

Reaching Out

Issue 101

Welcome to Reaching Out,

a Christian magazine to serve the community. Our goal is to offer Biblical solutions to the problems facing our society today.

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Selfish or Godish?

by Clay Zimmerman

Am I selfish? I am concerned about my needs and desires. Aren't you? I want enough to eat and a dry place to lay my pillow at night. That's just natural. On deeper levels I enjoy love, and I want peace. I don't know if everyone wants peace or not. If you haven't experienced it, maybe you don't know what I mean. Real peace comes from being right with God. *"A conscience void of offence toward God."* (The Apostle Paul said he worked at that all the time—Acts 24:16.) So does that make me selfish?

True selfishness, as we use it in the English language, means being concerned about my needs and desires with no regard for others' needs and feelings. Maybe we need another term

for those who are extremely concerned about themselves but in a godly manner. After all, God does want us to be concerned about ourselves and our future. So maybe we could be "godish" or godlike. What does that look like?

#1. A truly concerned-for-self person will be thinking about the present. Being forgiven by God, being accepted by God, walking in the light

of God's approval, and experiencing God's love—oh so good!

#2. A truly concerned-for-self person will be planning for the future. After all, we will be there. The here and now is temporary and the future is eternal. That is why a real Christian will deny himself of sin now. Listen to this. *"For if ye shall live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live"* (Romans 8:13).

#3. A truly concerned-for-self person will be filled with the spirit of God. After all, that is how he became a Christian. Thus he will love others and want what's best for them also. The first commandment is to love God; the second is to love our neighbor

as ourselves. *"God is love."*

God wants us to be concerned about ourselves, but in a "godish" or godlike way.

"As I live, sayeth the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways" (Ezekiel 33:11).

**God wants us to be
concerned about ourselves
*but in a godlike way.***

*Would you like to receive each issue of **Reaching Out**, or do you know of a friend who might? Send your requests to the church represented on your back page.*

*Do you care to respond to any of the articles?
Send your thoughts and comments to:*

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WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

About Purity

From *Doctrines of the Bible*, by Daniel Kauffman

"Keep thyself pure . . . " (1 Timothy 5:22)

For an example of perfect purity, look to our Lord Jesus Christ.

But none of us need ever expect to attain the standard of purity held forth in the Bible by striving in our own strength and effort to be like Christ. The law was perfect, pure, holy (Romans 7:12), yet no one ever attained it in perfection. Christ, tempted in all points like as we are, was *"without sin"* (Heb. 4:15); yet none of us, while wearing our mortal robes, need ever expect to attain the same end, for perfection is never reached through human effort or human goodness.

Paul pointed out the weakness of the Pharisees when he said, *"They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God"* (Romans 10:3). If any of us have thought in our own goodness and by our own effort to attain to the purity, holiness, and perfection of God, we had better cease trying and ask God to try in our stead. This is the way it is accomplished:

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

"The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Thus, submitting ourselves to God, allowing Him to perform the miracle of grace in our hearts, walking in the light *"as he is in the light,"* with our lives *"hid with Christ in God,"* it is possible for the weakest of mortals to walk in paths of *"righteousness and true holiness."* This is heaven-secured purity.

What Purity Includes

The admonition of Paul to Timothy, as quoted at the head of this chapter, should be taken seriously by all people. Applying it to our own lives, this Christian grace and attainment means:

1. Purity in Thought and Purpose

We often think of the old-fashioned hourglass. With the upper chamber filled with sand, it is only a question of time when this sand is found in the lower chamber. So with mind and character. Keep the upper chamber (mind) filled with pure thoughts, and it is only a question of time when this purity is reflected in the character. Keep your mind stored with thoughts that are pure, holy, kind, righteous, chaste, worshipful, and these traits of character will shine out in your daily lives. On the other hand, let your minds harbor evil thoughts, impure motives, and it will not be long until tongues and lives will betray the filth that is harbored in the mind. Therefore, keep thy mind pure.

2. Purity in Speech

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6). *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Colossians 3:16). *"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks"* (Ephesians 5:4). Here is a catalogue of things which do not belong to pure speech: idle words, bywords, slang phrases, vulgar language, profanity, gossiping, rehashing stale yarns, etc. Two things are essential to success in eliminating them from your speech: (1) a pure heart (*"for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"*); (2) a persistent, prayerful, persevering effort to overcome former habits. Keep thy speech pure.

3. Purity in Heart

"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). Especially

where people, before their conversion, were given over to vile affections do they need to come before the throne continually for grace to overcome. To every child of God there comes the admonition, *"Be thou an example of the believers . . . in purity"* (1 Timothy 4:12). Keep your affections centered upon things that are pure and true and righteous and holy, and your mind, tongue, hands, and feet will respond. Read Philippians 4:8. Keep thy affections pure.

4. Purity in Companionship

This means two things: (1) that you, personally, live a pure life, worthy of the associations of the best of people; (2) that you choose your companions from among those who are pure in thought and mind, [avoid] an attitude of social equality with those characters who are tainted with social impurity. Beware of questionable entan-

glements. *"Evil communications corrupt good manners."* You are safe in applying this same rule in your companionship with books and other literature. You cannot afford to mix in ungodly associations, for stronger people than yourself have succumbed to such influences.

**THE CONSCIENCE IS
THE MONITOR
WHICH GOD HAS
PLACED WITHIN YOU
TO SOUND
A NOTE OF
WARNING IN
EVERY TIME OF
DANGER**

5. Purity in Social Relations

The Bible nowhere refers to social impurity except to condemn it. Where chastity gives way to impurity, character is ruined—and this is true of men as well as of women, for there is no "double standard" in morals, in the sight of God.

Speaking of social impurity, it is in order to say that many of the things, in which some people see nothing wrong, are the very things that start people downhill morally. Such things as practicing undue familiarity with the persons of the opposite sex, courtship at late hours, with curtains drawn and lights dimmed, unchaste conversation and telling vile "jokes," attendance at movies and theaters and circuses and other places where

vulgar wit and suggestive thrusts are considered "smart"—these are things which excite the passions and are responsible for the ruin of thousands who were once pure-minded young people. As the young man who never takes the first drink will never become a drunkard, so the young man or young woman who never allows himself or herself to be caught in these first traps on the downward road to [immorality] will never become a libertine. . . . Keep thyself pure in the social realm.

6. Purity in Conscience.

[The conscience] is the monitor which God has placed within you to sound a note of warning in every time of danger. Be sure you keep this conscience pure and tender. Keep it fed on the pure Word of God, and never fail to heed its warnings. So long as your conscience is on the altar of the Lord, and implicitly obeyed, you are safe. Therefore keep thy conscience pure. Read Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 9:9, 14; 1 Peter 3:16, 21.

7. Purity in righteousness.

Righteousness, like every other trait of Christian character, should be maintained in its purity. This includes an upright life, honest dealings with fellow men, the righteousness of Jesus Christ shining out in every walk in life. When tempted to compromise for the sake of gain in wealth, ease, and popularity, remember the admonition, *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness"* (Matthew 6:33). A straightforward course in business, social, home, and religious life will keep you in line with the Gospel standard of righteousness. Keep thyself pure in righteousness.

8. Purity in religion.

We have reserved this for last because it is the foundation and the climax of all purity. We have a perfect definition for pure religion in James 1:27. . . . Never be satisfied with anything short of the pure, unadulterated religion of Jesus Christ, unspotted by any of the sins of this world. Keep thyself pure in religion.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

"Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).



THE CHRISTIAN HOME SERIES

Surviving a Broken Home

by J. Luke Martin

They are everywhere in every community. Husbands abandon their spouses and children. Wives walk out of their husbands' lives and leave children with devastated emotions. Single mothers give birth to children with no marriage and no father image for support and guidance.

Consider how far removed this is from God's original plan. God planned for one man and one woman to be joined in marriage to become a "one flesh" union. They are to partner together in true fidelity until death separates them.

Hear what Jesus said, *"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder"* (Mark 10:6-9).

Jesus went on to speak of the sin of divorce and remarriage. *"Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."*

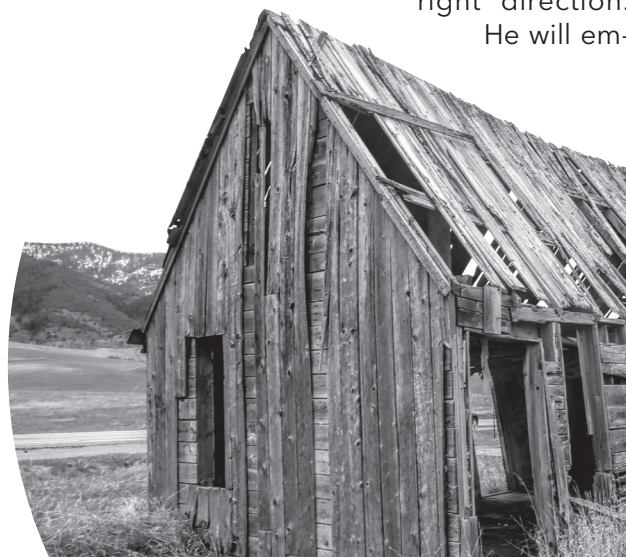
These divine mandates by the Saviour of the world are violated wholesale in our society. The violations are approved by nearly all of professed Christianity which has greatly multiplied the problem. Perhaps you, as a reader, are a victim of such a broken relationship. Is there a remedy? Is there hope? Can broken relationships and broken homes be fixed?

What can spouses do when their partners walk out? What can children do when their parents abandon them? These are tough questions. The old adage, "Misery loves company," provides little comfort. There is a lot of company in the broken home scenario. But it only magnified the problem rather than fixing it. Here are some steps to finding God's way.

- Stop and consider that God is greater than any difficulty. In crises, He welcomes us to seek Him

and call upon Him. Consider these wonderful promises found in the Bible. God hears the cry of those who are hurting. *"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near"* (Isaiah 55:6). *"Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me"* (Psalm 50:15). *"Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD"* (Jeremiah 29:13, 14a).

- Jesus loves you. He died on a cross of wood for your sin (Romans 5:8). *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28-30).
- Ask God to make you a better person in the present circumstances. Our first impulse is to strike back or run away. These are negative responses. They will lead to more trouble and disappointment. When you let Jesus come into your life, He will steer you in the right direction. He will em-



power you to forgive, to love those who may be hurting you. Respond in helpful ways, doing your part to show love in action.

- Seek the help of other Christians. Find someone with whom you can share your struggles. Attend a Bible believing, Bible practicing church. Pray privately and with others. Read the Bible regularly.
- Seek restoration. Jesus in the great reconciler. He made peace through the blood of His cross. Jesus wants to work in your life and the life of your loved ones to heal broken relationships. Be willing to say, "I am sorry, I was wrong, forgive me" and "I will do better with God's help." Look for something good in others and commend it. Pray for ways you can lighten the burden of others around you. Your own burdens will become more bearable.
- Be convinced that regardless of how bad your situation is, God can make you a person of honor and integrity. In our difficulties, God comes near.

In the Bible, read Jonah, chapter two. Jonah cried to God from the belly of a great fish, a most hopeless situation. God brought him deliverance. God allowed the Apostle Paul and his shipmates to face a terrible storm with all hope that they could be saved gone. In that desperate situation, God saved them all (Acts 27).

Read Psalm 40. Note particularly the last verse. *"I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God."*

Jesus taught that all things are possible through Him though they may be impossible with men. Coping with rejection, abandonment, abuse, anger, and contempt by ourselves is impossible, but not so with God. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to heal the brokenhearted and to set at liberty them that are bruised (Luke 4:18). You can find help from Him this very moment. If you need more help, contact the church or organization named on the back of *Reaching Out*.

O HAPPY HOME!

O happy home, where Thou art loved the dearest,
Thou loving Friend and Saviour of our race,
And where among the guests there never cometh
One who can hold such high and honored place!

O happy home, where two in heart united
In holy faith and blessed hope are one,
Whom death a little while alone divideth,
And cannot end the union here begun!

O happy home, whose little ones are given
Early to Thee, in humble faith and prayer,

To Thee, their Friend, who from the heights of Heaven
Guides them, and guards with more than mother's care!

O happy home, where each one serves Thee, lowly,
Whatever his appointed work may be,
Till every common task seems great and holy,
When it is done, O Lord, as unto Thee!

O happy home, where Thou art not forgotten,
Where joy is overflowing, full and free,
O happy home, where every wounded spirit
Is brought, Physician, Comforter, to Thee—

Until at last, when earth's day's work is ended,
All meet Thee in the blessed home above,
From whence Thou camest, where Thou hast ascended,
Thy everlasting home of peace and love!

—Carl Johann Philipp Spitta

Only Common Sense by Dallas Witmer

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7).

Some call it "higher law, universal law," or the "code of conscience." By whatever name, it is God's law, and we all know it's there. God's law is the ultimate expression of common sense. It rewards well-doing, and condemns wrong. It speaks in propositions: Do this and you will live. If you do not, you will die.

Everyone can follow God's law. *"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Romans 8:4). Jesus taught us the spiritual meaning of God's law. He then died to save us from the curse of breaking God's law. He sent His Holy Spirit who writes His laws in our minds. He makes us able and happy to live God's law. We can then face God's judgment without fear.

God's law fits our needs perfectly. When the government allows immorality, divorce, abortion, and lawsuits, for instance, we need guns, jails, and an army of police officers to keep disobedience to God's laws in check. God draws lines where the person who accepts Him can enjoy safety. God's way may seem strict to the unconverted, but when God's law converts or changes our lives, we scarcely notice its restraints.

God's law is in wide circulation today—it is known as the Holy Bible. Read, believe, and obey it to be truly free. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32).



THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

Cooperating Systems in Creation

by Elvin Stauffer

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created"

(Revelation 4:11).

Darwin saw competition, struggle, and survival of the strongest and most intelligent in nature. He could only see nature at war with itself and wrongly supposed this caused upward evolution. This groaning and travailing in nature (Romans 8:22) is true "as far as the curse [of human sin] is found." But from the beginning of creation this was not the case. The discerning eye still sees the awesome beauty of harmony and cooperation in the many systems of God's world.

The evolutionist's problem is not only to bring all the organisms out of nothing but there are many systems required in the cosmos to make life and human existence possible. For any one of these systems to emerge from murky chaos would be inconceivable. There is a God (a good one) who "Spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9, Hebrews 11:3).

The Solar System

The tilted, spinning earth circles the sun at varying distances to cause day and night and summer and winter on earth. "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22). If the earth were a little closer to the sun it would dry up. If it were a little farther away we would freeze to death.

Then we have the water cycle operating on the earth to continually water the land. "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again" (Ecclesiastes 1:7). By evaporation off the bodies of water and condensation over the land, through variations of cold and heat and whirling winds (v.6), the water continues to cycle.

Next we have a food cycle. The first living things created were the lowly grass and plants (Genesis

1:11). There is a hierarchy in nature by which grass is the foundation of the biodiversity of our environment. Various kinds of grasses covered the plains, savannas, steppes, and valleys of the world. Then the animals were created with the food source already provided. So the mouse eats the grass, the weasel eats the mouse; the fox eats the weasel, the bobcat eats the fox. They all die, rot, and return to nutrients in the ground, which again nourish the plants.

The Photosynthesis / Respiration Cycle

This system originated by God in nature is constantly operating without any thought on our part. Man, along with all the creatures of our world, exists among raw elements of minerals, chemicals, gases, and sunshine. They would be useless to us except for this system which converts them into food.

Chloroplasts in the chlorophyll of green plants use light energy to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. Hydrogen, through a series of complicated steps, is then combined with carbon dioxide from the air to form sugar. Green plants can make this sugar, along with nitrogen, sulfur, and phosphorus from the soil into starch, fat, protein, vitamins, and other complex compounds essential for life. In the process, oxygen is given off for us to breathe.

We, along with all the creatures, in turn "burn" the food by combining it with oxygen. This process called respiration releases energy for activities and growth. Respiration is the opposite of photosynthesis, using up oxygen and giving off carbon dioxide and water. This process maintains a balance of gasses in the air. It is a miracle of God's sovereign, overruling hand.

"He is before all things, and by him all things consist," and He "Uphold[s] all things by the word of his power" (Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3).

The Human Body

The systems in our human bodies are representative of those in the mammals. This in no way indicates that one came from the others. It just shows that the Creator used similar design in many creatures. The human eye is a detailed, unique structure, but it is also found (much larger) in the squid. There is no lineage here!

There are other systems such as that found in the butterfly and moth. They have all the information in their genomes to take them through the bodies of a sixteen-footed caterpillar and a six-legged insect. This is a miracle of God's design when he wrote all the original genetic codes. Evolution has nothing to even come near this creative work. The genes in our chromosomes are the source of all our working systems and their program for growth.

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written [information!], which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them (Psalms 139:14-16).

The many systems which are "fashioned" by God at birth are: The skeletal system, muscular system, nervous system, digestive system, circulatory system, respiratory system, endocrine system (glands), lymphatic system, the reproductive system, and more. If any one of these systems fails there are major problems or even death.

Each system is built on and depends on the others. The muscles are attached to the bones. The nerves run through the bones and muscles. The blood draws its oxygen and nutrients from the lungs and intestines. There is a harmonious blending of functions. The more carefully we look at these operating systems the more we see they had to be designed together. One system could not arise from a need without the others being there. We call this "irreducible complexity." No system can be removed and the organism continues to function. Evolution could not gradually create them

with mutations or in any other way. It is like a new train locomotive sitting on the track with all systems completed—except the electrical system. It won't go!

A Spiritual System - The Church

God did not just work in the material world and create physical systems. He made man a spiritual, three-fold being with physical, intellectual, and emotional needs. God has an operating system for his people that provides for all the physical, social and spiritual needs of a human society. Some have needed to stand alone in their culture like Joseph and Daniel, but God does not intend this to be the norm.

Evolutionists may try to imitate caring and sharing but after an education teaching that we are just so many pounds of flesh, blood and bone of the species Homo Sapiens, evolved from sea scum, these sentiments are not very deep or enduring. The calamity of social animosity and woe in our world proves the futility of human efforts at harmony. The UN has become a tool of anti-Semitic, and anti-Christian forces that cannot stop persecution in many countries. In contrast, Christian organizations are spreading relief and the Scriptures with the gospel of peace around the world.

But much greater than the humanitarian aid, Jesus said, *"I will build my church..."* In this organization the influences of love, nurture, correction and direction are provided for each member. Children are raised rather than left to themselves. Marriages and families are encouraged and enhanced. The sick and handicapped are accepted and the aged are respected and cared for. Life is considered sacred.

Through bishops, ministers, deacons and the church members, spiritual needs are met according to Bible principles and ethics. Insurance companies are not needed because the deacon's office was provided to take care of the financial, physical, and social relations in the body (Acts 6:1-7). The church, the people of God, shares with freewill offerings and in other ways when there are fires, storms, accidents, and sickness (1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

In a community of believers, the differences and the gifts of all actually enhance the whole body. *"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body"* (1 Corinthians 12:4, 12)

"God did not just work in the material world . . . He made man a spiritual, three-fold being with physical, intellectual and emotional needs."

Resources: The Bible - God's Word
World Book Encyclopedia

What Is Your Top Priority?

by Roger Berry

Plan now for future success! Invest for the future! Education is for you!

So read the billboard beside the busy freeway. The sign expressed in catchy phrases the main goal of the American public education system—success!

A new school year has begun for millions of young people across the land. One wonders what thoughts might be racing through their minds as they set foot in the classroom.

Perhaps they wonder, “What am I here for? What will the future hold? Will all this study really bring me success? Will I get a job making plenty of money after highschool or college?”

Studies made by psychologists and pollsters indicate that what many people want most in life is a money-making job, a home, a little “nest egg” for retirement—in short, financial success and security.

But is financial success really the most important thing in life? Should it be tops on the list of life’s priorities? Does it really give life meaning?

Some seem to think so. They assume that education can solve almost all of the world’s problems. Modern philosophy says we must educate people—then, somehow, war, poverty, hatred, and greed will melt away!

When I was in high school, many years ago, you just weren’t “with it” unless you were out to get all the education you could. High school students were expected to go on to college. Today, we have a superabundance of highly educated people, many with a long string of degrees behind their names. But, are our problems well on the way to being solved? Obviously not! War, crime, government corruption, drug addiction, and immorality are all on the increase. The world seems headed toward

chaos, not some bright, man-contrived, educated utopia. The Bible speaks of a time when people will say, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jeremiah 8:11).

Somebody’s priorities aren’t straight. Somebody has missed the real values in life. Education hasn’t been the cure-all for our social ills.

A successful businessman lay dying of cancer. His wife stood beside him, tenderly wiping the

sweat from his fever-wracked forehead. His face was contorted in pain. His cries of pain and despair echoed down the long hospital corridors.

You see, he had given all his life to pursue education and a successful career. He neglected his children and was unfaithful to his wife for years. His god was the “almighty dollar.”

Now his “success” no longer mattered. Death stared him in the face. Life had nothing more to offer. He had missed the mark. He discovered, too late, that something other than his success-drive should have had top priority in his life.

He had sought happiness in the wrong things—things that could bring him no peace of mind. He searched for real meaning in life, but did not find the real key to attaining it.

The Bible says, “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [the necessities of life and happiness too!] shall be added unto you*” (Matthew 6:33).

God must be the object of our search for true happiness and true wisdom. Success only comes through seeking to serve Him above all personal ambitions.

“*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).

Your whole life, education included, must be turned over to Jesus Christ to be used for His glory. If God’s service and glory is not the center and first purpose of your life, then you’re missing the mark.

All your learning must be centered on the Source of all true knowledge. Take time to study the Bible

to find God’s way of success through submission to His Son Jesus Christ. As you surrender to Christ, consider ways you can better prepare yourself to work for Him and for His kingdom. As helpful as some education can be, all will be lost if you do not know Jesus Christ

as Lord and Saviour of your life.

Make “first things first” your motto. Give Jesus top priority in your future. You will never be sorry.





THE WORLD TODAY

Do Christians Hate?

by Roger L Berry

We're living in a world of hatred and violence. The violence continues to intensify. Almost daily, it seems, we hear of conflict and bloodshed not only in wars but in otherwise peaceful nations. Shootings and other violent crimes take place not only between gangs in the cities but even the workplace, schools, and more and more in places of worship. Even some who profess to be Christians get caught up in the use of force and even violence.

A lawyer from New York stated that "the anti-abortion movement in the United States follows up . . . with violence." Abortion opponents, most of them professing Christians, regularly picket abortion clinics and otherwise protest the destruction of the unborn. Doctors and workers at abortion clinics have been killed by anti-abortion activists. In this case pro-abortionists are blaming conservative Christians. Christians often get accused of "hate crimes."

Should true Christians guilty of violence because they practice the Biblical view of family and marriage or because they believe that an unborn child is a real person, created by God, for a purpose in this world? Certainly Christians should be known as those who love others, even those they disagree with. Jesus taught: *"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"* (Matthew 5:44).

Because of this Scripture and others, we know it is sin for a Christian to hate others or to mistreat them. Hate is never right, no matter how wrong the other person is. True Christians do not get abortions because they know that the Bible teaches the sanctity of life in the womb. *"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb"* (Psalm

139:13). Christians abstain from all forms of immorality, including fornication (premarital), adultery (married people), and homosexuality. Christians teach and practice moral purity. *"Now the works of the flesh are . . . adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred ... they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts"* (Galatians 5:19-21, 24).

Christians can expect persecution from a world that is anti-Christ. However, we must be careful not to bring accusations against ourselves by disobeying

God. The Bible teaches Christians to suffer wrong and not retaliate. *"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:17-19, 21).

If Christians take this Scripture seriously they will not harm people, even their enemies. They will not become involved in any type of coercion or force against others. This includes trying to prevent workers, even at abortion clinics, from doing their work. Sadly, Christians who feel they must use force, even "nonviolent" resistance, are missing the way God has planned for the church to reach an ungodly world. Using coercion and political influence to make people stop doing wrong does not change their hearts. By such methods Christians tend to make enemies instead.

The crux of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to bring change to people's hearts. Without changed hearts, immorality, abortion, murder and a host of other sins



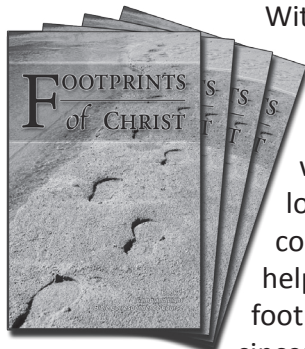
Dirk Willems rescues his captor only to be later martyred for his faith.

will not be dealt with. The Bible teaches Christians to, first of all, live out their faith as examples among the ungodly. Secondly, Christians are called to expend their time and efforts appealing to people to take God's way, through His Son Jesus Christ. Thirdly, the church needs to encourage and teach those who have become Christians. If the churches of our world would take this approach seriously, more could be done to change people than could ever be done through political means, demonstrations, or force.

When churches start using political means or coercion, they open themselves to retaliation in kind. Political force against the church increases.

So what shall Christians who are concerned about our world do about immorality, violence, abortion clinics, the drug and alcohol problem? Let us be examples of right living first. Then, on a one-to-one basis we can point people to the better way of obedience to the Bible. We can also share Christian literature that teaches God's way. We cannot force people to follow Jesus. Transformed lives can and will make a difference in our world. They will bring hope to men and women now and, more importantly, forever.

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Satan's Most Successful Lie

by James Yoder

John 8:44 describes Satan as a *liar*, the father of lies. He is the ultimate con artist, cleverly weaving bits of truth into his tapestry of lies. The vast majority of people follow him to their own destruction.

But what has been Satan's most successful lie—the lie that has probably led more souls to hell than any other?

There is no God. Most people, deep in their hearts, know that certainly there must be a Master Designer behind this intricate creation. Some believe this lie; it is not Satan's most effective lie.

The Bible is not true. The Bible is a book that is extremely difficult to explain away. Its fulfilled prophecies, its miraculous preservation, and its practical wisdom that changes lives all speak of a Divine Author who is dependable and true. Some will deny the Bible but, no, I don't believe this is Satan's most effective lie.

Calm down; everything's going to be all right! This lie has produced results over the years, but it has only had limited success. Even the ungodly can observe the increase in natural catastrophes, the increase of wickedness and violence, and conclude that everything is **not** going to be all right.

I believe that Satan's most successful lie is very simple, and that is why it is so successful. *You've got plenty of time.* I believe this lie has damned more souls to eternal punishment than any other. Satan cares not about good intentions as long as you wait until tomorrow. For many, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. How about you? Are you waiting for a more convenient season to settle the question of your eternal destiny? You have no promise of tomorrow. The Bible pleads, *"Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart."*

Today, God calls you to:

1. Admit that you are a sinner and have displeased a holy God. *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).
2. Believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for you. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"* (Acts 16:31).
3. Confess your sinfulness to God and turn from it. *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out"* (Acts 3:19).
4. Begin to follow Jesus faithfully. *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"* (Matthew 16:24).
5. Read the Bible regularly. *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psalm 119:105).

