also that in Greek the original word for "Spirit" is neuter and that the proper grammatical pronoun in reference to spirit is "it," a neuter pronoun.)

But consider these passages even further. Notice that in verse 18 Christ says, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." And also verse 20, "At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."

Who, then, is the Comforter? By Christ's own statement, He Himself lives in a person after that person has been begotten with the Spirit by the Father.

That is why Christ said He could not come unto the disciples unless He went to His Father — was resurrected as a spirit being with the power to live in a person through the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). While He was flesh, He had no such power.

Even Paul stated clearly that it was Christ who lived in him (Galatians 2:20). But it was not the human Christ. It was the Christ who lived in his mind and actions through the character-changing power of the Holy Spirit!

Finally, many laymen will turn to I John 5:7-8 to try to document the trinity argument. Theologians will not do so, however, for it is well established, even by those who believe in the trinity, that much of these verses are spurious additions and not of the inspired text. With the spurious parts removed, no such proof of the trinity appears.

Why it all matters

In review, we have seen a wonderful and astounding truth. The Holy Spirit of God is the mind, the power and the nature of God the Father and Jesus Christ.

But the most important and truly startling truth is yet to come! What difference does all this make? Why does it matter just what the Holy Spirit is? It makes a great difference indeed. For the Family of God — now composed of the Father and the Son — is not yet complete. It is God's incredible purpose to add more beings — you and me — to that Family! And He uses His Holy Spirit to do it!

Isn't that incredible?

But the big question is how? The big answer is by the power of the Holy Spirit, that's how. Let us now explain.

Man is mortal and fleshly, and subject to death. God, who is spirit, is immortal. Man has sinned and will therefore die, "for the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Yet, for God to make a man a member of His Family, He must make him immortal. To do this He will add an important, immortal ingredient — His Holy Spirit.

Notice, for example, Romans 8:9-11, which declares that the mortal, fleshly body will, due to sin, inherit death, but that if the Spirit of God dwells in you, "He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwells in you." That is, He will give you eternal life!

Or turn to I John 5:11-13, which states that if Christ lives in us by the power of the Spirit, then we have eternal life dwelling within us, but if the Spirit is not in us, we have no such life. See also I Peter 3:18.

Of course, the first question that pops into the minds of most is how one may receive that Spirit. The answer is that we can only receive it as a gift from God, but only if we are baptized properly after repentance from sin and belief in the true God and the message He sent by Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38).

When we are baptized and have hands laid on us by God's true ministers, we receive a small portion of that Spirit. That Spirit is like a seed. It will grow, with our effort at overcoming.

The bit of Spirit we receive from God the Father at baptism is like the physical sperm with which a physical father impregnates the mother's ovum. And, like the fertilized egg, the begotten child of God must grow until birth. The birth of the spiritual fetus (you and I after baptism) does not take place until we are born anew at Christ's return, when mortality is swallowed up of life — that is, when that begotten, faithful Christian, having overcome, is born as an immortal son of God (II Corinthians 5:4).

We explained earlier how each cell of a person's body — through key codes in the chromosomes — carries all the characteristics of the person. In like manner, when the Father puts His Spirit into us, His Spirit imparts to us all of God's characteristics, such as immortal life, His mind, His understanding and His character of love, joy, peace and the other fruits of His Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). We become partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4)

Of course, God's Spirit is not exactly like the sperm cell from a man's body. This is an analogy.

Key to eternal life

The Holy Spirit of God is the key to eternal life! If you don't have it, then you do not have eternal life dwelling within you. Most don't have it, because they don't understand what it is. They believe that it is a part of a trinity — a third person in a Godhead closed to entry by mankind.

Belief in the trinity hides from man the very power of God that can live within us and make us into powerful spirit beings with eternal life and the character, nature, form and shape of the living God.

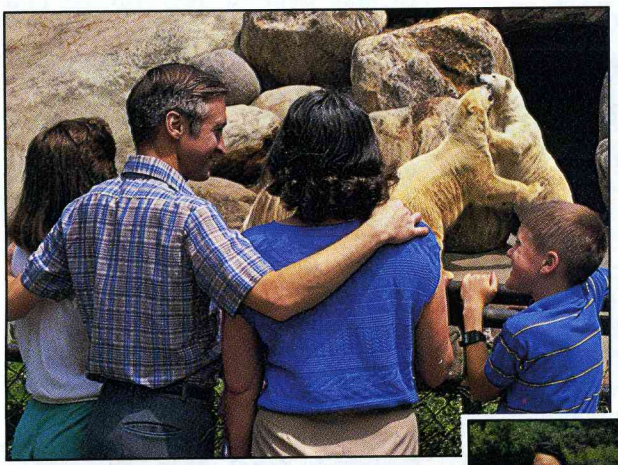
When we understand the truth, what a delight and a supreme gift the Holy Spirit of God is!

God is not a trinity. God is a family of, at present, two persons, who think and act with the power of the Holy Spirit. When God begets us with that Spirit, we are impregnated with eternal God-life, to grow in God's qualities of mind and power until the Second Coming of Christ, when we shall be born into God's Family as His literal children! □

By Ronald D. Kelly

Who Is the Head of Your House?

We live in confusing times. Men who marry often don't understand what a husband should be. Is he still supposed to be head of the house? Or should the wife in these modern times assume that responsibility? Is it a 50-50 relationship where neither is in charge?



Where can we find the answers? Is there a source to which we can turn and find out how a family should be structured?

If you are even a casual reader of this magazine, you know there is such a source. We go to it for answers about every area of life. And right family structure is no exception.

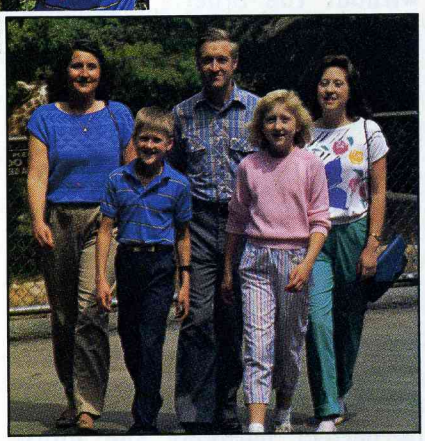
The Holy Bible provides the framework.

We have been sharing with you in this column how the Bible gives direction to happy family life — how, if applied, the Bible will direct men and women to the happiest marriages and family life in the entire history of mankind.

Some modern views

Countless books and articles have been written on family life. That alone ought to show this age-old institution is in confusion. Given the feminist movement of the past two decades, the roles of men and women have become confused.

Has feminism gone too far, even from a woman's point of view? In attempting to solve one problem, have two or three or more problems just as great or even greater cropped up?



With marriages and families failing at alarming rates, it ought to be obvious these newfound freedoms and philosophies have not produced good fruit.

Many are now coming to see that applying feminist philosophy has produced a weakened generation of males who don't know how to exert masculine leadership. The whole society has become topsy-turvy. Boys don't know what it means to grow up and head a family. A common word appears more and more frequently to describe modern young men — *wimp*.

What a tragedy!

A few years ago, I read an article in a major magazine about the changing role of husbands and fathers. The author, a woman, had come to see a happy home should be led by a strong husband and father. The article she wrote was entitled, "Let's Put Father Back at the Head of the Home."

At first glance that might seem like a good idea. Many men have lost that sense of responsibility. They indeed should be "head of the home."

But who should put him there? The wife and children?

The poor guy still is floundering while Mom and the children somehow try to put him back in a position of leadership.

Husbands should not have to be "put back" at the head of the house. They should *be* head of the family in the God-ordained organization of the home.

What God says

Because a lot of people don't understand the Bible, many become hostile at the very mention of the apostle Paul as an authority on family life. Branded as the classic male chauvinist, Paul has little, if any, respect among most modern women's liberationist

Photos by Nathan Faulkner

types. But they totally miss the point.

Paul was not antiwoman. He was not a male chauvinist. He was a called apostle of Jesus Christ who knew, understood and taught the proper relationship between husbands and wives, between parents and children.

In fact, the only way to truly happy family life is to apply the laws of God to the marital relationship. You see, it was God who inspired Paul's writings and all other Scripture.

So what does the Bible have to say about the head of the house?

Let's read it in Ephesians 5:23-24: "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

That scripture, taken out of context and misunderstood, has made the blood of many modern feminists boil. The verse seems to say that men are superior — that they have dictatorial rights and can run their families like demagogues and tyrants.

That's not what the Bible says.

Notice what Paul wrote in that same context: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives" (verses 25-28).

That hardly sounds as though a man has the right to drag his wife around by her hair, keep her in the back tent or deny her any privileges and responsibilities in the family.

God's instruction also states: "Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the [physically] weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered" (I Peter 3:7).

So, who is in charge?

God placed the husband at the head of the family to lead, guide and inspire it — not as a dictatorial monster, but as a loving authority whose wife and children are the highest priority of his life.

God placed the husband at the head of the family to guide and inspire it — not as a dictatorial monster, but as a loving authority whose wife and children are his highest priority. There has to be leadership.

God created marriage when He created Adam and Eve. Neither of the first humans was complete without the other. Together a man and wife become a team — two people, making one new and complete unit. God says of marriage, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

Yet, as in any other facet of life, there has to be leadership. Even in the Family of God, the Father is over Jesus Christ, who is the Son. Christ is subject to God in everything. But they live in perfect harmony and unity. God is the perfect Father and executes His leadership with unfailing love. But does anyone doubt that He is in charge?

Christ is Head of the Church. He presides over it with equally deep concern and love. In fact, the spiritual analogy in the Bible shows that Christ's relationship with the Church will be like a marital relationship.

Notice how the Bible describes the coming of Christ: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife [the Church] has made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7).

The relationship of Christ, in God's Kingdom, to spirit-born saints will be as a husband to a wife.

Most of us have no fears of submitting to Christ. We know He is filled with love, that He is not a harsh dictator, that we will have an eternal relationship.

If husbands would pattern their leadership and loving authority after that of Jesus Christ, women would never feel the need to take over or feel abused and rejected.

Sad to say, throughout most of human history, few men have patterned their relationships after that great example.

But you can.

One path to success

You men who are husbands and fathers must assume your proper role and place at the head of the family. You are not elected to that position — God has given you that responsibility. Men who have abused it have pushed women to rebel. Men who refuse to accept their leadership role have pushed women to take the lead to get things done.

Neither extreme is right. Neither produces a happy and healthy home.

There is only one path to success in family life. The Bible lights that path. A successful family consists of a man at the head who applies the law of God in loving authority, a woman of capacity and ability who responds to the lead of her husband and parents who set an example of love for their children.

If you create that environment in your home, your marriage and family will grow in happiness and love.

It is guaranteed! □

Miracles Are They Happening Today?

Jesus said miracles would follow His true servants (Mark 16:17-18). You can recognize the Church of God today by the miracles being performed!

By Earl H. Williams

"Where are the miracles? If this is really God's true Church, why don't I see you performing miracles?"

The person asking these provocative questions sincerely sought to prove if this was God's true Church. Miracles loomed as the missing piece of the puzzle.

But were they really missing? Or was he oblivious to the astounding phenomenon unfolding in his very life?

What about you? Are you able to recognize the earthshaking miracles occurring in God's Church? They are happening!

Yes! Miracles are happening in the Worldwide Church of God, today. At this very moment, one of the greatest miracles of all time may be happening to you. Read on. Discover God's purpose for miracles in your life.

What is a miracle?

How would you recognize a miracle? After witnessing the theatrics of phony miracles in sweaty tent meetings with "cripples" cartwheeling over wheelchairs, or hearing the babbling gibberish of people supposedly "speaking in tongues," many people are confused as to what constitutes a real miracle.

The suspension or changing of a natural law produces a miracle. *Dunamis,* a Greek word meaning "the dynamic display of power," is used in the New Testament for miracles. Our modern English form of the word evolved from the Latin *miraculum,* meaning "a marvelous event."

When Jesus Christ dynamically displayed God's power to alter natural laws, the disciples marveled, saying: "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!" (Luke 8:25).

In whose hands rests the power to perform these mighty wonders — man's or God's? The power is in God's hands. He determines how, when and where to unleash His wonders. Puny man stands as observer and server — not source. Even Christ, the instrument, acknowledged God as the source of the miracles He performed (John 14:10). Marvel not at the man — marvel at the God behind the man.

Remember, too, that while Christ guaranteed that signs would follow God's true people, God is never bound to perform miracles just to satisfy skeptics. John the Baptist, a righteous servant of God who prepared the way for Christ's first coming, did not do many mighty works. Yet Jesus said no human greater than John the Baptist had ever been born (Matthew 11:11)! While God may perform miracles to reveal Himself, His existence and authority are in no way negated if He chooses not to.

The master deceiver

What about Satan? Can he perform miracles? If by "miracles" you mean the power to amaze and daze — yes, the master magician can.

The apostle Paul called Satan's bag of tricks "lying wonders" (II Thessalonians 2:9). This subtle deceiver can manifest attention-attracting acts; nevertheless, God limits Satan (Job 2:6). Satan is allowed to perform a few cheap tricks, while God reserves for Himself the most important powers, such as healing. Only God can make you whole (Exodus 15:26).

God's purpose

But first, why does God perform miracles? What purpose do they serve? Is God in the entertainment business, amusing and

tantalizing the masses? When things get boring around heaven, does He yawn and say: "Oh, well, it's about time to spice things up again. Let's do another miracle"?

No! Miracles are not ends in themselves. God uses miracles as a means to an end. That end — God's all-encompassing purpose — is the revelation of Himself to man.

Let us now look at three epochs in history when God used miracles to get man's attention: the time of Moses, the time of Elijah and the time of Christ.

It was God's will to reveal Himself to Israel and Pharaoh by performing signs and wonders in Egypt. But first, he needed an instrument, a servant. So the Lord introduced Himself to Moses in an amazing way: through the burning bush. He got Moses' undivided attention (Exodus 3:2-4). The Eternal's persuasive power convinced Moses that the Lord was God, and motivated Moses to do His work.

Through Moses, God made His debut with Israel and the Egyptians — and God was a "knockout." The plagues stunned everyone, bringing the nation of Egypt to its knees. The Red Sea overwhelmed Pharaoh's army. When God was finished, everybody "knew the Lord" (Exodus 14:4, 18).

A dark age of religious confusion descended again in Elijah's day. The people lost sight of the true God and His servant. Instead, they worshiped Baal and Baal's servants (I Kings 18:18). God, working through His servant Elijah, challenged the prophets of Baal to a showdown, a contest of miracles, at high noon in Israel (verse 27).

The question of who was the greatest in Israel, God or Baal, would be settled once and for all. Elijah cried out: "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him" (verse 21). Here was the challenge: Two bulls were to be cut up and laid on separate altars, one for God and one for Baal, "and the God who answers by fire, He is God" (verse 24).

The odds seemed overwhelming. Elijah stated, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men" (verse 22). Elijah, outnumbered and surrounded, strove forward with courage. Baal's prophets drew first, but their guns were empty — Baal was silent (verses 26-27).

Then Elijah fired: " 'Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.' Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice . . . Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!' " (verses 37-39). Through this dramatic miracle, the one true God and His one true prophet were made known.

As time went on, the shades of spiritual darkness descended yet again. This time God decided to send His Son to bring light to the world. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). Christ's purpose was not to glorify Himself, but by His light reveal the Father (John 17:4). Again, mira-











Modern "miracles"? *Left and below, evangelical healing service. God alone can alter natural laws, and He decides how, when and where to unleash His wonders (photos by T. Simon — Gamma/Liaison).*

Pilgrims collect "holy water" *near Lourdes, France, far left (Religious News Service photo). Left, the "mother of God" was seen at Fatima (Deutsche Presse-Agentur). Above, liquification of St. Januarius' blood signifies good luck in Naples, Italy (AP/Wide World photo).*

cles pointed out the true God and His true servant. On the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31, the apostle Peter preached: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know" (Acts 2:22).

They could not deny the true God and whom He was working through. Through the Church Christ founded, the light of the true God continued to shine (Matthew 16:18).

An end-time witness

But deception and persecution dimmed that light after the first century. The Church still existed, but, as a whole, "slumbered and slept" (Matthew 25:5). The Gospel was not preached to the world in power. The ominous fog of religious blindness engulfed the world.

Would the light be dimmed, the voice silenced, the knowledge of the true God hidden forever? No!

"And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' " (Matthew 25:6). Some 1,900 years after the founding of the Church, a voice began crying out in the wilderness of religious deception. Light pierced the darkness (Isaiah 40:3).

That voice was that of Herbert W. Armstrong and the Worldwide Church of God. God promised an end-time witness: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me" (Malachi 3:1). Today Mr. Armstrong's successors continue this great Work.

The greatest miracle

But as the man referred to earlier asked, "Where are the miracles?" Jesus Christ promised, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12).

Greater miracles than Christ performed are happening in God's Church today. Those miracles are revealing the true God. Many people have been healed. Many have been miraculously protected in cases of accidents and natural disasters. Tremendous doors have been opened for preaching the Gospel in far-flung places around the globe. Prayers sent up by God's people have been answered in astounding and undeniable ways. This very Work itself, which began from nothing, has grown spectacularly, like the proverbial grain of mustard seed, and it is still growing by leaps and bounds today.

These miracles surpass those of Christ Himself! But the most important miracle may be happening to you right now.

Surprised? Impossible, you say? Think: Which is greater, the healing of a body or the healing of a mind? Which is more important, your physical life or your eternal life?

Jesus asked the same question: "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Man is preoccupied with the preservation of the flesh. God is interested in the ultimate spiritual goal.

Spiritually, Christ didn't heal a single person during His earthly ministry. Jesus did not even convert His chief apostle, Peter. Christ told him, "And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32, Authorized Version). Conversion — spiritual healing — is the greatest miracle of all!

An end-time Work of Elijah

The greatest miracles of God's end-time Work concentrate on the heart. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:5-6).

Elijah was a forerunner of this end-time Work. God the Father is turning the hearts of His children to Himself, as He turns His heart to them through the preaching and publishing of His Church.

In Elijah's day of spiritual darkness, fire came from heaven and revealed the true God. Today, a fire — a light — also comes down from heaven and reveals the true God, but in a greater way.

Paul explained: "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Corinthians 4:6). That light — that fire from heaven — is the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-4).

The true God is not only being revealed *to* you, but *in* you. A nature-defying spiritual miracle beyond all human understanding unfolds within your mind: "I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33). Through the process of character development and conversion, God is actually being formed in you (Galatians 4:19)!

The physical miracles of Moses, Elijah and Christ were soon forgotten — out of sight, out of mind (Psalm 78:10-11). The spiritual miracles of today cannot be forgotten, for they are not of the sight, but of the mind. The mind is the object of the miracle.

God takes nothing — you and me — and miraculously creates sons of God out of us (Romans 8:14, 16-17). To learn more about this most marvelous miracle of all, write for our free full-length book *The Incredible Human Potential.*

The purpose — the end result — of God's greatest miracle is to create His own children, with His body, mind and Spirit. God is performing this miracle today, in the lives of thousands of people just like you. But you must allow Him to work in your life. Where are the miracles? Let them happen within you! □

The Faith Required for Salvation

"God said it — I believe it — and that settles it!"

So says a bumper sticker appearing on more and more cars these days. Perhaps you have seen this sticker yourself.

If so, you have seen a perfect example of a *profession* of Christian faith. But whether you have really seen *true* Christian faith is another matter indeed, for true Christian faith is a much misunderstood subject, and goes far beyond a mere outward expression of belief on a sticker pasted on the family car.

Many profess faith, but in reality faith is a rare commodity. For proof, just look at the startling epidemic of anxiety, fear, worry and even religious disbelief that plagues almost everyone at some time in his or her life!

No wonder Jesus Christ asked, "When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

The basic doctrine

Faith is the belief that God exists and that He will do exactly as He says He will in His Word, the Bible. It is by this faith that we must live if we want to please God and to know the peace of mind that comes only through trust in Him. It is through this faith that we are justified and by which we can gain the strength of godly love to obey God's commandments. This is the kind of faith required for salvation!

The usual teachings of this world

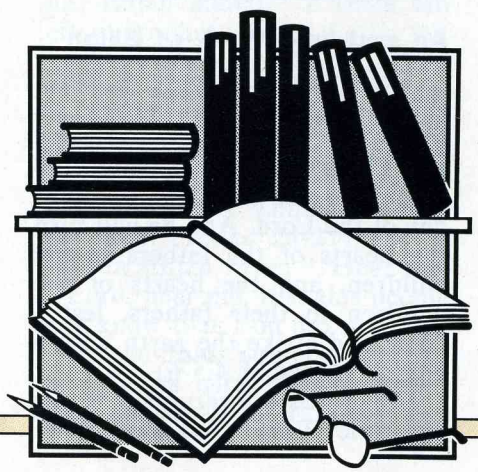
Probably most religious people would profess agreement with at least part of the definition given above. Yet upon closer examination, we find that almost no one truly grasps the real meaning of the word *faith*. Almost no one understands where it comes from or how it works in our lives.

Indeed, most would — quite wrongly — think faith is something one must "work up" from within the self. Further, many would also confuse faith with emotion, such as affection for God. Many would say that having faith precludes the necessity to obey God's laws, saying that Christians live "by faith without the works of the law." All of these ideas are false.

The Bible teaching

Probably the best place to begin a discussion about faith is with a simple Bible definition. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

In other words, faith is belief that God will uphold His promises, in spite of the fact that no physical evidence may exist to demonstrate it. A person's faith — true belief — is all the evidence he or she needs. Faith *is* the evidence.



Hebrews 11:6 expands upon this definition: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Faith, then, is again declared to be a belief that God exists and that He will reward those who obey Him according to His promises.

Some think faith is an emotion — a sort of sanctimonious "good feeling" about God and His existence. They have some kind of warm feeling for God in their hearts, for example, and they think this is faith. It is not. Faith is an inward belief in God and that what He says is true. It is a state of mind and not an emotion (although it can, of course, be accompanied by emotion).

Faith is not mere hope, nor is it simply fear, as when a Christian may seek God because he or she is afraid of a trial in life. It is not self-righteousness or peer pressure, as when someone may obey God since others around do.

Some do not understand what faith is — although they may think they do — because they wrongly suppose that faith must come from within themselves. They believe it is something that can be "worked up" from within. It cannot.

True faith is not a natural quality found buried or disguised within the human psyche and capable of being conjured up if one just knows how. It must come wholly from without as a gift from God to the human mind.

Notice Ephesians 2:8: "For by

grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Galatians 5:22 lists faith as one of the primary fruits of God's Spirit working within a person, rather than as a natural quality of man that can somehow be coaxed to the surface through emotional tent meetings, or otherwise "worked up."

Many misunderstand what faith is because they fail to see it involves not merely believing that God exists, but that what God says is true. That is, they believe *in* God, but they don't *believe Him.*

Adam and Eve made that mistake. Surely they believed that God existed, for they walked and talked with Him in the Garden of Eden. But they didn't believe that they would die if they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, even though He said they would die. That is, they didn't believe what He said. Most today who claim to have faith make this same mistake!

Some other dangerous misunderstandings about faith persist.

The first such misunderstanding is that faith negates the need to keep God's law. This false concept is often supported by citing — in part — a statement in the book of Romans that "a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28), and some other similar verses. Essentially, however, those who subscribe to the faith-instead-of-works theory profess that the law has been "done away."

In actual practice, however, those who hold to such a doctrine do so rather hypocritically and contradictorily. Do they mean we can use God's name in vain, or kill, or steal, or commit adultery, or fall down and worship an idol? No, they mean none of these things, even though to literally apply the "We don't have to keep the law anymore" philosophy would indeed mean believing these things. Rather, the only one of the Ten Commandments they will admit to having been done away is the Sabbath. Plus they lump in God's Holy Days and tithing and any other points of God's law they don't want to obey.

Such a theological position is ridiculous. Humans are in no position to decide which of God's laws are in force and which aren't. Those over whom God rules — and professing Christians claim this status — have no right to tell God which of His laws they want to obey and which they want to dispense with. God has made it clear in His Word what His laws are.

Further, those who say we are saved by faith alone, with no need to obey God's law, err by mixing together two separate concepts — justification and obedience. Yes, Christians are justified (that is, forgiven and made right with God) by faith and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9), yet that does not give the forgiven sinner the right to repeat the sin any more than a murderer who has been pardoned by the authorities has the right to kill again.

And Romans 3:28 says the same thing when viewed in context. Verse 31 further clarifies the truth: "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." Clearly, faith does not abrogate God's law.

James 2:14-24 states that "faith without works is dead" (verse 20), and that "a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (verse 24). These verses show that a person who has faith — who believes God and wants to please Him — will demonstrate that faith with obedience.

How illogical to believe that someone who has faith in God would even want to disobey Him! Rather, faith is the very power we must exercise to obey God!

Now understand this: God's law is a law of love. The first four of the Ten Commandments define love toward God, the last six love toward man. To fulfill that law requires the power of love, for "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10).

But it must be God's love in us and not merely our own love. His love is "poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit," which God gives us after repentance and baptism (Romans 5:5, Acts 2:38). We receive that love and the strength to obey God from Him through the Holy Spirit He gives us.

To receive the strength to obey God requires us to pray to Him for it. Yet to receive answers to our prayers — including an answer when we pray that God will help us obey — requires faith, for without such faith no one can receive anything from God (James 1:6-7).

Therefore obedience stems directly from faith and is in no way abrogated by it. Instead, as stated in Romans 3:31, faith establishes the law, for faith enables us to keep the law. The Holy Spirit actually gives us the very faith of Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16, Authorized Version).

Key verses

Here is a brief list of main verses about faith, to summarize the topic: Hebrews 11:1, 6 — faith is defined. Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 2:16 — we are justified by faith, and faith is a gift from God; God, through the Holy Spirit, actually gives us the faith of Jesus Christ. James 2:14-24 — faith does not abrogate God's law or good works. Romans 3:28-31 — faith justifies us and establishes the law.

Yes, true faith is far more than a mere profession of belief proclaimed by a sticker on the bumper of a car. It is the gift of God for forgiveness of the past, and the key to obedience for the future! □

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