

Reaching Out

Welcome to Reaching Out, *a different kind of magazine*

Issue #71

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

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What Has God Said?

—Clay Zimmerman

Has there ever been a time when God and the Bible have been more doubted, disbelieved, scoffed at, and reinterpreted than right now? I know that every era had its unbelievers and critics, but it seems that now there is a huge smorgasbord of religious thoughts on the table. With today's media and communications networks, all the old (and new) ideas are easily available worldwide.

Some would say there is no God, or that we are God (all in all). Some would doubt that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, or that He rose from the dead. Some hold that all or parts of the Bible are irrelevant for mankind today or that there are other teachings that are just as good, or better.

So where does that leave us? Is it a matter of simply picking or choosing what we like? Can you take what's right for you and I will take what is right for me? We can of course do that, but my or your personal preferences do not make anything true or false.

First, let's put our feelings aside, for if they are the only building blocks, they can surely mislead us. For the sake of logic, let's look at some facts:

#1. When we carefully look at Creation and the facts of life, Genesis is a very logical answer to "Where did we come from?"

#2. The Bible is full of fulfilled prophesy. How could men have known? Self-proclaimed prophets today are certainly missing the mark.

#3. When we look at the evidence of who Jesus was, it is very compelling.

#4. When we look at the problems we humans have, I must admit the Bible has mentioned them all and gives us answers for them.

Therefore . . . if the Bible is right, there are some basic things that I must believe if I am going to be correct in my religious belief.

- *"Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him"* (Hebrews 11:6).
- *"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).
- *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).
- *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son"* (2 John 9).
- *"Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 4:17).
- *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life"* (Romans 6:4).
- Jesus said, *"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be"* (Revelation 22:12).

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Reaching Out
Roger Berry, Editor
6872 State Highway K
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Editor: Roger L. Berry

Board: Joe Weirich, Allan Miller, Wayne Miller, James Yoder, Clay Zimmerman

Regular Columnists: Lester Troyer, Marlin Kreider, Elvin Stauffer, Clay Zimmerman, Roger L. Berry

Reviewers: Glenn Kilmer, Lewi Graber



The Christian Home Series

—Marlin Kreider

Children of Character and Obedience

Character refers to the qualities of moral strength, integrity, and self-discipline. The Bible commands: “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right*” (Ephesians 6:1). As a rule, children of good character are also obedient, and obedient children are an expression of good, God-honoring character.

Is it possible in today’s world to have children that respectfully obey their superiors; young people who are godly, pure, honest, expressing integrity and self-control? Praise God, the answer is “yes”! We can have children and youth of this caliber in our homes and churches. But we all know this doesn’t just happen without plan or purpose.

Children, those sweet innocent babies, are born with a bent to do evil and to go wrong. This is because they are born with a sinful nature that they inherited from their parents (1 Peter 1:18, 19). If left to express themselves, to do their own thing, unrestrained and untrained, they will bring themselves and their parents to shame and disgrace (Proverbs 29:15).

In America, it is time we weep for our children and the youth that are coming of age in our society in general. Countless homes are broken by selfishness, lust, and material pursuits. The “American dream,” as it is often referred to, may well become the “American nightmare.” The public school system is not only in financial trouble; for the most part it is also morally bankrupt. Taking the Bible out years ago was only the beginning. The anti-Christ agenda continues its attempt to remove every reference to God and

moral absolutes from our society. In its place, they are teaching and promoting humanistic, socialistic philosophy. This includes sex education that encourages alternate lifestyles and unrestrained, immoral expressions of all kinds. To all this, add the growing addictions to drugs, sports, and pleasure-seeking; the worship of self, the physical body and fashion, resulting in rampant public nakedness. We face an unprecedented explosion of hi-tec-mass worldwide communication via the Internet and its associated evils. An evil tidal wave of modern psychology teaches self-esteem and self-expression. The subtle weakening of most all authority structures, of corrective disciplines, and moral restraints follows.

Is it any wonder that many are losing their children to this anti-God world system? The sad fact is that the mainstream church has compromised and fallen from a Biblical standard. Too many professing Christians have embraced these unholy teachings, or are being swept along by the pressures of these last days. The fruit of all this folly is coming to maturity and the reaping has only begun.

Praise God, there is a remedy, a better way! It is the Bible way! It may not be “politically correct” in this “New Age” world of 2012. But it is the old, tried-and-proven way that still works, that will save our families, and will produce children of character and obedience (Jeremiah 6:16). Through God’s power, the faithful remnant of families and churches still dare to stand, promote, teach, and live by God’s standards. How wonderful and refreshing! Will you join us?

We still believe the Bible and what God says about children. Consider the following five points:

Children are gifts from God! *“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD; and the fruit of the womb is his reward”* (Psalm 127:3). Why do so many despise God’s gifts today and choose to have few or no children? Children are the future of the home, church, and nation! Today we need parents like the parents of Moses described in Hebrews 11:23: *“They were not afraid of the king’s commandment”* (see Exodus 1 & 2). Godly parents desire children and participate in the great work of propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Children are to be loved and protected! God has placed a natural affection in the hearts of parents to love their children. When people love and give more attention to animals and pets than children, the Bible calls that *“without natural affection”* (see 2 Timothy 3:1-5). There is a foundational error in a society that has a strong “animal rights” emphasis, yet continues to sanction the abortion of millions of their own children!

The Bible, in Titus 2:3-5, exhorts the aged women to teach the young women to love their husbands and to love their children. Fathers and mothers who love will also take the necessary steps to protect their children from the evils of a wicked world. Our homes must be to our children like a greenhouse is to young plants: a secure place of protection, while producing a healthy environment to grow, develop, and get established before being transplanted into a hostile world.

For example, TV, the pollution of the Internet, Harry Potter type books, the sensual music—both secular and religious of our day, etc., are not acceptable to parents who truly love and properly protect their homes and children.

Children are to be taught and trained! *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”* (Proverbs 22:6). This is a beautiful promise. Parents, claim and build on it with God’s help! *“Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:4). This is a clear command. Fathers, we must rise up and build our homes for God!

Parents are God’s representatives—God’s delegated authority to their children. Parents are called to teach and instill Biblical values and build

enduring relationships that transmit the Christian faith from generation to generation. Parents are also called to correct, guide, and discipline their children (Proverbs 22:15; Proverbs 23:13, 14). Contrary to this world’s philosophy, children need, develop, and thrive under a loving, disciplined, structured environment. This brings security and stability. This is true for the institutions of the home, school, and the church. For an example, read about the effects of godly training in the life of Moses in Hebrews 11:24-27.

Children are to be a powerful testimony for God and the truth! (Psalm 127:4, 5 and Psalm 144:11-15) *“As arrows, so are children.”* Parents, children are offensive weapons and tools whereby we can reach and accomplish far beyond our own capacities! No wonder the Bible says: *“Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.”* Full of what? Children! The world says one or, at the most, two children. God says, *“I want to bless My people with larger families.”* Godly, well-trained families are a strong, convincing testimony of God’s truth for Christ and for the church. Amen!

Children are to become productive adults given to God for His service and glory!

Hannah of old had it right when she said, *“For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the LORD there”* (1 Samuel 1:27, 28). She was returning the son God had given her in answer to her prayer. When parents have a proper understanding and a right relationship and respect for God, they are in a good position to pass on spiritual values to their children. Spiritual and moral values are the foundation for productivity and usefulness.

In conclusion, only a return to Bible truth and values will reverse the deterioration of the home unit. Without a spiritual revival, our society will continue to be burdened with many unwanted, neglected, and untrained children—disobedient children void of good, wholesome character. If you need encouragement or are interested in restoration for your home, please contact the address on the back of this paper.

May God richly bless all the faithful parents, people, and families who are still “salt and light” to our society in this corrupt world!



THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

—Elvin Stauffer

The Human Race

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? ... Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands” (Hebrews 2:6, 7).

If we take the time to consider man, his composition, and capabilities, we must marvel. His capacity for noble achievement or ignoble acts is cause for considering “what makes him tick.” Our helpless arrival into this world and unplanned exit are facts that demonstrate our subjection to a Providence beyond our control. We did not make ourselves. The pride and glorying of man is a vain show. *“The LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves”* (Psalm 100:3).

Man Is Not an Animal

It is common today in evolutionary circles to refer to mammals as “other animals” (from ourselves). However, though physical bodies have similarities, there are significant differences. Man’s natural position is upright. He can communicate complex ideas through speech. Man can appreciate and create beauty. He can also philosophize, theorize, and worship his Creator.

William Paley (1743-1805) likened God to a watchmaker. If we found a watch, we would not presume that it created itself. Someone made it. Every design requires a designer. This principle was not original with Paley but was in the Jewish teachings two millennia earlier. This understanding by God’s people countered the many pagan gods representing the forces of nature creating themselves.

Paley’s argument was common sense until Darwin came along and again popularized the pagan idea of nature creating itself from nothing, under the name of evolution. But evolutionists, to this day, have not sufficiently answered the scientific fact that a design needs a designer. Entropy is a fact of the real world—organisms disintegrate with age and fall apart instead of growing in complexity.

The Genetic Cause for Life

The features of all plant and animal organisms have a genetic cause and are not called forth randomly. This genetic cause is spoken of in the Bible: *“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them”* (Psalm 139:14, 16).

Books contain information attached to the ink printed there. In like manner, verse 16 shows God’s book of genetic information contains the information for all the features of our bodies. It would take the addition of millions of bits of ordered genetic information to add a fin, a leg, or a wing. Evolution cannot account for this information which is in the seed as well as the plant, the egg as well as the bird. Mutations are always compromises of this information.

How did this ordered formula for life (2-4 billion symbols in mammals) get written? If printed in ordinary type, one genetic code would fill 2,000 volumes on a shelf as long as a football field. All this information is in the tiny chromosomes of each cell of our body. If straightened out, all the DNA of one chromosome could be 10 centimeters long. All the DNA in the nucleus of each human cell would be over one meter long. Multiply this times the estimated 50 trillion cells in our bodies and the length of all the DNA in our bodies would be 50 billion kilometers long! This would reach from our earth to beyond our solar system. It would take two days for light to travel this distance.*

These genetic codes had to be composed by our infinitely wise and all-powerful God. The cell then needs to “play” this tape to translate the DNA information into substance. We must stop here. As the Psalmist says *“such knowledge is too wonderful for me”* (139:6). Scientists can discover

how they think this information might work, but they cannot make it work—that is God’s work!

Man’s Capacity for Good or Evil

The rise and fall of cultures through history show the blessing or curse in following God’s natural laws or the degeneration of immoral, lawless living. This effect of righteous living is also evidence of a Lawgiver who sets the bounds for man’s actions.

The heights and depths that men and women attain in life are evidence of different spirits that produce their actions. Man is not just a cookie cutter production that performs in the same way. This is one of the evidences that define man’s difference from animals.

Animals have a similarity of action according to the instinct placed in them by the Creator. Barn swallows will gather mud and straw and build their nests on the side of a barn log even if they never saw it done. Monarch butterflies will travel north in successive generations. When winter comes, the fifth or sixth generation returns to the same valleys in Mexico that their ancestors came from. Animal instincts and senses in certain areas are much above man’s—but that’s all! They can’t go on to more knowledge.

Man, however, starts as a helpless infant and begins to learn and it continues. He achieves more and more knowledge and develops resources for living. There apparently is no boundary line that will stop him other than what God allows him to achieve. This God-like capacity is described in the Bible. *“So God created man in his own image . . . male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth . . . and have dominion . . . over every living thing”* (Genesis 1:27, 28). Jesus Himself referred to the Psalm where it is said, *“Ye are [like] gods; and all of you are children of the most High”* (Psalm 82:6; John 10:34).

A True “Great Society”

Culture is not enough. Human kingdoms such as Egypt have been built on the blood, sweat, and tears of the masses. In such cultures some of the severest oppression of humanity and profaning of God have taken place. True greatness is found in freedom and the happiness of society’s individuals. The queen of Sheba’s response to Solomon’s social structure was: *“The half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before*

thee, and that hear thy wisdom” (1 Kings 10:7, 8). Pagan kingdoms keep their power and prosperity by fear and swift retribution, whether right or wrong.

The Human Race Scattered

God had to frustrate man’s achievement at the tower of Babel. It was as today when human achievement excels in rebellion against the true God. God said, *“Now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do”* (Genesis 11:6). God then scattered them across the earth by giving them different languages to frustrate their communication and progress. Man’s dispersion over the earth can be followed by studying language groups.

Many of these early cultures had developed great kingdoms at one time. There are stone ruins in Central America where the Aztec and Maya peoples once lived. China, Babylon, and Egypt also show the same archaeological remains of highly-developed kingdoms. However, when men decide to indulge their lusts, they always regress into more and more deviate behavior. God’s noble purpose and calling to serve one another is then squandered. This is caused by the common evolutionary viewpoint that we are just accidents with no responsibility or accountability.

The Need for a Redeemer

Men and women who try to follow the voice (of conscience) in them to do better also find a force in themselves that brings defeat. They need a redeemer. God provided this by sending His Son Jesus Christ into the world. God foresaw the need for a redeemer even before He created the cosmos and all its biological diversity and placed man in it. Jesus was slain (in the plan of God) from the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:7, 8-20). Jesus then came in *“the fullness of time”* and was *“born of a woman”* (Galatians 4:4).

Until that time in the midst of history, a placeholder for man was found in the Old Testament (or Jewish economy) through obedience to ordinances and sacrificial types or pictures of Jesus’ sacrificial work. A hymn writer once wrote: “Not all the blood of beasts, on Jewish altars slain, could give the guilty conscience peace or take away the stain. But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, takes our sin away . . .”

It is up to you and me to choose to think, live, and work in harmony with God’s purpose for our lives. *“That we should be to the praise of his glory”* (Ephesians 1:12), and fill our place in the human race.

Sources: **Not By Chance*, by Dr. Lee Spetner
God’s Word, *The Holy Bible*

Feature Article for Youth . . .

The Latchstring

In colonial America many of the settlers built log houses. There were no nails available, so builders used wooden pegs to hold logs together. Door latches were also made of wood because of the scarcity of metals. The wooden latches were on the inside of the door. A small hole in the door provided passage for a small cord called a latchstring. The latchstring hung through the hole to the outside of the door. The door could be opened from the outside by someone pulling on the latchstring. At night, the pioneers often pulled the latchstring inside for safety. The latchstring hanging outside the door soon became a symbol of colonial hospitality.

The story is told of an Indian uprising in Pennsylvania. The Indians burned all the homes in a certain village except one house where the latchstring was hanging out. The Indians knew these people were saying, "Our house is open to you. We want to be friendly." The family was showing a kindness that many white people did not show to the Indians.

As I meditated on the latchstring, I thought of God's offer of salvation made possible through the shed blood of Christ. Since the Resurrection day centuries ago, the "latchstring" has been out for whoever will come to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Door to salvation. The door will be opened to "whosoever will."

Jesus said, *"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"* (John 10:9).

The Bible tells of those who will attempt salvation by many other ways than by the Door. These thieves will try climbing into the kingdom of God some other way. *"He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber"* (John 10:1).

It is a great paradox that the vast majority refuse God's gracious hospitality. Many totally reject Him. Others try to serve Him in their own way. They aim to come inside, but they like the atmosphere outside too. Good deeds, church attendance, and even church membership can be attempts to please God without full surrender to Him.

Christ wants your uncompromising loyalty. He wants you, by faith, to step inside His door of invitation. This will mean a clean break with the enticing influences of the outside and pressures from a corrupt society.

Young friend, does something hinder you from total surrender to Christ and to the radically different lifestyle that surrender demands? Is it popularity? Money?

Running around with the gang? Smoking? Drinking? Sex? Rock music?

The latchstring is still out, inviting you to the way of fulfillment in life. I cannot guarantee it will be out one more day.

You may say, "But I can't do it. I've tried to go straight before, and it was a flop." Your rescue from a life of defeat is what the resurrection of Jesus Christ is all about. Nobody but Christ ever had the power to rise above death and decay. He was the first to do it. This victory means victory over sin too, because sin leads to death. The victory found in surrender to the resurrected Lord is twofold. Through accepting Christ as Lord you can be victorious at the end of life. Your immediate need, however, is for right now. Christ gives the power to make daily godly living and right choices possible.

It is possible to live for Jesus Christ, but you must mean business with Him. So many try and fail, try and fail, because they are holding something back from Jesus. Just one "little" thing can forever crush spiritual victory.

Recently I read the story of a woman who wore her sin on her finger. She had stolen a beautiful ring when she was young. As she grew older, she made attempt after attempt to get right with the Lord, but nothing she tried seemed to work. The most unselfish service, the most noble works did not satisfy her. Finally, as the Lord kept on convicting her, she knew she must part with her precious ring. Such a small item had stood between her and the Lord for years.

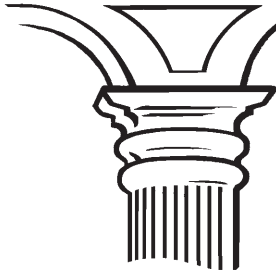
The patience (longsuffering) of the Lord is amazing. He waits patiently for us to divest ourselves of such "trivial" hindrances. The latchstring is still out.

The time is coming when the latchstring will be pulled in. God's day of invitation will end. God has said, *"My spirit shall not always strive with man"* (Genesis 6:3). Jesus told of five foolish virgins who were not prepared for the wedding to which they had been invited. The call came: *"Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him"* (Matthew 25:6). They arrived at the wedding too late, *"and the door was shut."*

The door of invitation may be shut for you tomorrow. The latchstring for you could be pulled forever through a tragic accident or the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. He is coming. Are you ready?

—RLB

The CHURCH in SOCIETY



—Lester Troyer

The Sign of the Enduring Culture

Could we agree that signs and signals are important? Were it not for good highway signs, we would be even more likely to take wrong turns in our travels. We would easily miss our destinations in a maze of unfamiliar highways. Would you care to dispense with those trusty break lights in traffic situations? Is it important that drivers signal their intent to change lanes?

Do you know that God has divinely mandated certain signs for us to practice? These are Biblical reminders. They serve to signal our intents and commitments both to God and man.

We remind you of two that are almost universally practiced by churches in our day.

The Bible commands that new believers are to be baptized in the name of Jesus on the confession of their sins. Water baptism is taught in Scripture as a non-optional outward public sign of conversion, and of unqualified commitment to Jesus Christ. Baptism has also served as the recognized standard for entry into the church from New Testament times to our day.

A second sign, also common to practically every denomination, is the communion service. In this ordinance the believers partake together of the bread and the cup, keeping alive the remembrance of the offering of the body and the blood of Christ for our salvation. It signifies the unity and fellowship of the believers, and will be practiced by the faithful until Christ returns again (1 Corinthians 11:24-26).

But there is another sign, historically in common practice, but now long-neglected, that speaks to the very heart, purpose, and unity of the human family. This sign is found in 1 Corinthians 11. This outward sign is based on the principle that bonds the human family together. Instead of a false sense of equality and independence, and vying for dominance, this one has men and women focused on filling vital but differing roles. Heeding the call to specialization has the effect of doing what they do very well, coupled with sincere gratitude for the contributions of the other. This establishes secure, dovetailed relationships. (Think of the interlocking pieces of a jigsaw puzzle). Earthquakes happen because rock strata are not sufficiently interlocking under pressure. The same applies to broken homes. These happen when marriages and families are not sufficiently dovetailed to withstand the challenges that come into all human relationships. Because marriage and family are keys to the whole culture, destructive forces in the home infect every area of society.

Perhaps almost inexplicitly, the moral failures that finally destroy marriages have a way of following equality wars, as though role independence first confuses, and then destroys the sexual exclusiveness of the marriage bond. After all, in the modern equality race, the partner is a replaceable duplicate. Intrinsic appreciation of the other is destroyed. This

disease of trivialized roles of men and women has trivialized not only marriage, but everything male and everything female. Can you find an advice columnist who is seriously against divorce?

The truth of Scripture is clear. Following is the principle that supports the teaching of the signs that follow this Bible passage. What we don't know on this subject will not only hurt us. It will destroy us.

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).

From this we know that there exists a divine chain of command, established in the very Godhead—that Jesus Christ is subject to the Father (a point Jesus spelled out clearly and repeatedly). Following this same order, Christ is the head of the man, and the man is the head of the woman.

The teaching of this earthly order begins in Genesis, where Eve was created in a delightfully complimentary role for Adam. By no means does it end there. The Scriptures draw in every sphere of human relationships, authority, and service. Along with the subjection of wives to their husbands, children are to obey their parents (*Honour thy father and thy mother . . .* Exodus 20:12). Employees are to render service to their employers as unto the Lord. Citizens are to obey the laws of the land, and to honor governors and magistrates. In turn, all are to submit to God, as Christ Himself submitted Himself to the will of the Father. God has not ordered this only for the good of Christians and churches. The order and stability of the whole culture depends on it. The alternative is anarchy, the poison of which is becoming a threat even to the orderly transition of government.

Now for the reminder signs (1 Corinthians 11:1-16). They are directed first to men, then to women:

1. That the man is to have his hair cut short, and his head uncovered (verses 4, 7, and 14), for the honor of Christ (Ponytails don't cut it, and protective headgear should come off in times of worship, lest the man dishonor Christ). His daily ritual obedience reminds him that he is not his own boss.

2. That the woman is to have her hair uncut and also covered (verses 5 and 6) in keeping

with her role of subjection and in honor of her head.

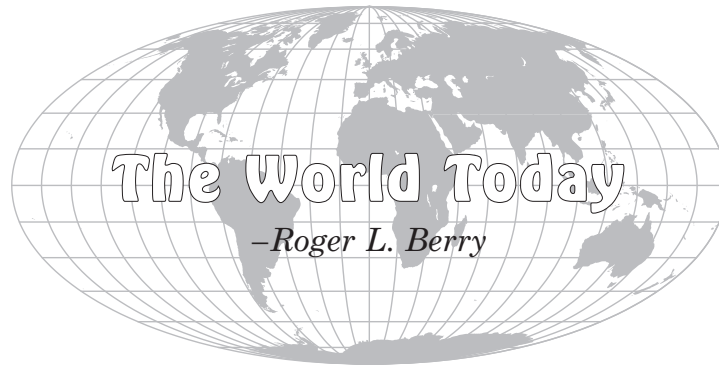
Notice that these signs are actually inherent to fulfilling the Christian calling. The man who means to submit to Christ but keeps his headgear on when it should come off is actually signaling disregard for Christ over him. Likewise, the woman whose cut hair and choice of clothing denote either manliness or sensuousness has already signaled contempt for the gift of godly submission, the precious gift given her by her Creator.

The choice of a head covering for a woman ought to be one of obvious Christian distinction. It ought to signify a badge of honor toward her husband in the home and keep her from ruling over men outside the home, such as in business or politics. (While it may be a fact that women have leadership capabilities very sufficient for powerful positions and offices, it comes at the price we can least afford—the decimation of marriage, home, and children). If she applies the sign, for her, the battle of the sexes is over. She has found a place of security and freedom. Her conscientious choice to cover her head despite the scorn of a heedless culture also helps remove her from the sway of seductive or indecent apparel so prevalent in women's fashions.

She is beautiful in the truest sense, clothed in that uncommon beauty of rare reserve. She doesn't play games. The woman who so belongs to God will not want to belong to but one man. He who wins her hand in marriage wins her completely. In marriage, the heart of her husband does safely trust in her. She has no part in the statistics of unfaithfulness and divorce. (Neither does he.)

The battle of careers is likewise over. After her husband, she is also there for the children. She cooks their meals, washes their laundry, wipes their tears (and their noses), and settles their fights. In all her doings, she is training them toward noble manhood and virtuous womanhood. Thence the statement: *The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world*. No wonder she is the delight of the whole family. They rise up and call her blessed.

It's all marked with the clear signal: ***Let her be covered***. What more could we want? The answer is obvious. We need millions more like her.



More Precious Than Gold

Gold! This “magic” word has led thousands to forsake home, family, and even moral principles in search of wealth. Mythology tells of a king who craved gold so much that he was granted the ability to turn everything he touched to gold. His food and eventually his own daughter turned into gold which turned him into a miserable man. Gold has been treasured by mankind since recorded history began. The Bible mentions gold in the land encircled by one of the rivers flowing from the Garden of Eden.

The price of gold has been escalating in the world markets for a number of years. At this writing one ounce of gold is worth well over \$1,700. The price of gold has risen 400% in ten years! In an age of shaky economies and the plummeting value of currencies and even properties, people are desperately trying to find security in gold. But what will happen when gold loses much of its value? The price of gold even now fluctuates wildly.

Man’s estimation of gold is high, but God’s view of the precious metal is very different. The Bible says we are “*not redeemed with corruptible things, [such] as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ*” (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

The skeptics of Peter’s day must have scoffed at this statement, for the ancients believed that gold was indestructible. Gold could be heated and melted, only to be purified rather than harmed. It has been only a few hundred years since a way to permanently alter or destroy gold has been found. The Bible was right all along, of course.

Another passage in 1 Peter also puts gold into its proper perspective. “*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ*” (1:7).

Gold can bear intense heat without the slightest alteration of its properties. It melts at 1063°C (1945°F) and boils at 2966°C (5339°F). And to think that the trial of our faith is more precious than gold tried by fire! If you are tempted to give up when the fires of criticism, ridicule, or physical persecution come, remember the heat gold can stand. It is puri-

fied in the process! Through Christ we can bear any trial. If we cast our cares (our anxieties) on Him, we will be protected and strengthened.

Another amazing characteristic of gold is its malleability. It can be hammered so thin that light shines through it, and it does not flake to pieces in the process. The ancient Egyptians could beat out leaves of gold so thin that 367,000 leaves stacked on each other were only one inch high! Modern goldsmiths can produce gold leaf 1/200,000th of an inch thick. This gold leaf is used in gold lettering as well as for tooth fillings.

You have heard people exclaim in exasperation, “My patience has worn thin.” The trial of our faith that is more precious than gold should be able to take a beating without being destroyed. We can liken Christian patience to the malleability of gold. Have you “*Let patience have her perfect work*” in you (James 1:4)?

What about when you fail a test? Or when people aren’t doing things the way you think they should? What about when you don’t get your way? Are you malleable? Do you come out of these experiences a finer person?

Your faith is malleable only when you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, allowing Him to mold you into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. Then you experience something more valuable than gold.

Another interesting characteristic of gold is that it is ductile. In other words, it can be drawn out into an extremely thin wire. It is said that sixteen ounces of gold can be drawn out into a wire 25,000 miles long, approximately the distance around the earth. It still holds together. It is still gold. We can liken Christian perseverance to this characteristic of gold. When you feel as though you have exhausted the measure of your faith or when you feel your faith is so small, remember that a small amount of gold will stretch a long way.

One property of gold that undoubtedly has increased its value is its ability to maintain its warm, yellow luster. Silver tarnishes and needs frequent polishing. Some metals rust. We can liken gold’s

luster to Christian joy. The joy of the Lord can, and should, shine through any circumstances of suffering or discouragement. People who do not know Christ may appear to enjoy themselves, but underneath it all there is emptiness; no purpose for living.

We can learn lessons for Christian living from gold, but we need to remember that the trial of our faith is more precious than gold. A living faith in Jesus Christ is more malleable, more ductile, and more lustrous than the finest gold.

Job was an ancient Biblical patriarch whose life was tested by many trials. He was a believer in God, but his faith must have been tried more than ours has ever been. In spite of all this, Job said, *"But he [God] knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."*

Job knew the secret of the refined life. *"His way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."*



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How to Be Saved . . .

Acknowledge your sin!

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

"It is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10).

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Repent of your sins!

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

Receive Jesus' pardon!

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9, 10).

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Become a new person in Christ!

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

