

LITTLE EYES ARE WATCHING YOU!

By Danny Tunnell

In a world that can often be unfriendly, a Christian home is a place of shelter and security, a place where wholesome recreation and simple pleasures are enjoyed.

An essential ingredient in a Christian home is love. We read in Genesis 24:67, "Isaac took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her." That simple phrase speaks volumes! "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies." (Ephesians 5:28.) "Husbands love your wives and do not be bitter against them." (Colossians 3:19.)

Couples during courtship usually put their best foot forward. But after the honeymoon is over, the real test comes. It is then that the true personality comes to light and defects seem to be magnified, while virtues seem to fade away.

Nothing can bring a sense of security into a home as true love can. Money plays an important role in marriages, but money alone can never bring real security or real happiness.

It is important that parents teach

their children. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6.) A lot of training needs to come from the Scriptures. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says, "And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart. And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up."

As children mature, they must be taught to observe rules. They need to know the rules of safety, so they'll be safe; the rules of health, so they'll be healthy; and the rules of courtesy, so they can get along with others. When it comes time to drive, they will need to know the rules of the road, so they can be safe drivers.

In a Christian home, parents need to be good examples to their children. Little children love to copy or imitate their parents.

Little eyes are watching you!

If parents fuss and quarrel, the

children will likely fuss and quarrel. On the other hand, if parents are polite and considerate of others, the children will see their good example. They may choose to follow that pattern. If the children see Mom and Dad honoring God, praying, reading the Bible, and sharing their faith with others, they may be prone to do the same.

Christian parents don't just send their children church to learn spiritual truths. They impart those truths themselves. John Wesley once said, "I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians of England."

Parents, little observant eyes are watching you! Christ cannot live in your home, or be the Head of your home, unless His is first living in your heart. With His help, you won't fail in your most important role as a Christian parent.

— Miami, OK

THE AMAZING DETAILS OF GOD'S CREATION

By Milton Smith

When we behold the physical universe we should immediately stand in awe of God's astonishing power to create. From distant, massive galaxies to the DNA molecule, we see amazing arrangement and design all around us. How foolish the man surely is who suggests that the physical universe is nothing more than the product of blind chance. Like a poem demands the existence of a poet, like a musical composition demands the existences of a computer, the human body - with all of its amazing complexity - demands an intelligent designer.

The complexity involved in the human eye demands not only a cause, but a master designer as well. Particular elements had to be arranged in a very specific order to form its optic nerve, retina, lens, pupil, iris,

and cornea. Are we seriously to believe that all the complexity of the human eye was somehow brought together accidentally? Is it the least bit illogical to assume that somebody had to purposely arrange all the parts of the eye in order to give us the gift of sight? Does this not strongly suggest a Designer? For nine months, the parts of the eye are being made and arranged. Then suddenly, the design emerges! Consider the fact that the very design of the eye is for the single purpose of producing sight. And the design of this amazing mechanism must precede the final arrangement that brings about the blessed gift of human sight.

Yet we are asked by some to believe that all of this came about by pure accident? With no real purpose, arranger, or designer?

When we consider the human eye and nothing else, the logical person should arrive at the conclusion that its intricate, complex, and elaborate design clearly demands intelligence. I have often pondered how any honest, logical person can seriously suggest that the eye came about as a result of (no pun intended) "blind chance." Surely we must all agree with the inspired pen of David when he declared in the 19th Psalm, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows forth his handiwork."

— Tulsa, OK

Old Paths

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"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

FEAR AND TREMBLE

By Danny Boggs

Scream! Panic! Collapse! Run away! Those are the kinds of things we do when we are afraid. We shake, and our hair stands up straight. Fear grips us, causing reactions and sometimes lasting effects.

When we come to the Bible, we cannot abandon those thought associations when we read about "the fear of God." And we should not. When God met Moses on Mount Sinai, "Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I tremble with fear.'" (Hebrews 12:21.) David confessed, "My flesh trembles for fear of you, and I am afraid of your judgments." (Psalm 119:120.) "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:31.) But that's not the whole picture.

Jeremiah saw the judgment of God in the destruction of Jerusalem, and then God showed him coming joy over the restoration of the city. Both scenes brought fear and trembling. "The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard: Thus says the Lord who made the earth, the Lord who formed it to establish it - the Lord is his name: Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and against the sword: They are coming in to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill them with the dead bodies of men who I shall strike down in my anger and my wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their evil. Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance and prosperity and security. I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it." (Jeremiah 33:1-9.)

When we recognize our rebellion against God, we are seized by the thought of God's anger and wrath. We shudder to think that he hides his face because of our evil. But when we truly learn and believe that he is a God who also heals, cleanses, forgives, restores, rebuilds, prospers, protects, and rejoices over penitent people, we fear and tremble because of all the good and the prosperity he provides.

Biblically, real fear of God does not drive us forever away from him; it draws us near to him. It's humbling in a special way to think of how good God wants to be to us. Art Lindsley writes that fear of God "involves a reverence for and respect toward God . . . It is not a fear of rejection by God but a fear of distancing ourselves from God by our behavior or by proving ungrateful for the love God has shown us." (True Truth, p. 79.)

"Therefore, my beloved . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both too will and to work for his good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12-13.)

— Neosho, MO

Right Conclusion, Wrong Scripture

By Joe Slater

We're a people of the Book! That is as it should be. I cringe, however, when I hear someone make a good point while trying to support it with a Scripture that doesn't apply. Let me illustrate what I mean.

Jesus' enemies asked Pilate to secure His tomb to guard against the disciples stealing His body and claiming a resurrection. The governor said, "Ye have a watch: go your way, and make it as sure as ye can." (Matthew 27:65, KJV.) This text has been quoted to "prove" that we should be as sure as we can that we believe and practice what God's word teaches. Now, being certain that we are following God's word is a worthy goal. But Matthew 27:65 has nothing whatever to do with it! In the first place, do we really want to take a pagan governor as our authority? Besides, Pilate's concern was the security of the tomb, not being "sure" about the rightness or wrongness of a religious point. The NKJV clarifies: "make it (the tomb) as secure as you know how."

Here's another example: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18, KJV.) How many times has that passage been quoted to "prove" that church leaders ought to be men of vision, setting lofty goals and making plans to reach them? Again, the conclusion is correct, but the wrong Scripture is used to support it! Solomon was writing about miraculous visions such as the prophets had as God spoke through them. Such a vision was not just a mental picture of some objective. The rest of the verse makes that clear: "but he that keeps the law, happy is he." A prophet's vision was to be obeyed as God's law.

Reverence for God and His word requires not only that we quote it, but that we apply it correctly!

— Justin, TX

(Editor's note: Observe as well, 2 Timothy 2:15, from three different translations. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (KJV.) "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (NKJV.) "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workmen who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth." (NASB.) Here we find the much-needed point of the article above both emphasized and illustrated.)

YOURS TODAY, BUT WHAT ABOUT TOMORROW?

By Steve Higginbotham

A couple of years ago, a brother in Florida gave me a coin that he had uncovered in Europe more than 50 years earlier. The coin is a Sestertius with the image of the Roman Emperor, Hadrian engraved on it. That places the date of this coin from 118-132 A.D.

My friend who gave me this coin happened to uncover 150 other coins in the same spot. Apparently, 1900 years ago, someone buried some money in the ground for safe-keeping, and for whatever reason, never recovered his treasure.

As I have held this coin in my hand, I have examined it closely and have mused about the person who buried it. What was the person like who once owned this coin? Was this all he had, or did he have the money buried in several “stashers?” What did he have to do to earn this coin? But the thought that impacts me the most is that this coin once belonged to another person who lived nearly 2000 years ago, and now what was once his is now mine.

When I consider this thought, it seems to help put life into perspective for me. What’s “mine” is only “mine” temporarily. Things for which we work so hard, and value so much, in a few short years will either be trashed or held in the hands of another person. What’s yours today will belong to someone else tomorrow.

In light of this truth, why would I spend my life in a pursuit of that which I cannot keep? Consider the futility of grasping for that which remains mine only for a short time. All the thought, expense and work expended to own something that someone else will take from me is vanity! Would it not be a much wiser course of action to pursue treasure that will survive the grave, and be mine forever?

Friends, don’t fall in love with money; fall in love with the Lord. Don’t allow your life to be characterized by your pursuit of money, but rather let it be summarized by your pursuit of God. Someday, probably sooner than you realize, all the money that is yours will belong to someone else. When that day comes, it won’t matter what’s in your hands, for your hands will be empty. What will matter is whether the Lord is in your heart, for he is your only hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27.)

Remember, a million dollars and a bale of hay will be worth the same on Judgment Day!

— Knoxville, TN

EDITORIAL . . .

OF TIME AND LIFE

By Dalton Key

From her deathbed, Elizabeth I, Queen of England sighed, “All my possessions for a moment of time.”

The Queen was forced by facts to admit the obvious. From the perspective of flesh, life is time and time is life, or as Benjamin Franklin once said, “Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.”

What is life in the flesh but so much time? Is not life composed, comprised of increments of time?

Enough wasted time amounts to a wasted life. Someone has written, “Time and opportunities go hand in hand. Lost wealth may be replaced by industry, lost knowledge by study, lost health by temperance, but lost time is gone forever. Don’t kill time . . . it has no resurrection.”

What really counts is not the number of hours we put in, but rather what we put into those hours! Many a slothful soul has worked twice as long to do one-half the work a more diligent worker will accomplish in short order.

That said, our concern should not be with the wasted hours and neglected opportunities of the past; we should rather focus our attention upon the here and now, upon what we should be doing and could be doing today.

Scripture places a hefty premium on the present. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Corinthians 6:2.) “But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:13.) “Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.” (Colossians 4:5.)

We must resolve to begin living each day to the fullest, as our days of flesh are by no means unlimited. “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12.) We must do all we can, with all we have, for as long as we are able.

“Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days.” (Ephesians 5:15,16, Phillips.)



FROM THE ARCHIVES . . . GOD HELPS IN TIMES OF STRUGGLE

By Bobby Key

It is good to acknowledge our weaknesses. We are all weak in certain areas and the devil tempts us at our weakest point. Let us never allow Satan to take advantage of us; we must be fully aware of his schemes. (2 Corinthians 2:11.)

Many times there is strength in weakness! The Lord told Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” The apostle then wrote, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:9,10.)

In time of grief, suffering, and struggles, we sometimes ask, “Lord, where were You?” When Lazarus died, his sisters, Mary and Martha, wondered where Jesus had been and why he had not been present when they needed Him. Both sisters said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” (John 11:21,32.) Many sincere souls have asked the same question and made similar statements down through the years.

Jesus prayed for the cup of suffering to be removed. On the cross, he asked, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Don’t be afraid of your weakness, your doubts, your fears. It is alright to feel anxious, empty, lost and alone. Struggling with weaknesses forces one to turn to God

for strength.

In 1948 J.R. Baxter wrote the song, “Just a Closer Walk With Thee.” He wrote, “I am weak but Thou art strong. Jesus keep me from all wrong; I’ll be satisfied as long as I walk close to Thee. Through this world of toils and snares, if I falter, Lord, who cares? Who with me my burden shares, if I walk close to Thee. When my feeble life is o’er, time for me will be no more, guide me to that peaceful shore, let me walk close to Thee.”

When life tumbles in and we feel weak and helpless, may we be assured that God is near by. God is always present, and ready to help His children in times of struggle.

NOW AND THEN IS NOT ENOUGH

By Richard Dent

Webster’s dictionary defines the word as occurring occasionally. A good synonym is infrequently. A good example in a sentence would be: His attendance in my class was rather sporadic which is why his grade was so low.

Why talk about this adjective, sporadic? Well, I think we all might be sporadic a little bit. Sometimes I surprise my wife by washing the dishes or doing something else unexpectedly nice. But I don’t do all of the nice things all of the time. Therefore, I must be sporadic at times in my actions.

I am a sporadic writer. It has been too long since I have written an article for our church bulletin or for the OLD PATHS. But here I am trying to put together a string of articles that I hope will be read and enjoyed.

There are some negative things about being sporadic. Attending church services is one of them. Remember that the writer of Hebrews stated, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:25.) Our Lord expects more from us than just an

occasional visit on Sunday morning.

I believe our Lord expects us to give some of our material gains to further the Lord’s work. Paul reminded the Corinthian brethren “that on the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:2.) Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7.) In chapters eight and nine of 2 Corinthians Paul reminds us of the Macedonian brethren’s willingness to give to help others. That does not sound sporadic to me. Are we giving as we have been prospered each Lord’s Day or might we just be sporadic?

Last, there is an example of a congregation in Revelation that seemed to be rather sporadic in their service to God. Revelation 3:15-16 tells us about Laodicea, which our Lord said was “neither cold nor hot . . . So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.” Let me guess! It appears that their service had become rather sporadic. They were close to spiritual death. Jesus told them what they needed to do (vs. 17-18). We hope

they took His advice.

What about you and me? Are we sporadic in our prayer life, our reading of God’s word, our attendance at services? There is almost always room for improvement. Perhaps I will try to write more often and not be so sporadic.

— Liberal, KS

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