

SPIRITUAL INSIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE

FAITH *for life*

*“The **life** which I now live...I live by the **faith** of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20*

Complimentary Copy

Volume 4, Issue 2

from the Ministry of Fargo Baptist Church

Fall Edition, 2011

for our own **GOOD**

by pastor tony scheving



“And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness (prosperity), if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.” - Deuteronomy 6:24-25

When we were children our mothers would often give us some nasty tasting medicine to help us over an illness. Do you remember Mom saying, “This is for your own good?” Now as adults we find ourselves consuming flax seed, fish oil, cayenne pepper, spinach, raw oatmeal and other yucky stuff because we know they are for our own good. Many people hate to exercise, but they do it because they know it’s for their own good. Somehow, we don’t mind doing something or eating something if we know it’s for our own good. In Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Bible, we find an old man by the name of Moses who is about to die. The book

of Deuteronomy is his ‘Swan song’. He spends many chapters reminding the Jewish people of how God had brought them out of Egyptian slavery and through the wilderness over a 40-year period. God had been very good to them during that time and Moses was bringing it to the attention of the people. Sometimes we need reminding as well as we tend to overlook, or misunderstand, the goodness of God.

God says in Isaiah 55:8-9, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your*

continued next page

IN THIS ISSUE:

Pg. 5.....Making Marriage Great!

Pg. 6.....A Man and His Money

Pg. 8.....What is God’s Plan for Getting to Heaven?

Pg. 14.....Myths About Life

Pg. 16...What About This Rapture Business?



FARGO BAPTIST CHURCH
3303 23 AVE S
FARGO, ND • 58103
FAITH *for life*

thoughts." Sometimes God does or allows something and we 'don't get it'. God's ways can be mysterious to us. At such times the Bible says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). Man is clever, and yet he's lost his way. He can split atoms, build nuclear devices, make satellites to orbit the earth 22,000 miles away and probe Venus and Mars. Yet, sadly we live in a day and age of guided missiles and misguided men. We have planes that travel at 2000mph and space ships that soar at 24,000mph, and we're continually going faster, but mankind still doesn't know where he's going. We have a lot of speed and noise, but no 'light'! Still, we have a wonderful promise from God's Word when it says, "The LORD shall guide thee continually" (Isaiah 58:11). God also adds in Psalms 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

The problem is that mankind is ignoring God's Word and not listening to his Creator. We have schools teaching children that they evolved from monkeys, and they're just a product of chance. This erodes any real purpose, meaning or value to life. No wonder suicide is the leading cause of death among young people. Actually, God has a wonderful plan for everything. Not just for the world or our nation, but for every individual person including you! God not only wants to guide you through your life overall, but actually every step of the way. The Bible says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD" (Psalms 37:23). Being in God's perfect will is life's greatest achievement whether you're a carpenter or a cardiologist; a pastor or a plumber. Success does not equal money. Success is to know the will of God in your life and doing it. When the clock of your life winds down and the last sentence of your life is written, all that will matter is, "Did you do what your Creator put you here to do?" The night before He died on the cross, Jesus told His heavenly Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

God never makes any copies when it comes to snowflakes or fingerprints. He also has a totally different plan for every life. But God's direction for your life is not about a roadmap as much as a relationship. God's plan is not about a philosophy or a program, but about an individual person. God wants a personal relationship with you. Do you find it difficult to trust God, or do you do so half heartedly? The reason might be because you don't actually know God in an intimate way. Is he more like the 'Big Guy upstairs' or the 'Man in the Sky' to you...kind of like an

imaginary friend? As a result, is it hard to trust Him because you really don't know Him? I love and trust my wife because I know her, and have been married to her for decades. I wouldn't feel that way about a total stranger. Knowing God begins with being born again into His family spiritually (see page 8).

After a person is truly a Christian, they learn to trust his heavenly Father instead of his own logic. The Bible says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12). We consult with our bankers, realtors, educators or psychologists, and too often bypass our Creator. But the Bible says, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). We need divine guidance. Does God truly rule over your finances, your business, your marriage, your home, your leisure, and your life? Would you give God a blank contract with your name signed at the bottom and allow Him to fill in anything He wants? Someone once said, "When it comes to God we should say, anytime, anywhere, and any cost." Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34). You don't have to be afraid of what God will send into your life. The Bible says, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalms 37:4). Living the life that God wants you to live is the way to fulfillment and purpose. The Bible says, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil 2:13). God wants to guide us for our own good.

It's wonderful to know that we have a heavenly Father who has our best interest in mind. He's not trying to hurt us or frustrate us. God says in Exodus 19:5, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." God wants to bless the obedient and show His goodness. God's blessings make such a difference. When God tells people not to engage in sex outside of marriage, He's not trying to spoil their fun. When God warns against drunkenness, He's not trying to be a cosmic killjoy. When God says that thou shall not lie, steal, covet,

7 STEPS TO *God*
BIBLE STUDY
www.7StepsToGod.org

Do you ever wonder *what life is all about*? In a sense, it's actually a dressing room for eternity. In the big picture we're "here today and gone tomorrow." 7 Steps to God is a Bible study designed to prepare people for the next life and also to enhance the quality of this present life. God created you with a special purpose in mind and has a wonderful plan for you. The Bible is the instruction manual to life and at Heaven 88.7 we're here to help people find God through His Word. If you are interested in taking the 7 Steps to God Bible study please contact us. Our staff is available for either a one on one, or group Bible study free of charge.

Sponsored by
HEAVEN 88.7 FM
CHRISTIAN RADIO

Tune into 'Pulpit Power'
weekdays at
Noon & 8:00 PM

PO Box 107 • Fargo, ND 58107
701.298.8877 • 1.800.232.5588 • www.kfbn.org

dishonor parents, take His name in vain, or put anything ahead of Him, He's not trying to zap the fun out of life. Sin wrecks everything! God is concerned about our own good. God doesn't tell us to stay out of sin for His benefit, but for our own. Sin is a hard taskmaster. King Saul succumbed to jealousy and it cost him dearly. Abraham's nephew, Lot, dabbled in covetousness, and it cost him everything. Samson dabbled in fornication and ended up losing his eyes and then his life. When God warns us against sin it's for our own good. Many picture God as a big policeman who steps in to 'break it up' every time He sees a group of people having fun. This isn't actually the case at all. God knows that sin is self-destructive, and He always has our best interest in mind. God says, "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him... That they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them" (Isaiah 3:10, Jeremiah 32:39). God knows that sin will mess us up, as well as scar us up. Like a parent who tells a toddler not to stick a bobby pin in an electrical outlet, God tells us to stay away from sin. The Bible says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him" (Psalms 103:13). God's not being some 'meany' when He warns us, but He's trying to salvage our lives from the havoc of sin. So let's trust Him and obey Him, and know that He does what He does for our own good. ■

Gentle Thoughts for Today

If you can smile when things go wrong, you have someone in mind to blame.

The sole purpose of a child's middle name is so he can tell when he's really in trouble.

The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

Ah, being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

AVENGE not yourselves

By Pastor Thomas Smith

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

-Romans 12:19

This verse is part of an extremely helpful portion of scripture, which includes instruction for the treatment of others. What are we to do when we are mistreated? Does God have anything to say about such things? The Bible is such a practical Book, and here, it gives advice concerning this very matter. The first bit of counsel is to "avenge not yourselves." The word "avenge" means to "retaliate, vindicate or punish." There will be times when people will treat us unfairly. Even professing Christians will sometimes act as cruelly as those who do no claim to know the Lord. Remember this—our Lord was lied about, misrepresented, and treated wickedly. What if someone is vindictive toward you or slanders you? What if we are lied about? We should not attempt to get back at others. One of the worst things we could do is to seek revenge. Our text goes on to tell us to "give place unto wrath." Instead of trying to punish or retaliate against those who been

malicious, we are to leave it in God's hands. Paul goes on to quote from the Old Testament, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord." Vengeance belongs to the Lord. It is never our place to try to even the score with others. Rather, we are to forgive those who wrong us and leave it to God to justly deal with them. Instead of seeking to avenge evil with evil, we are to overcome evil with good. For one thing, we are not qualified to deal with those who have acted disorderly. There are too many unseen factors. We may at times misjudge someone's actions or reactions, only to find out later that we were not just in our assessment. Only God knows all the reasons why people act as they do, or what information they were acting on. He alone knows what retribution or judgment is appropriate. We can be confident, whatever the situation, that God will do what is proper and right for the situation. Every deed will be properly rewarded at the proper time. We do not have to concern ourselves if someone "got away with it." Our responsibility is to leave it in God's hands and harbor no malice or bitterness. By faith, we are to trust the Lord to appropriately deal with these matters. ■

PRAYER

Prevailing

By
Pastor Kevin Folger

I am glad there is a God in Heaven who is not too busy to help me with my needs. Too often, though, we do not avail ourselves to the privilege of prayer as we ought; it is easier to worry about our problems and talk to other human beings than to take our needs to the Lord in prayer. Maybe that is because prayer is an exercise of faith.

We cannot see God or see Him work, so we hesitate to pray. We need to learn the discipline of prayer and avail ourselves to the opportunity of fellowship with God. One reason God allows us to face problems is so we can learn to bring our needs and troubles to Him for His touch to fix them.

I have learned that prayer is essential in my life. I have seen God do many wonderful things in direct response to my prayers. Recently, I was facing some trouble and realized that I needed to take definite steps to confront the problem; however, before I responded physically, I needed God to work in the situation. I found myself on my face before Him pleading for His intervention and help. He heard and He did that which only He could do. It was such a blessing, and it was also humbling to watch as God responded to my need.

Luke 18:1 says, *“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.”* This parable dealt with a widow who went to see a judge about getting help with a problem she was facing. Her adversary was making her life miserable. We are not told what she was dealing with, but whatever it was necessitated her going to the court of law to get help. The indication is that this judge was not very sympathetic at first; he really was not at all concerned about the problem or doing much to help with the need. This woman, however, was not about to quit asking. I get the impression that every day, when this judge showed up at his place of business, this woman was the first one in line asking for his help. She was obviously not going anywhere until she got what she was after.

Finally, the judge realized that he might as well do what she asked or he was not going to get any rest. He dealt with her problem and the application is clear in verses 6-8, *“And the Lord said, Hear what*

the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

The central truth of this parable is that God will help His people, and He does it in direct response to their willingness to pray. God may not answer your prayer immediately. Sometimes it may be a long time in praying. You must keep coming to Him. But mark it down; if the need is legitimate and your heart is burdened, God is at work as you pray. Sooner or later, God will answer that prayer so that you know it is He who has done it.

We live in troublesome times as believers. We are seeing things happening on a daily basis that can be quite disheartening. God is not detached or uninterested. He is not removed or distant—He is waiting for us, as His people, to speak to Him about what is going on. When was the last time you really got alone with God and just pleaded with Him about things that are happening in your life and in your world? Are you fearful about the future? Pray! Are you concerned about a relationship? Pray! Do you have financial needs that are overwhelming? Seek Him! Is there a health concern in your life today? He is there to help.

I often find myself in situations that are above my head. I am always challenged by the needs of my vast congregation and the money that is necessary to do all that must be done. I know my own limitations and how little I can personally do, but it is grand to know that God, the great God that made the universe, the God that hung each star in place and flung the galaxies into outer space is available to help me!

God told the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 33:3, *“Call unto me and I will answer thee and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.”* The calling here is prayer and the certainty of the promise is found in God, the One that made the promise. He is the One that cannot lie. I challenge you to claim the promise for yourself and watch what God can and will do! ■



making marriage Great

By Paul Chappell

My wife and I have been married now over thirty years. It's hard to believe that something that seemed too wonderful to be true on our wedding day is even better now! I praise God for a godly wife and for the ever-deepening relationship He has given us.

Every newly-married couple knows that marriage is one of God's greatest gifts. But, after the newness wears off, far too many couples treat their marriage like the kids who get the toy "I've always wanted" for Christmas. They enjoy the gift for a short period, but very soon it is forgotten or neglected.

Marriage is for the long haul. And it actually gets better through the years when it is given continual attention. If you want a marriage that lasts, then you need these five "stays":

Stay in Love with Jesus

God's greatest commandment is to love Him: *"And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might"* (Deuteronomy 6:5). This foundation to our relationship with the Lord is also the foundation to our relationship with our spouse. If you stay in love with the Lord and remain yielded to the Holy Spirit, He will give you love and patience for your spouse.

People who leave their spouse, do so as a result of gradually sliding—away from the Lord. They first backslide from the Lord, and then their heart is turned from their spouse.

So many husbands and wives focus on having the other spouse meet their needs. The

greatest needs of our lives, however, can only be met by the Lord. You need to be close to the Lord and walking with Him. When both partners are close to the Lord, they will then find themselves close to the other.

Stay Committed to Having a Great Marriage

God commands husbands to take the initiative in this commitment: *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"* (Ephesians 5:25).

When both partners are committed, not just to staying together, but to consistently building and strengthening their marriage, a great marriage is the result. Just as you invested in each other during your time of dating, invest in each other now. Give of your energy and of yourself to build your relationship. Don't settle for mediocrity!

Stay Grateful for God's Blessings

First Thessalonians 5:18 instructs, *"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."* I've learned much over the past year about marriage just by watching my son and daughter-in-law, Larry and Ashley. Larry suffered from cancer and had to go through several treatments. Even during the intensity of Larry's illness and treatment, it's been special to see them express gratefulness to one another and focus together on God's blessings.

Satan tries to point out all the flaws in your spouse, but remember, there are many great things about your husband or wife. Look for those things, and express thankfulness for them.

Stay Open and Honest with One Another

Either spouse should be able to check the other's cell phone, internet history, or social networking sites at any time. Guarding these areas as private and protecting them from your spouse leaves room for great damage in your life. But accountability in every area helps you obey the command of Romans 14:16, *"Let not then your good be evil spoken of."*

Stay Regular in Church Attendance

The local church is designed to strengthen and help families. But if you're not in church, you miss the help you need. Purpose to, as a couple and as a family, obey Hebrews 10:25, *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."*

Above all, stay together! Some couples endure marriage. But there is so much more that God desires for your relationship. Purpose to invest in your marriage—by God's grace take your relationship to new heights for the glory of God. ■

A MAN and his MONEY



by pastor tony scheving

What is your attitude toward money? The Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:7-8,10, *"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out, and having food and raiment let us be therewith content. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* Everyday, dead bodies turn up along the roadsides of Mexico because of drug money. I have good friends in Mexico who were shot at repeatedly by a drug cartel and barely escaped with their lives over an attempt to steal their vehicle. Truly, the love of money is the root of all evil. But 'money' itself is not the root of evil. The Bible says the love of money is the root of all evil. Some would say tongue-in-cheek, that the lack of money is the root of all evil.

God gives to everyone the ability to make a certain amount of money. The Bible says, *"Thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth"* (Deuteronomy 8:18). If God gives you an annual income of \$25,000; \$50,000;

\$75,000; or \$100,000, can you learn to adjust to live on the level God supplies? The problem is normally discontentment. We confuse our 'needs' with our 'wants'. Retailers work through the night creating new ways for you to spend your money. The result is something continually bigger, better, or shinier. Somehow, we get something 'in our craw' and figure we've got to have it. The devil is clever and recognizes our discontented nature. The 10th commandment says, *"Thou shalt not covet"* (Exodus 20:17). God warns us against looking for greener grass and panting after what we don't have.

There are things money can't buy, like a hug from your daughter, a phone call from your mom, the sound of a bird singing in the morning, and things we take for granted like taste buds and the ability to hear. Sadly, we forget about the hidden blessings and we foster seeds of discontentment over what we don't have. It doesn't help when we float through the malls and page through the flyers, or surf the internet and cultivate an appetite for more materialism. The TV

brainwashes our children at an early age to believe that they won't be happy until they get the next thing.

Ironically, Americans have more stuff than anyone else, but are the least happiest people in the world. A survey was done by a leading magazine where the average family in various countries was asked to place all its household things out on the front lawn. Most countries had a few things set out on the lawn while Americans had a pile that looked like a small mountain. The point is, more stuff doesn't equal more happiness. The Bible mentions two basic needs when it says, *"And having food and raiment let us be therewith content"* (1 Timothy 6:8). That's a pretty short list, but it's all Jesus had.

The Christian definition of 'contentment' is: an inner peace that comes from having the Lord and not needing all the external things. The wise Psalmist said in Psalms 23:1, *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."* So where is contentment found? The Bible says, *"Godliness with contentment is great gain."* If you have to rely on the external things, you'll never be content. Some people waste decades figuring this out. The Bible says, *"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase"* (Ecclesiastes 5:10). Trying to satisfy 'the desire for more' is like trying to fill the black hole of outer space. As people acquire more, they realize that they just have to maintain more. They also feel guilty for not using it as much as they thought they would.

continued on next page

A Man and His Money

continued from previous page

Why do we think we need more stuff? Besides covetousness, sometimes it's a 'status thing'. Many equate their self-worth with owning a lot of things. They attempt to meet an inner emotional need by increasing their possessions. Our society thinks that if you own more, you're worth more. Such a notion couldn't be further from the truth. Jesus Christ said, *"Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"* (Luke 12:15). A much higher measure of a person's worth would be their character, patience, wisdom, sincerity, honesty, generosity, availability, humility, compassion and self-control. True godliness is worth more than a fat bank account. Self-worth has nothing to do with what you own. It's actually a very foolish barometer. Jesus said, *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"* (Mark 8:36). Our culture has a twisted logic. The devil has many people very upside down in their thinking. Success is not fame, money or constant pleasure. A real relationship with God is far more valuable. The Bible says, *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee"* (Isaiah 26:3).

Have you ever heard college commencement speeches? Normally, they are as dry as cracker juice, and often you'll hear the speaker say something to the graduating class like, "As you go through life, make all the money you can, but make it honestly." Sadly, as most graduates set out to make all the money they can, they neglect far more important things. True success is measured by godliness. Money can actually get in the way of someone finding salvation through Jesus Christ. Warren Buffet and Bill Gates both admit to being agnostics. Jesus said, *"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"* (Mark 10:23). The devil gets many people focusing on the wrong stuff. Money is a wonderful servant but a poor master.

So what is the goal? Jesus said, *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Matthew 6:33). Many have made money the main thing and ended up miserable. The best of families find themselves in bondage and need to perform plastic surgery with the credit cards. Many young couples have set out to immediately duplicate the level of lifestyle it took mom and dad 30 years to acquire. It has led many families into a stressful bind.

Jesus said, *"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"* (Matthew 6:20). The

real test of wealth is what you will take to heaven with you. You'll never see a U-haul following a hearse. An Old Testament prophet once said, *"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither"* (Job 1:21). Proverbs 23:5 says, *"For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle."* What will they talk about at your funeral? Will they talk about all the stuff you acquired during your life? Will they brag on your portfolio or the fancy car you drove? Will they talk about what a great businessman you were, or how you were a shrewd operator? What would you like them to say at your funeral? How would you like to be remembered? Many people spend their lives trying to 'acquire what the other guy has' only to leave it behind. He who dies with the most toys still dies. The greatest wealth a man could have is not at the bank, but under his own roof. A good family makes a poor man rich, and a rotten family makes a rich man poor. No wonder the Bible says, *"Labor not to be rich"* (Proverbs 23:4). According to the Bible, we really don't own anything. The Bible says, *"The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein"* (Psalms 24:1). God owns it all and we are simply stewards or caretakers of what He loans us. With that attitude in mind, may we loosen our grip on the things of this world and get our focus on our Creator. May we seek the Giver more than the gifts. ■



We're Building Lives!

FARGO
BAPTIST CHURCH

3303 23rd Ave S
Fargo, ND · 58103

Senior Pastor
Tony Scheving

Assoc. Pastor
David Dennis

Asst. Pastor
Lawrence Vandal

Campus Minister
Neal Irion

Outreach Ministry
Dan Schatz

Bible College
Bob Venem

Sunday Bible Class 9:30am
Sunday Worship 10:30am
Sunday Evening 6:00pm
Wednesday Service 7:00pm

I Have A Question

What is God's Plan for Getting to Heaven?

The Bible tells us who will be in heaven when it says, *"And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it (heaven) (Revelation 21:24). We must be saved from our sins in order to go to heaven. Judgment day is coming, and the Bible says, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom 14:12). We won't be judged by man's standard, as the Bible says, "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things" (Rom 2:2). What is truth? Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The Bible is the source of truth, and according to Jesus we will be judged out of the Bible (John 12:48). So what does the Bible say about getting to heaven?"*

According to the 10 Commandments, we are covetous, liars, thieves, blasphemers, idolaters, and adulterers. James 2:10 says, *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* There are also other commands we are violating. Do you really love your neighbor as yourself? Do you put his needs before your own? Are you willing to meet his needs no matter what the cost? Do you devote more of your time to others than yourself? Are you ever: selfish, angry, impatient, harsh, wasteful, proud, gossipy, stingy, insensitive, insincere, inappropriate, undependable, unforgiving, disloyal, etc.? We must realize we are serious sinners, and sin is serious. Romans 6:23 says, *"The wages of sin is death" (hell). The Bible says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with*

mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God... they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9-10, Gal 5:21).

Going to heaven is not automatic. Just because Jesus is the Savior of the world doesn't mean we're automatically saved. Most people have never been converted/saved/born again because they don't see how desperately they need to be. We are born spiritually dead, condemned and alienated from God. The Bible says in John 3:18, *"He that believeth not is condemned already."* No one has 'always been a Christian'. Without being saved, we will face the wrath of God one day. The Bible says, *"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life (heaven); but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). Romans 1:18 says, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth (Bible) in unrighteousness." (i.e. they take sin lightly while ignoring the Bible).*

What do we need to be saved from? Our sin! Our sinful soul must be converted by salvation, which is taught in God's Word. Psalm 19:7 says, *"The law of the LORD (Bible) is perfect, converting the soul."* Self-righteousness sends more people to hell than anything. Jesus gave an illustration of a self-righteous clergyman in Luke 18 who went to hell because he didn't recognize his sinfulness, rather than a crooked tax collector who saw his own wickedness and repented of his sin. The Bible says in Romans 3:10, *"There is none righteous, no, not one."* Isaiah 64:6 says, *"We are all as an*

unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." In Luke 19:10 Jesus said, *"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."* Jesus is willing to save us, but we must see ourselves as lost and deserving of hell. This is key! Afterwards, salvation is simply a matter of repentance of sin and faith toward Christ.

Repentance and faith are the 'twin sisters' of salvation and going to heaven. St. Paul the apostle spoke of both of these when he mentioned the 'gospel' he preached, *"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Act 20:21).* In the Bible, Hebrews 6:1 mentions, *"Repentance from dead works (sin), and of faith toward God."* True repentance is 'what is missing' in most people who claim to be born again. In regards to 'going to heaven', most 'want their cake and eat it too'. They want to go to heaven, but not turn away from the sin that's taking them to hell. Repentance is key. Jesus said, *"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).* Sin goes contrary to the Bible. The Bible says, *"Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4).* In order to be born again, we need to be willing to repent, or willing to make a 180 degree turn. II Peter 3:9 says, *"The Lord is... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* Sadly, most refuse to repent. Jesus said, broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction (hell), and many there be which go in thereat (Matt 7:13).

Repentance towards God is turning from wrong to right. II Kings 17:13 says, *"Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes."* Paul said, *"We preach unto you that ye should turn (repent) from these vanities unto the living God" (Acts 14:15).* Jesus came, *"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).* St. Paul said to those who had been born again *"Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."* (I Thes 1:9). An idol is anything that comes before God (money, materialism, booze, illicit sex, false church or false religion, etc). We must turn from

continued on next page

Faith for Life

God's Plan for Getting to Heaven

continued from previous page

it, in order to turn to God. Normally, there is one main thing that stands in our way of getting saved. Are you willing to repent of it? Jesus said, *"My sheep follow me"* (Jn 10:27). To repent of your sin means to change your mind about your sin, and be willing to obey God through His Word, the Bible. We cannot knowingly hold back on obeying God and the Bible and get saved. Peter said, *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out"* (Acts 3:19). Repentance shows that we 'mean business' with God.

Repentance will mean turning away from different things, depending on the person. Sometimes a person refuses to give their heart and life to God because they are afraid what other people may think if they 'get religious'. The Bible says, *"The fearful, and unbelieving... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"* (Rev 21:8). A healed blind man in John 9 parted ways with his family when he got saved. Sometimes, others won't let go of their pride and self-importance in order to be saved. Men, like Paul and Nicodemus, had to repent of their 'works salvation' and 'false religion' in order to be saved. Sometimes it's sexual immorality that keeps people from coming to Christ. Jesus dealt with a Samaritan woman's immorality in John 4 before she could be saved. Sometimes it's alcohol and partying that keeps people away from salvation. The Bible says, *"Nor drunkards... shall inherit the kingdom of God"* (I Cor 6:10). Sometimes it's greed and materialism that gets in the way. Zacchaeus, the tax collector, had to repent of these things to be born again. The Philippian jailer was willing to repent and turn from his rough living to be saved. He said, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30).

Sadly, some are not willing to repent. The 'rich young ruler' was not willing to repent. He held on to his self-righteousness and went to hell. Herod Agrippa wasn't willing to turn from his sin. In Acts 26:28, *"Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."* Felix the Roman Governor wasn't willing to repent of his sin. In Acts 24:25, *"As he (Paul) reasoned of righteousness, temperance,*

and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Felix refused to repent in order to get saved. Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, *"No man can serve two masters... Ye cannot serve God and mammon (material wealth, greed)".* Repentance is the missing 'ingredient' for most people.

Getting saved means repenting of sin and making Jesus Christ the King of your life! If Jesus isn't Lord of all, He's not Lord at all! Jesus warned that when you follow Him and His Word (Bible), even your friends and family may not understand. He said, *"I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and ... a man's foes shall be they of his own household"* (Matt 10:34-6). He also said, *"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:27). It means making the Lord priority #1 in life. He must become the King of your life. You submit to Him by consenting to follow His Word (Bible). Jesus said, *"My sheep hear my voice (His Word, the Bible), and I know them, and they follow me"* (John 10:27). It's all about obedience. Jesus said in Luke 6:46, *"Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"*

True conversion to Christ requires a willingness to take a stand for Him. Salvation is simple, but it's not shallow. It will cost you something to follow Christ. It may be free, but it cost Christ His life. When you really mean business and want to be saved, you are deciding to walk the 'narrow road'. Jesus said, *"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"* (Lu 14:27, 33). Jesus warns us that, *"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:62). Every person must carefully consider how much they really want to be saved. Jesus said, *"For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:28, 33). Do you mean business with God? While salvation is free to us, it was not cheap for the Lord. Christ shed His blood for us and it will cost you something to follow Him. Will you take a stand for Christ without worrying

about what others may say or think? Will you live for Him in spite of opposition from your friends & loved ones? Being born again does not mean you will never sin again, but simply means you've accepted Christ's payment on the cross to forgive your sins. Are you willing to make Jesus Christ the Master of your life? Romans 10:13 says, *"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* This verse above gives a promise. It says in essence, *"Whosoever (will make Jesus) Lord shall be saved."* Are you willing to turn from sin and submit to God by trusting Him and giving Him total control of your whole life? Are you willing to make God's Word the guide for your life?

Finally, salvation comes down to a matter of faith. Faith is not a feeling, but simply a matter of taking God at His promises. There are over 7500 promises in the Bible from God. God has kept every one of them. God cannot lie. Titus 1:2 says, *"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."* If you mean business with God, and you're ready to give him your life, you can pray the following prayer from the heart and God will save you. Jesus promises, him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37). Remember, God keeps His promises. He said in Romans 10:13, *"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* God has promised to save you and He keeps His promises. God has promised to hear you and answer your prayer.

"Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I'm a condemned sinner unable to save myself, but I'm willing to turn from my sins and make Jesus my Lord, Savior and Master. I want to be born again. I now trust in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross to pay for my sins. Please forgive me and save me. Thank you ... amen."

If you have made Jesus Christ the King of your life, and been born again spiritually, we rejoice with you. God has given you a salvation that you can never lose! In John 10:27-28 Jesus said, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."*

THE PERILS OF PORNOGRAPHY

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”- Matthew 5:27-29

Our country has a fetish and an obsession with the sensual. The 21st century American is continually solicited by sex through television, magazines, billboards, movies and music. America has become pre-occupied with a carnal idol known as pornography and is sinking in a cesspool of degradation. Pornography has gone from a \$10 million industry in the 1970s to a \$10 billion industry today. We are definitely heading in the wrong direction when adult pornography stores outnumber McDonalds restaurants worldwide. We are surrounded by a tsunami of sludge and nothing is sacred anymore. We live in a society of hormones gone wild. Every past civilization which morally decayed to the degree of America soon fell, whether Rome, Greece or Babylon. The pornography industry exposes vulnerable children to a harsh world of sexual and physical abuse before they ever reach adolescence. 90% of those who molest children admit to having a pornography addiction. 90% of sexual murderers also admit to having a pornography addiction. Is pornography really a harmless thing?

Graphic material that was once confined to back alleys is now boldly flaunted from newsstands and televisions. The worst of it all is the systematic seducing of the internet. Men and boys are becoming road kill on the cyberspace highway. It is destroying homes,

marriages, trust, happiness and the next generation. It is sabotaging the ability of men to honestly love their wives. Illicit lust destroys real love which is the highest joy and greatest good. Real love lives to ‘give’ while lust lives to ‘get’. Illicit lust destroys respect for the opposite sex. Pornography creates an appetite that cannot be satisfied within the realms of decency, and leads to sexual frustration. The Bible says in Proverbs 20:17, *“Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.”* Pornography mars a husband ability to be satisfied with his own wife. It also builds an invisible wall of mistrust between a wife and her husband. Nothing can replace the close intimacy between life long spouses who are really in love. This has always been our Creator’s design. Intimacy between one man and one woman was originally God’s idea to replenish the earth and for mankind’s enjoyment. The Bible says, *“Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge”* (Hebrews 13:4). Sex is God’s gift to committed married spouses. Pornography, lust, and illicit sex are ungodly imposters. Pornography leaves the impression that sex is not connected to love, commitment or marriage; and that irresponsible sex has no undesirable penalties. This kind of ‘Charlie Sheen mentality’ is brainwashing our culture.

Pornography rips families apart. Intimacy in a marriage is based on trust and commitment. The dangers of pornography can be seen as a constant erosion of those values and qualities. Almost without exception, husbands keep their addiction to pornography a secret from their wives. Over the long term, the results are guilt and isolation: the husband retreats emotionally and finds himself in a barrenness

of soul. He has lost any real intimacy that he was experiencing with his wife, and has discovered that pornography initially excites but without fail, disappoints. Also, sex for a man without true love for his wife is hollow and futile. Pornography destroys the awesome way for a husband and wife to connect emotionally and physically. The dangers of pornography come with a hidden price tag! Many men involve themselves in pornography to try to fill some need or simply for the thrill of it; and then they quickly discover they are being controlled by a destructive habit. By this stage, intervention from the outside is usually necessary. Unfortunately for men who try to hide their addiction, there is a spiraling dynamic of guilt, emptiness, isolation, and perverted thinking that takes place. The end of such a spiral is despair.

Any type of secret sin actually makes the husband feel guilty and erodes communication in a marriage. Use of pornography by a husband especially destroys the basis of sexual intimacy in the relationship. Husbands addicted to pornography envision fantasy playmates instead of their partners to find fulfillment and excitement. Perfectly airbrushed images lead to unrealistic expectations of body type, relationships, sexual intimacy, and marriage. Normal sexual activity within the marriage also decreases, and any form of sexual contact is not ‘good enough’ for the disillusioned husband. Wives totally disrespect their weak husbands for allowing themselves to be in bondage to such perversion. It discredits the husband from being the right kind of family leader. A man engaged in pornography does not know how to treat a woman. Young people exposed to pornography cannot remove the traumatic images from their memories, and often delve into a cycle of addiction as well. It makes a young person far more likely to molest their sibling. Jesus spoke out against self-gratification through lust and adultery (Matthew 5:27-30). The lust of the eyes (1 John 2:15-17) has been the downfall of many a person.

continued on next page

The Perils of Pornography

continued from previous page

Mary Anne Layden, co-director of the Sexual Trauma and Psychopathology Program at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Cognitive Therapy, called pornography the "most disturbing thing to psychological health that I know of existing today. Pornography addicts have a more difficult time recovering from their addiction than cocaine addicts, since coke users can get the drug out of their system, but pornographic images stay in the brain forever." Layden said, "Pornography really does, unlike other addictions, biologically cause direct release of the most perfect addictive substance in ultimately released naturally occurring endorphins." Guilt and despair usually follow. Research has shown that repeated exposure to pornography results in a diminished sexual arousal. Men are aroused by sight, but women by touch and communication. That's why 95% of pornography viewers are male. The experience of sexual arousal can be intense when viewing pornography, and as a result, an addiction can be very easily formed. It is like a drug addiction. To respond to the body's urges for 'another dose' reinforces a habit that becomes extremely difficult to break. The combined physical and psychological responses to pornography make it 'the crack cocaine of sexual addiction'. The addiction develops through progressively dangerous stages: addiction, desensitization, and then 'acting out' sexually. The dangers of pornography are evident with every stage more destructive than the one before.

Not everyone who sees pornography will become addicted to it. Some will just come away with toxic ideas about women, sex, marriage and children. That kind of damage is bad enough. Usually, those who become addicted have some kind of emotional weakness that allows the addiction to really take root. The pornography companies don't mind at all if you become completely addicted to their product. It's great for their business. An addict of any kind becomes so weak that he keeps coming back for more. So, pornography pushers fill their smut with images that will excite you, arouse you, and

get the hormones flowing. You don't have to shoot up any drug with a needle to get addicted to pornography — your body will make its own drugs just by looking at the pictures. Dr. Victor Cline says that sex and pornography can be a more difficult addiction to break than cocaine. Dr. Jeffrey T. Parsons, a sex addiction expert and psychology professor at Hunter College in New York City, noted sexual addiction is officially recognized as a mental illness in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

Pornography communicates its own lies about women, such as, women are less than human. The women in Playboy magazine are called bunnies, making them cute little animals or 'playmates'; making them some type of toy. Pornography often refers to women as animals, playthings, or body parts. The idea that women are real human beings with thoughts and emotions is played down. Pornography treats women like a sport. It doesn't care about a woman's mind or personality; only her body. There are five stages of addiction to pornography. Often, it starts through early exposure. Most guys, who get addicted to porn, foolishly start early. They see the stuff when they are young, and pornography gets its foot in the door. Secondly, the addiction comes. They keep coming back to pornography. It becomes a regular part of their life. They get hooked. They can't quit. Thirdly, after a while, escalation begins. Guys start to look for more and more graphic porn. They start using pornography that would have disgusted them when they started. Now it excites them. They become out-of-control. Fourthly, desensitization comes. Eventually, they start to become numb. Even the most graphic, degrading pornography doesn't excite them anymore. They become desperate to feel the same thrill again but can't find it. The next, and fifth, tragic step is acting out sexually. At this point, many men make a dangerous jump and start 'acting out' their perversion. They sadly move from the paper and digital images of porn, to the real world. Pornography is absolutely sick and makes God our Creator sick!

Are you addicted? Some of you reading this may have already developed an addiction

to pornography. If you see any of the patterns described above in your life, then you need to put the brakes on right now. Is pornography beginning to control your life? Do you keep going back for more; you can't leave it alone? Perhaps you find yourself needing to see increasingly graphic pornography. You're starting to take risks or act out physically for sexual thrills. If you see yourself at any point on this progression downward, you need to realize you are in serious trouble, and you need to get help. The dangers of pornography lead to men finding more than they bargained for when starting down the path of cyber pornography. For those men looking for freedom from this addiction, help is available! It starts with spiritual help and Biblical salvation (see page 8). A man must recognize his sin, and turn to the Lord Jesus for forgiveness. With this awareness of forgiveness, he needs to enter into accountability relationships with other Christian men who have also found freedom over pornography.

Bible verses relative to pornography include:

Genesis 3:21, *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*

Revelation 3:18, *That thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear...*

Habakkuk 2:15, *Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink... that thou mayest look on their nakedness!*

Exodus 28:42, *Thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach.*

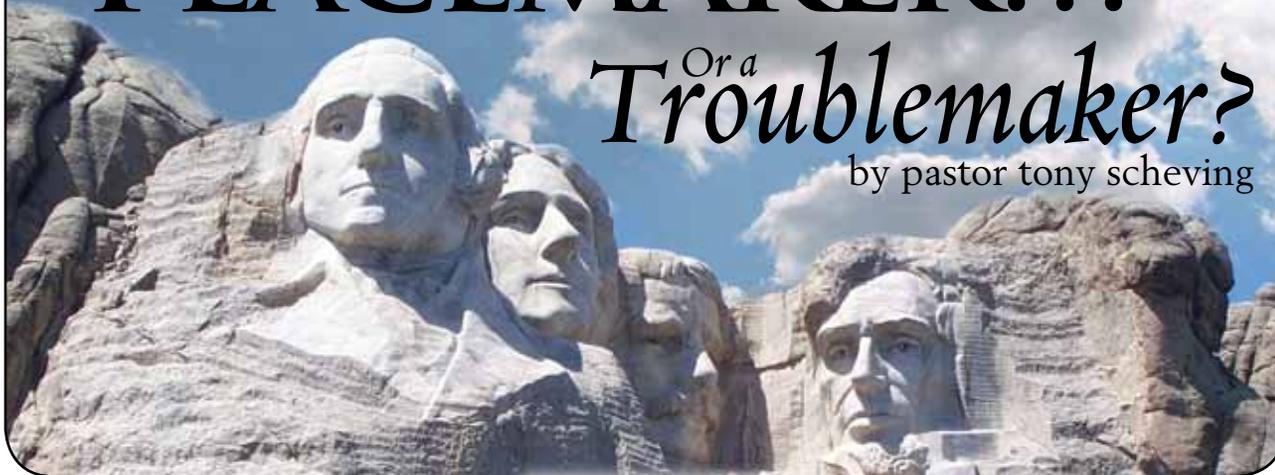
1 Timothy 2:9, *In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel.*

Matthew 5:28-29 (Jesus said)... *That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.* ■

ARE YOU A PEACEMAKER...

Or a Troublemaker?

by pastor tony scheving



Ephesians 4:1-3, *“Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

The whole world is looking for peace, yet peace continues to elude us. Many songs, books and movies have been produced which deal with the subject of peace. The hippies rioted for it in the 1960s. John Lennon sang about it in the 1970s. Politicians continue to grapple for it decade after decade. And yet, peace continues to evade us. Man can almost achieve anything else but peace. Man’s brilliance is amazing. He is ingenious enough to erect the Hoover Dam, carve out Mt. Rushmore, and span the San Francisco Bay with the Golden Gate Bridge. Man is clever enough to build the Mall of America, which is the size of 88 football fields and employs 10,000 people. And yet, man cannot get along with man. We can master machinery and mechanics, but not the human heart. We can link the world together through technology, but not through relationships. We can make the world a neighborhood but not a brotherhood. The Beatles sang songs entitled, “Give Peace a Chance” and “Let it Be,” but continued to fuss and feud with each other. Though John Lennon had sit-ins for peace, he was ironically gunned down in cold blood. The Bible verse above speaks of ‘endeavoring’ or striving to keep the peace. This verse implies that it’s going to take great effort to ‘keep the peace’. Do you

go out of your way to keep peace in your home, neighborhood and workplace?

THE ANTAGONISTS OF PEACE

Why can’t we live in a peaceful world? The Bible tells us in James 4 that the source of turmoil comes from within the human heart. It’s also known as a ‘sin nature’. You even see it in babies and toddlers. You don’t have to teach a child how to be selfish and demand his own way or how to fight with his siblings. We are born with a sin nature. The reason nations can’t get along is the same reason husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, and co-workers can’t get along. There’s war in the world because there’s war in the human heart. Since 1919 (following WWI), there’s been over 200 peace treaties signed and all of them have been broken. In the past 1700 years, there have been over 8000 ‘permanent’ peace treaties signed, which were actually enforced for about two years on the average. Since recorded history, there has been 14,351 different wars fought. These wars include property losses and other costs which would equal the worth of a gold band 97 miles wide, 33 feet thick and would circle the earth. Since the beginning of time, there has only been 292 recorded years of no war. Someone said, “The only time there’s been peace on earth is when mankind has stopped to reload.”

The great British Field Marshal and author Lord Montgomery was asked what book he would want to have along if he

were marooned on a desert island. He stated, “I would want my own book, ‘The History of Warfare’ so I could restudy it and try to figure out a way to get people to stop fighting!” But again, there is war throughout the world because there’s war inside the human heart, which makes it nearly impossible to keep peace within families, businesses, and even churches. One preacher said, “Peace has five enemies which are envy, pride, self-centeredness, an anger problem and covetousness.” There are also some people who are just thin skinned and easily offended. Others just like to ‘trounce through the mud puddle instead of going around it’. It seems like every business, church, and family reunion includes these kinds of people. As hard as you may try, there will always be those who want to wreck the peace. The Psalmist said, *“I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war”* (Psalms 120:7).

THE APPEARANCE OF PEACE

Jesus said, *“Blessed are the peacemakers”* (Matthew 5:9). How can a real Christian be a peacemaker? The Bible says, *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”* (Hebrews 12:14). According to this verse, there is apparently a connection between peace and holiness. Again, the Bible refers to this when it says, *“The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace”* (James 3:17-18). Peace and sin don’t go together. The Bible adds in Isaiah 48:22, *“There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.”* The hippies’ peace movement from 40 years ago was ironically characterized by rebellion and riots, along with drugs and sex. That was a total contradiction to the peace God gives. *“For they (say) Peace, peace; when there is no peace”* (Jeremiah 8:11). Sin always stirs up the pot and wrecks the peace. Sin makes you miserable, and misery loves company, so you make others miserable. A bad attitude or spirit is a poison that destroys the peace. That’s why the Bible says, *“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it”* (Psalms 34:14).

The truth is there is no peace without the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ (Isaiah 9:6). While Jesus was a peacemaker, He didn’t

continued on page 13

Are You A Peacemaker..

continued from previous page

compromise when it came to truth. There are some who think that Christians should tolerate everything just to keep the peace. Jesus didn't. Most people picture Jesus with a white robe, bare feet, flowers in hand and a dove on His shoulder. This isn't at all the Jesus of the Bible who called the religious clergy of His day 'snakes' and threw the money changers out of the temple. Jesus Christ didn't tolerate ungodliness under any circumstances. He required true repentance. The Bible says, *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"* (Romans 12:18). This verse implies that sometimes it's just not possible to please everyone as you stand for what is right. True Christianity can even cause division in a family. Jesus said, *"A man's foes shall be they of his own household"* (Matthew 10:36). A Christian should be gracious and kind, but at times he won't be able to please everybody.

THE AMBASSADORS OF PEACE

On July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 landed on the moon. The insignia for the trip was an eagle carrying an olive branch to symbolize peace. Neil Armstrong stated from the moon's Sea of Tranquility, "We come in peace for all mankind." But the only reason the moon is a peaceful place is because there haven't been any humans living there yet to wreck the peace. But true Christians are to be ambassadors of peace. We are not just to be peacemakers, but peace lovers. The Bible says, *"God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation... Now then we are ambassadors for Christ"* (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

Yet, Christians fail in the 'peace department' for several reasons. Oftentimes, pride gets in the way. They get their feelings hurt and want justice. Sometimes it's a matter of insecurity where they feel challenged or threatened and have to set the record straight. Insecurity always feels like it has something to prove. Sometimes it's a matter of jealousy where someone tries to blow someone else's candle out in order to make his look brighter. Troublemakers are often overly competitive. They were the children back

in grade school who were normally trying to make points with the teacher. Sometimes a 'peace-wrecker' is too strong when it comes to justice, and too weak when it comes to mercy. They have to make sure everything is fair. Troublemakers are also normally gossips or tattletales. If Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers," then cursed must be the troublemakers. A troublemaker is also someone who doesn't have much love in his heart. The Bible says true love doesn't act in a carnal manner (1 Cor 13:4-7). True love will cover the multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). A peacemaker knows when to 'let it ride' and 'let it be'.

THE ACQUIRING OF PEACE

The Bible says, *"Finally brethren... live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you"* (2 Corinthians 13:11). How can you be a peacemaker? Peace is not something you can buy at the mall. Yet, God wants us to have peace. He even says in Jeremiah 29:11, *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."* So how can we find peace? First of all, we must trust God to correct all wrongs and take care of all injustices. Vengeance belongs to God according to the Bible. Secondly, we should be careful to mind our own business. The Bible says, *"That ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business"* (1 Thess 4:11). Less gossiping, meddling, and being a busy body help to maintain the peace. The Bible says, *"It is an honor for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling"* (Proverbs

20:3). Thirdly, we must keep our focus on a bigger picture than the 'here and now'. Those who stay heavenly-minded have a greater peace than those who are ensnared in the quagmire of this temporary life. The Bible says, *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee"* (Isaiah 26:3).

Looking for peace in a temporal world of strife is a waste of time. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). The main remedy for turmoil is to truly know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Man is at odds with God because of sin. Someone well said, "Know Jesus, know peace.... No Jesus, no Peace". Ephesians 2:13-14 says, *"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ... For He is our peace."* The Bible adds that Jesus *"Made peace through the blood of his cross"* (Col 1:20). (To learn more, please refer to page 8 of this issue). The Bible tells us that one day the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, will return and we will study war no more. The swords will be beaten into plowshares and the spears will become pruning hooks and nations shall not lift up swords against nations anymore. Until that day, we're told to, "Be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thess 5:13). We need to get to the place where we hate confrontation until we finally 'rest in peace'. The Bible says, *"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it"* (1 Peter 3:10-11).

CLASSIC CHRISTIAN RADIO

HEAVEN

88.7 FM

www.kfbn.org

Listen to the live morning service of Fargo Baptist Church each Sunday at 10:30 A.M.

MYTHS ABOUT

Life

CARY
SCHMIDT

Myths abound in today's culture - fueled by urban legends, chain emails, speed-diets, and beyond! Thanks to snopes.com, it's pretty easy to run an email, a story, or a bizarre event through a quick research test to find out if it's true or not.

So, do you have a "snopes" for life? Has it occurred to you that life also has its myths and "urban legends." The issue is, these myths have much greater consequences. And much like "snopes," we need to take the philosophies, assumptions, and teachings of our pop-culture and run them through the truth test—the Bible.

Here are seven popular myths of about life—seven lies that people buy into. Let's run them through the truth test and unmask them as frauds:

MYTH 1

Happiness and love is found in a person, and I must find that person. Many people fall for this lie. Their lives become an endless search for the right person who will completely bring happiness to life. The problem is—no human being can fulfill the deepest desires of our hearts. That is reserved for God alone, through Jesus Christ. Psalm 16:11 teaches, *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy;"*

MYTH 2

Freedom is about making decisions alone and doing my own thing—"I gotta be me..." This is a gross distortion of a

biblical truth. Yes, God created you as an individual with many unique qualities—so in that sense, you do have to be you. But, God never intended for you to live independent of Him or outside of His purpose or structure for life. The greatest life is found when you are who God truly made you to be. In John 10:10 Jesus said, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

MYTH 3

There is a shortcut to success and fulfillment in life, and I will find it. Many believe there are quick ways to happiness and fulfillment in life, and so they fall for them—parties, illicit sex, drinking, drugs, etc. We all tend to want the path of least resistance and the quickest path to success. In truth, the best life is built patiently, one decision at a time, on the strong foundation of biblical values and principles. This takes years—not weeks or months.

God taught in Joshua 1:8 that true success is a product of biblical principles in practice: *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."*

MYTH 4

Responsibility and purpose in life can be indefinitely postponed. In the short term, a life free of responsibility and commitment seems like the way to go—but in the long term, it's disastrous. We

were designed by our Creator to have purpose, to embrace commitments, and to shoulder responsibilities that honor Him. God teaches that life comes with built-in accountability and responsibility. Those who embrace this, always win. Romans 14:12, *"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."*

MYTH 5

Love is a mystical, magical, fleeting thing that has something to do with sex. God is love, and God created sex, so who could possibly instruct us in this matter better than Him. Quite simply, true love is a choice, not an emotion. You do it, you don't feel it. Warm and fuzzy emotions, as enjoyable as they are, are not and never will be love. And sex is only an expression of love when it's done God's way—within a committed marriage for life. Outside of that boundary, sex is harmful in every way to both parties. It does irreparable spiritual harm.

Here's how God says it: 1 Corinthians 6:18, *"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."*

MYTH 6

As long as I'm not hurting anyone else, what I do doesn't matter. This sounds great and becomes an easy excuse for someone who purely lives for self. The problem is, it's simply not true. No man is an island. The Bible says in Romans 14:7, *"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to*

continued on page 15

himself.” We all influence somebody. We all have people in our future whom we will one day influence. And every decision you make today has countless repercussions in people’s lives for years to come—like your kids! Think of it this way, have you become the bearer of the bad decisions of others? Probably so. And at the time, they too were thinking their decisions wouldn’t hurt anyone. But you know differently.

God commands us to live as examples to others, positively influencing them for right. 1 Timothy 4:12, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

MYTH 7

Pleasure, possessions, and personal pursuits can ultimately fill the longing of my heart. God created pleasure. God gives us possessions. And God calls us to purposeful pursuits. But He is the source and the giver. When we forsake following God and pursue these other things, life begins to fall apart. Apart from God, more stuff merely means more problems! We’re called to worship God and use things. But so often we get it backwards. We worship things and use God.

1 Timothy 6:17, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;”

Are you falling for some of these myths? Begin today aligning your life with God’s principles—beginning with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. For information regarding how to get a restored relationship with your Creator, please go to pages 8-9

Build your life and future upon truth, not upon the myth and urban legends of popular philosophy. Opinions of men will fail, but God’s Word is always true! ■



AVOIDING FAMILY FRAGMENTATION

By Troy Dorrell

A couple of years ago I was reading an interesting article from Time Magazine about the demise of the nuclear family. One of the things they attributed this cultural phenomenon to was the loss of the family dinner table. The article mentioned that over the last several decades families have been eating together less often than ever before. The article stated that with the advent of fast food, busy schedules, differing obligations, and the TV, the traditional family simply has no time to eat together anymore. The outcome, according to the author, was an attenuated or weakened family structure that is not good for anyone involved. I would strongly agree with that conclusion because it echoes a biblical truth found in the book of Mark which says, “If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”

Fragmentation in a country, a business, an athletic team, or even in the home can bring with it destructive consequences. The fragmentation does not have to be a result of conflict; it can simply be a result of not being together. Teenagers need the involvement and influence of parents and family more than ever. There are a thousand competing voices for their time and attention, and not all of those voices have their best interest in mind. Teens are making important life decisions which make the influence of a mother and father vitally important. Here are a few suggestions for spending more time with your teen to prevent fragmentation:

- Eat together as much as possible and talk about the day’s activities.
- Have a family night out or activity each week.
- Be a part of your teens athletic or school activities by volunteering to help.
- Go on family vacations together even if you don’t go far away.
- Build good memories by doing something fun together.
- Talk to your teens—if you are persistent, they will talk back (smile).
- Most importantly, just find some way of spending time together; it will pay off in the future.

Family fragmentation does not have to be a threat if we spend time with our families!

Pastor's Perspective

WHAT ABOUT THIS RAPTURE BUSINESS?

Two cars were sitting next to each other in the parking lot of a seminary near Milwaukee. The bumper sticker on one car said "Jesus is Coming." The bumper sticker on the other car said, "Escape to Wisconsin." This past spring a preacher by the name of Harold Camping falsely predicted that the world would end on May 21st. When it didn't happen, he promised it would end on October 21st. Sadly, he predicted the same thing about May 21st, 1988 and September 7th, 1994. Each time he falsely prophesied, he mentioned that the rapture would take place, followed by months of chaos and plagues on the earth with millions dying. Mr. Camping is unfortunately confused about a Bible doctrine. Just what is the 'rapture'?

While speaking of the second coming of Christ, the Bible says, *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (1 Thess 4:16-17). These verses, along with others in the Bible, speak of a generation of people that will see Jesus come back to this earth, and how true Christians will be snatched up into heaven in an instant when He comes. There will be a heavenly homecoming. Jesus said in Luke 17:35-36, *"Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."*

A preacher from over a century ago made the following statement: "The first century church thought more about the second coming of Christ than they did death. The early Christians weren't looking for a cleft in the ground [grave] but a cleft in the sky called glory. They were looking for the 'upper taker' more than the undertaker." Someone said, "Fear always looks backward, sorrow always look down, but hope always looks up." The Bible speaks of *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* (Titus 2:13). Furthermore, the Bible says, *"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."* (1 Cor 15:52). Many would mock at such a supernatural and spectacular event, but the same God who spoke the universe

into existence, and raised His Son from the dead can easily snatch away those who are true believers in Christ from off the earth in a moment's notice. While some may think they're too sophisticated to believe such a thing, Christian doctors, lawyers, engineers and college professors with PhDs all over the world believe it whole-heartedly. It's not a matter of prideful intellectualism, but humble faith!

The second coming of Christ could be at any moment. There are no Bible prophecies yet to be fulfilled for this event to take place. Jesus said in Matthew 24:38-39,44, *"For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."* The Bible speaks of many indications of the second coming of Christ when it mentions an increase in earthquakes and natural disasters, pestilence, economic problems, a one-world mentality, the increase of technology, fast modes of transportation, spiritual coldness and other things. But can we know the date the rapture will take place and Jesus will return?

Jesus Himself said in Matthew 24:36,42, *"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."* Jesus makes it clear that no one knows the date when He will return, including Harold Camping. Down through the years there have been a number who have predicted the end of the world. William Miller, the unofficial founder of the Seventh Day Adventists, predicted the world would end in October 1844, and then again in 1845. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, also prophesied a deadline for the end of the world, which never happened. The Jehovah's Witnesses followed with several false predictions. Pat Robertson predicted it would happen in 1982. Hal Lindsey said it would happen in 1984. Ed Whisenant followed with his book, 88 Reasons the Rapture Will Be in 1988. But God has never rewarded the 'date setters' because only He knows when it will take place. The Bible says, *"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God"* (Deut 29:29).

So what harm can come from setting dates for the second coming of Christ? Sadly, it puts a question mark over those who believe in the doctrine and a shadow over the Bible. When Harold Camping falsely predicted the end of the world this past spring, the American Atheists Association held 'Rapture parties' in many major cities like Oakland, Houston and Ft. Lauderdale. They even put up their own billboards which stated, "The Rapture... You

Know It's Nonsense!" The Bible says, *"Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme"* (2 Samuel 12:14). It sounds like the story of the little boy who 'cried wolf' so many times, that no one believed him when the true emergency arose. Consequently, the Bible states, *"That there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"* (2 Peter 3:3-4).

So, let's look at the facts. First of all, Jesus did come the first time to this earth, and there were 333 prophecies written earlier which said He would. He fulfilled all those predictions. Secondly, there are over 1800 prophecies that tell us that Christ is coming back again the second time. So, if we go with the Bible's past track record, we are definitely on a collision course with destiny... Jesus is coming back again and no one can afford to be caught unprepared. Jesus Himself said, *"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh"* (Matthew 24:44). He added in Matthew 16:27, *"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels."*

The best way to prepare for the coming of Christ is to never forget the presence of Christ. The Bible says, *"Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 1:13). 2 Thessalonians 3:5 says, *"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."* The Bible says, *"Wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come"* (1 Thess 1:10). Do you believe in the rapture and the second coming of Christ? Do you believe it without shame or apology? The very last thing Jesus tells us in the Bible is, *"Surely I come quickly"* followed by the last prayer in the Bible which is, *"Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus"* (Rev 22:20). Now that you've read the end of the 'last chapter of the book', I hope you're on the winning side.

