

Loaves & Fishes

A vast field of red poppies stretches towards a horizon under a warm, golden sunset sky. The sun is low, creating a strong lens flare and casting a soft glow over the entire scene. The poppies are in various stages of bloom, their vibrant red contrasting with the green foliage and the orange-hued sky.

Issue 26

Jesus the Light
of the World

The First
Christian Martyrs

Poems and Stories
From Prison

THE ROCK

Upon a mountain's long hard climb,
I tend to lose my way;
Escaping from a miry pit
And all its evil sway.
I struggle as I take each step;
Sometimes I slide back down.
Yet still I seek its pinnacle,
Where all my hope is found.

Evil hands stretch up to grab me—
The ones I knew before.
I know they'll lead me to my death;
That's all they're hoping for.
I take a hold upon a rock;
It's standing firm and sure.
And just beyond its brilliant light
I find an open door.

I know that once I reach the top
I'll find the peace I seek.
Till then I know each step I take
Is flesh that's still so weak.
I grab the Rock that gives me strength;
His standing is of old.
The Rock I speak is Jesus' Love;
His grace will me uphold.

Robert M. Zukowski
SCI Cresson, PA

We publish *Loaves & Fishes* as the Lord provides. Our goal is to point those in prison to Jesus Christ and help them experience the life, hope, and freedom of a daily walk with Him.

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Loaves & Fishes

Issue 26

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The Rock
A Mother's Love

ALERT: THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST ISSUE

If you see "SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRED" on the back cover, use the form in the middle of this book to renew.

This applies only if you get *Loaves & Fishes* with your name on the back.

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Jesus, the Light of the World

Lavern Gingerich

On the first day of the Creation, the earth was completely dark—no sun or stars, not even the flicker of a firefly. The Spirit of God was moving over the face of the water, which covered the entire surface of the earth (Genesis 1:9).

Imagine a deep, raging ocean engulfed in total darkness. It's no wonder God's first priority was to add light to the scene.

God gave us the sun not only to warm the earth, but also to sustain and cheer us. Light is vital, both for the growth of plants we depend on for food, and for maintaining our physical and mental health. Light is made of photons, which reflect off objects at different wavelengths, making it possible for our eyes to see color. So without light, there is no color.

In six days, God made a beautiful world full of plants, animals, fish, and birds. God



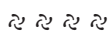
God's first priority was to add light to the world.

created two people to enjoy this perfect world and walk in open fellowship with Him. Sadly, it didn't take long for Adam and Eve to sin and fall into spiritual darkness.

1 John 1:5 says, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." Because God is completely holy, without even a tinge of sin or injustice, sin has separated man from God. Just as the universe is dark without the sun, stars, and artificial lights, so the universe is spiritually dark without God. Without light, we stumble

around in confusion, unable to tell right from wrong and unable to live as God intended.

But, praise God, He did not leave us in the dark! The Lord Jesus Christ came to change us and bring us back into fellowship with God—to give us life, love, and light. He is the true Light, which gives light to every man coming into the world (John 1:9).



The Jews have an annual week-long celebration called Sukkot, or the Feast of Booths. Part of the tradition, when the Jewish temple existed, was to light four tall lamps in a section of the temple called the Court of the Women. These lamps were said to be so bright that they lit up every courtyard in the city of Jerusalem. The people would dance, sing, and play music in the Temple courtyard, celebrating and anticipating the coming Messiah—the Light of the world whom God had promised.

When Jesus attended the Feast of Booths in John 7, how many people knew the Light of the world was among them? In chapter 8, Jesus made an amazing proclamation: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,

but will have the light of life” (v. 12). Truly, to be in the presence of Jesus would have been the experience of a lifetime; yet how few believed in Him!

Jesus said, *“And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”*

John 3:19–21^{ESV}

In the last issue of *Loaves & Fishes*, we looked at the story of the Pharisees bringing in a woman accused of adultery (John 8). The Pharisees did not understand who Jesus was, so they asked for a judgment from Jesus, hoping to find fault with Him. The woman found mercy and healing because she was willing to face her sin and receive the light. Sadly, the Pharisees rejected the light and continued in their sin.

Following Jesus is the key to leaving the darkness of sin behind and living in light. We don’t have the privilege of following

Jesus around town or listening to Him speak in person, so what does it mean to follow Jesus today? It means to believe in Him even though we have never seen Him. It means to pay attention to His teachings and live them out on a daily basis. We must allow Him to change our hearts and thoughts so that we think like Him.

“This is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 6:40



We must see everything
else through the lens of
Jesus' teachings.

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

John 14:21

We must give the teachings of Jesus priority, and everything else must be understood through the lens of His teachings. Some of Jesus' teachings are not popular, but ignoring or diminishing the teachings of Christ is a serious matter.

In Matthew 7, Jesus told the story of two men, one wise and one foolish. The foolish man built his house on sand, and the storm wrecked it and washed it away. The wise man built his house on a solid foundation, and his house withstood strong winds, rain, and flooding. If we hear Jesus' words and obey them, we are building on a strong foundation.

In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” Some people come to Christ because they want a comfortable life with earthly abundance, but true followers of Christ embrace the cross of self-denial, persecution, and death. Jesus didn't hide the fact that life here on earth would not always be easy for His disciples.

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 is packed with teachings of Jesus. He speaks about relating to those who wrong us, adultery, swearing,

returning good for evil, loving our enemies, giving, fasting, prayer, wealth, trusting in God, and more. This passage makes for an excellent Bible study of Jesus' teachings.

~ ~ ~ ~

Light is stronger than darkness. If you bring light to a dark space, the darkness immediately leaves. On the other hand, if a space is filled with light, it is only by removing the light that darkness can return.

So it is with the light of Jesus. Jesus is infinitely more powerful than all the forces of Satan and sin. Darkness cannot force the light of Jesus to leave your life. If you find darkness filling your life again, it is because you are withdrawing from the light. The invitation to follow Jesus still stands! Turn from any known sin in your life and follow Jesus with all your heart again.

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light... finding out what is acceptable to the Lord."
Ephesians 5:8, 10



If you find darkness filling your life again, it is because you are withdrawing from the light.

"You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

1 Peter 2:9

God, who is light and who has filled our world with light, has called us, His people, out of darkness into His marvelous light and made us light. Now we can help those around us find fellowship with God and meaning and beauty in life again.

Is the light of God shining from your life and drawing others closer to Him? Walk as a child of light, and God will fill your life with His glory. ~



Have Mercy on Me

2 Corinthians 12:9

"Have mercy on me, I plead!"

As I saw, as it were, on a tree, hanging there for me,
A spotless Lamb, white as can be, looking down at me.

"My grace is sufficient for you."

And I knew at that time, for no reason or rhyme
that I could assign, that the Lamb had died for me.
And this deep pain in my heart, as if ripped apart, at that moment
started to mend.

I was to blame for all this pain, because of the sin I took in;
And I'll never know why or how it could be, that Jesus would die for me.

I spat in His face—it was such a disgrace, if you could only see
How wretched I am; I murdered the Lamb, the only begotten of God!
And as I mocked on, the victory was won, because He died for me.

So please hear me out, have not a doubt! There's only one thing to do!
It's true that Jesus died for you, and faith is the only way out.

My heart breaks with regret as I look at the debt
that caused my Lord to die.
I did so much evil to so many people because I believed a lie.

So please, won't you see that He is the key
to break free from the chains of sin and death?
And know that He cried, with love in His eyes,
"Forgive them," with His last breath.

Do you know what it meant, when the curtain was rent,
and He gave up His final breath?
They saw Him rise, then ascend through the skies—
He had paid the final debt.

So if you'll believe that not just for me, but for you He died as well,
You can be free and live in victory over sin and death and hell.

He died for our sin, but that's not the end—He justified us when He rose;
And at the right hand of God, the angels applaud every man whom
God now knows.

Steven Tyler Plumlee

Can We Do This Every 3 Months?



Our readers would be glad to get a new issue every 3 months, but it's been a stretch financially to maintain that schedule.

If you have the means to help, return this form to learn more about the needs in prison and how you can help us publish *Loaves & Fishes* every quarter.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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(By sharing your email address, you give us permission to follow up via email.)

Word Search Puzzle

Galatians 5:22-24

Find all the words from this Scripture passage in the puzzle below.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

C Z G J K I N D N E S S N O I S S A P
L A P B F Y G N N X E M C N B G M L Q
Z L X F W F O L R C T J C X F R U I T
K X T E X F F J I K C A S G K G M O D
T R Z M L X K H I L Q J J W S P D M E
I X D E I F I C U R C Q N U V J A N C
P S S M K N V S K H M H F Y H O D E A
G H U O A E Z U E R W F R L C H Z Z E
K D K C M E M K A R E Y F I O M I Y P
W D Q E H Z H L U R F W H W S V O S E
B H E I Y E L Q I C C V S F C T E S A
C J O S A Z O N V R G F D E H T S E P
U K L L S W G B M N B L O U X M O R O
X E F L R O G E O I T G H C C E H E L
Z J V D W O N L Y Q O J T G Q H T H N
P V Z M Q T L P J D L A E R I S L T E
W A L H T E H T V Y G N Z K L G A V K
A H O K U U H T Z A T T D I V H H C N
W A R S P O B T I L I E R S I H T N S
M V T D Y I G N E W S E L F P H P P K
K E N W J J S N P I M R L S E K I V I
M A O O C T E C R K G J O R O R T K Q
O W C F I S U E A D Z N U S I N S T F
E S U Z S S S E N L U F H T I A F N S
G P N S S E N D O O G S B A Q G Y M N



Science in Creation

Ice Age

Andrew Zimmerman

Winters here in central Pennsylvania get quite cold at times. On several recent mornings the temperature was several degrees below zero (Fahrenheit), along with high winds. We get snow and ice that make travel treacherous, especially on the hills. But then spring arrives, the snow melts, and the landscape turns green again. God promised that seedtime and harvest will not stop as long as the earth exists.

“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22).

In some regions of our planet, the snow and ice last through all twelve months. In ages past, those areas of year-round ice

and snow were much larger than they are now. An ice age is a long-term reduction in the earth’s atmospheric and surface temperature that results in larger polar and continental ice sheets and more alpine glaciers. There is evidence that the earth experienced at least one ice age in the past. Much of Canada and the northern United States

Andrew has had an avid interest in science since he started studying it in his early years of school. Because of his interest in science and his belief in a literal six-day creation, he enjoys telling others about creation science. He lives in Central Pennsylvania with his wife and children.

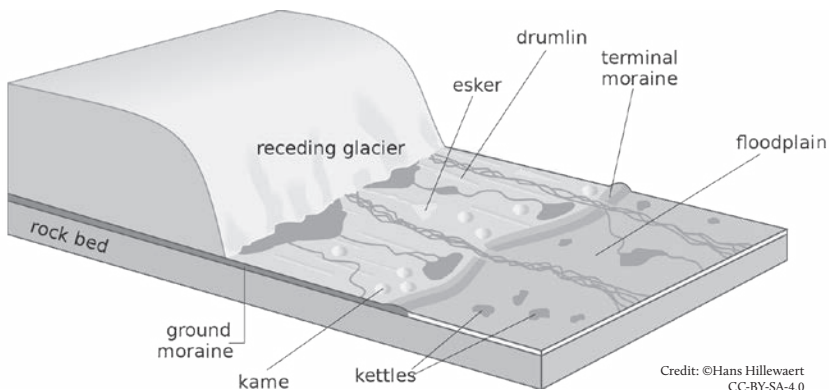
shows signs of having been covered with ice.

We can learn about past ice ages (or the Ice Age, if there was only one) by studying present day glaciers. A glacier is a large river of ice, formed by years of accumulated snow, moving slowly down a slope or spreading outward over a land surface. A region that has been covered by a glacier in the past is said to be glaciated. A time of extensive ice coverage is called a glacial period.

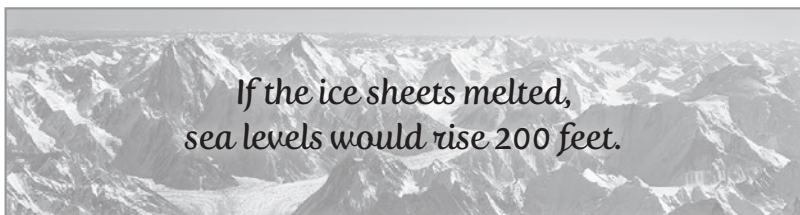
The rocks and debris carried with the glacier are called till. A moraine is a mound of till, pushed ahead of the glacier, or pushed out along the sides. By observing moraines, we can see a glacier's path long after it has melted. Another indication of a glaciated area is the striations, or marks on the bedrock made by a passing glacier.

Glacial erratics are rocks that do not match the bedrock native to the area. These rocks were carried to their present locations by glaciers, sometimes for hundreds of miles. By identifying the type of rock and the region where that rock originates, scientists can determine the path taken by the river of ice. Plymouth Rock, symbolic of the Mayflower landing in Plymouth, Massachusetts, is an example of a glacial erratic.

Currently there are two ice sheets in existence: the Greenland ice sheet in the north, and the Antarctic ice sheet in the south. The Antarctic ice sheet is the largest. Covering 5.4 million square miles, it contains 7.2 million cubic miles of ice. If all this ice melted and flowed into the oceans, sea levels would rise 200 feet. The Greenland ice sheet covers most of the island of Greenland. Together,



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*If the ice sheets melted,
sea levels would rise 200 feet.*

Aerial view of the Baltoro Glacier. Credit: Guilhem Vellut

these two ice sheets contain 99% of the fresh water on the earth's surface. The Arctic Ocean also contains vast amounts of sea ice, which is sometimes referred to as an ice sheet.

There is evidence that two ice sheets covered much of North America in the past. The Cordilleran ice sheet covered the western mountains of Canada and the northwestern United States. The Laurentide Ice Sheet covered the rest of Canada and the northern United States. These may have reached as far south as St. Louis, Missouri. Another historical ice sheet in northern Europe and northwest Asia is called the Scandinavian Ice Sheet.

There are numerous ideas about what causes an ice age. Considerably cooler summers and lots of snow would be necessary. Did the earth's orbit change? Was the sun less intense? Perhaps the tilt of the earth's axis changed? Did dust somehow obscure the sunlight? If something

brought cooler weather, what caused all the snow? Cold air holds less moisture than warm air, so cooler weather should have resulted in less precipitation. Did ice invade the United States from farther north?

The astronomical theory attempts to explain past climate variations as the result of a combination of axis tilt, earth's elliptical orbit path, and their changes over time. But it has been calculated that all these fluctuations would cause the solar radiation (amount of sunshine reaching the surface of the earth) to vary by only 0.17%.

Geological science, with its tendency to explain everything by uniform non-catastrophic processes, uses millions of years in its explanation of how ice ages happened. But for creation scientists, the Biblical account of the world-wide Flood fits the geological evidence and helps explain the Ice Age.

From the Biblical account in Genesis 6–9, we know the Great

Flood was a global, catastrophic upheaval. This event would have produced a sudden, major change in the climate. Instead of dozens of long ice ages cycling over millions of years, there may have been a single Great Ice Age in the centuries following the flood.

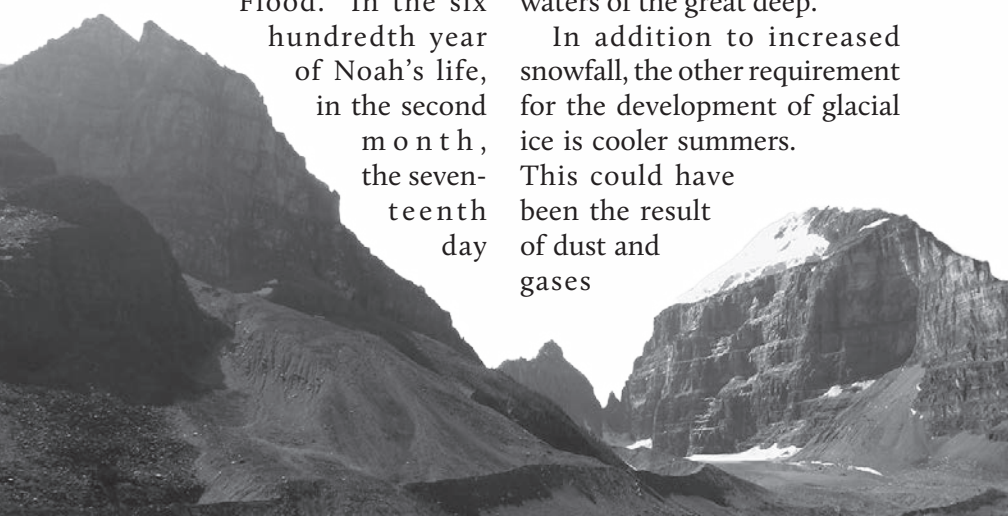
What could have caused the increased snowfall? Think of how the climate before the Flood was different from what we have today. “A mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.” (Genesis 2:6). There may have been a tropical climate over more of the earth’s surface than there is today. The temperature of the ocean would have been warmer than today.

Let’s look at something the Bible says about the Flood. “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day

of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened” (Genesis 7:11). The “great deep” refers to the oceans. Much of the water for the flood could have come from below the earth’s crust. This subterranean water would have warmed the oceans. The earth’s crust is about 10 degrees warmer for each 1,000-foot increase in depth.

Along with water, the “fountains of the great deep” could have included volcanic activity. The sedimentary rock layers contain much volcanic content, indicating a high level of volcanic activity during and after the Flood. The volcanic activity would have brought hot lava to the surface, further warming the waters of the great deep.

In addition to increased snowfall, the other requirement for the development of glacial ice is cooler summers. This could have been the result of dust and gases



from the volcanoes. The volcanic activity in the time of the Flood likely dwarfed the few eruptions we see today. This could provide a cause for much cooler summers in the years following the Flood.

Sulfur-rich gases from volcano eruptions seem to have an even greater cooling effect than the ash itself. Sulfuric acid droplets in the stratosphere can take several years to settle out. The eruption of Tambora in Indonesia in 1815 caused the “year without a summer” in 1816. Snow fell in June in the New England states. Some accounts say there was frost every month that year. Lakes and rivers had ice in August as far south as Pennsylvania. All this seems to have been caused primarily by the eruption of a single volcano.

This combination of warmer oceans, with faster evaporation and cooler continents from the volcanic activity, could have produced just the climate needed for much larger ice sheets than what we see today. The climate change would have been very fast by uniformitarian standards. The Ice Age could have continued for several hundred years after the Flood.

The driftless areas within the glaciated areas suggest a single,

rapid Ice Age that left some parts of the landscape untouched. The sandstone spires in southwest Wisconsin are evidence that this area escaped glaciation, as those tall, relatively thin formations would otherwise have been leveled.

You may have heard of the hundreds of thousands of “annual layers” of ice counted in ice cores recovered from borings in Greenland and Antarctica. These highly compressed layers, which can only be estimated at great depth, could be the result of storms or other variations within a year.

Interestingly enough, a number of animals became extinct toward the end of the Ice Age. These include the woolly mammoths of Siberia, as well as the mastodons of North America. Could they not adapt to the changing climate? Did humans kill them off? Perhaps we can look at these creatures in a future article.

As with all of creation, the ice sheets and the alpine glaciers proclaim the greatness of God. “He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth’; likewise to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength.” (Job 37:6). ~

Resources: National Snow & Ice Data Center, www.nsidc.org.
Frozen in Time: The Woolly Mammoth, the Ice Age, and the Bible by Michael Oard.

ROYAL STANDARDS

All communities have standards. Standards affect every area of our lives—standards of weight; standards of measurement; standards of food purity; standards of housing; standards of hygiene; standards for road users—standards, standards, standards. Where good standards exist and people live by them, life is generally sane and secure. Where good standards do not exist or are ignored, there is chaos.

Today there is chaos in the most vital parts of many of our lives, because moral and spiritual standards have become obscured. Many people, though they have not flung their Bibles away, have made the easy choice of conforming to human opinions, stashing the Bible into the attic of their minds to be

treasured as an antique, out of fashion for everyday use.

On unimportant issues, it may not matter what opinion a person holds; but when it comes to spiritual reality, we must have the truth or we will fail to reach our goals.

This principle is clearly shown by the man who rushed into a ticket office and asked, panting, “When does the 5:30 train leave?”

“At 5:30, of course,” answered the ticket agent.

“Well,” said the passenger, “whose clock am I to go by? It’s 5:27 by the church clock, 5:25 by the post office clock, and your station clock tells me it’s 5:32.”

“You can go by any clock you like,” answered the agent, “but you can’t go by the 5:30 train, for it has already gone.”

Where there are
no standards, there
is chaos.



If we heed God's Word,
instead of "keeping time" by
imperfect human standards, we
will be on time for God's train of
deliverance and blessing.

—Anonymous

*Thy Word is truth! Thy Word is light
Undimmed by cloud or age:
Thy Son of love—clear, spotless, bright—
Gilds every glowing page.*

*Thy Word is truth! 'Tis here Thy grace
Shines forth amid the night:
A star to guide our wandering race,
By faith, to perfect sight.*

*Thy Word is truth! Men come and go;
Age follows mortal youth;
Thy Word, Thyself, no change can know,
Both are Eternal Truth.*

—William Luff

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Send Your Work to Loaves & Fishes!

Do you have a testimony, poem, or other inspirational writing to share with the rest of our readers? To improve your chances of being published in *Loaves & Fishes*, please keep the following in mind:

- **If your poetry uses rhyme and rhythm, the rhyme and rhythm should be consistent throughout the poem.**
- **The message of the writing should be clear and focused, not rambling from subject to subject.**
- **The writing should be consistent with the truth of the Bible.**
- **If you write your Christian testimony, it should not focus on your sinful past or your attempts at self-improvement, but on God's redemptive work in your life.**

We receive far more submissions than we can use. Thoughtful attention to these guidelines will increase your chances of having your work published.

Let's Study...

Jonah



- **Jonah** is the 32nd book of the Bible (and the Old Testament).
- **Author.** The author of the book of Jonah is anonymous, although tradition says it was written by Jonah himself.
- **Time of writing.** If the author was Jonah, the book would have been written around 780 BC (before Christ).
- **Historical context.** The story of Jonah, a prophet of God, occurred during the reign of the Israelite king Jeroboam II. At this time, the Assyrian empire had become the strongest nation in the region, and was a threat to all its neighbors. The Assyrians were fierce and cruel to the people they captured, and were feared and hated. Nineveh was Assyria's capital city.
- **Summary.** Jonah was called by God to go to Nineveh and preach against its wickedness. Instead, Jonah boarded a ship for Tarshish, a distant port in the opposite direction. God then sent a violent storm which threatened to sink the ship.

Jonah told the sailors he was the cause of the storm, and at his own request, they threw him overboard. He was swallowed by a great fish, and remained alive in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. During this time, he called out to God for help.

The fish spat Jonah out on land, and Jonah headed for Nineveh. When he arrived, he prophesied that God would destroy the city in forty days unless they repented of their wickedness. Amazingly, the Assyrians in Nineveh repented in large numbers.

Jonah left the city, but stayed near enough to see its destruction by God. When God had mercy on the city, sparing it, Jonah became bitter and angry. God rebuked Jonah for his lack of compassion on the people of the city.

- **Themes.** The primary theme of the book of Jonah is the mercy of God toward the most evil of men who repent and turn to him for salvation. As Peter wrote, God “is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Peter 3:9^{ESV}). A secondary theme of the book is the sovereign power of God over nature, shown in God’s control of the weather, the great fish, and even the tiny worm that ate Jonah’s shade plant.

The most exciting and memorable part of the story, of course, is the account of Jonah being swallowed alive by the fish, and surviving in the fish’s belly for several days. Without a doubt, this is one of the most amazing events in the Bible! Jesus referred to Jonah’s time in the fish’s belly, saying that in the same way, He would be in the grave three days and three nights before his resurrection (Matthew 12:40).

- **Book outline.**

- I. “Running Away From God” – Chapter 1
- II. “Running to God” – Chapter 2
- III. “Running With God” – Chapter 3
- IV. “Running Ahead of God” – Chapter 4

- **Key verse.** “And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?” (Jonah 4:11).

- **Key questions.**

- » Have you ever wanted to run from something you knew God wanted you to do? What does the story of Jonah tell us about the results of running away from God this way?
- » Why do you think God answered Jonah’s prayer from the whale’s belly?
- » How did the people of Nineveh show they were truly sorry for their sins?
- » After the great mercy God had shown him, why would Jonah not have shown the same mercy toward the hated people of Nineveh?

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYRS

Mike Fisher

During His earthly ministry, Jesus promised His first group of followers that He would build his church, and that it would prevail over any obstacle the devil could raise against it (Matthew 16:18).

Jesus will always have a church in this world—a body of people who believe and follow Him. We know the powers of evil will try to hinder and destroy the church; but we also know that evil will not prevail in the end. We have Jesus' own promise!

Listening intently to Jesus' words, His small group of followers little knew what was in store for them. Satan, working through powerful governments of this world as well as through evil individuals, tried to eliminate the church from its very beginning. Jesus Himself, followed by most of his twelve disciples, would be the first victim of the evil attempts to destroy the church.

None of the Christian martyrs (those who died for their faith) suffered more than Jesus,

the Son of God Himself, who died in agony, nailed to a cross of wood. Not only did He die triumphantly, having lived a perfect life of love, but God raised Him supernaturally from the dead three days later. Not long afterward, He ascended to heaven to sit at God's right hand.

Jesus' resurrection filled His disciples with boldness and zeal, and drove them to tell the world the good news of God's kingdom. They spread out from Jerusalem into neighboring areas, and within a generation the gospel had gone to the far reaches of the Roman Empire and beyond. From the Bible and tradition, we

Within a generation, the Gospel had gone to the far reaches of the Roman Empire and beyond.

Seeing James' courage in the face of death, the soldier fell at his feet, repenting of his sin.

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Andrew, the brother of Peter, preached the gospel throughout Asia. The Roman governor of Edessa imprisoned him, and he was crucified on an X-shaped cross, now known as a “St. Andrew’s Cross.”

Mark was a Jewish follower of Jesus, who was converted to Christianity by Peter. Mark served as a scribe for Peter and also authored the Biblical Gospel of Mark. While he was in Alexandria in Egypt, during a great event honoring the pagan idol Serapis, Mark was mercilessly dragged to pieces by the people.

Peter was crucified in Rome, upside down at his own request. He did not consider himself worthy to die in the same posture as his Savior, Jesus.

Paul, the well-known Jewish convert to Christianity and author of much of the New Testament, was beheaded by the Roman emperor Nero.

Jude, brother of James the Lesser and also called Thaddeus, was crucified at Edessa, 72 AD.

Bartholomew is believed to have translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India, where he was beaten and crucified by the pagan

people. Thomas also preached the Gospel in Parthia and India, where angry pagan priests thrust him through with a spear.

Luke, author of the Gospel of Luke, traveled with Paul, and is supposed to have been hanged on an olive tree by idolatrous priests in Greece. Another disciple, Simon, preached the good news of Jesus in Africa as well as in Britain, where he was crucified in 74 AD.

The only one of Jesus’ twelve disciples who escaped a violent death was John, the “beloved disciple,” brother to James. John

The blood of the
first Christians
only served to
water the growing
church.

was the author of the Gospel of John and the Revelation in the Bible. The early Christian writer Tertullian tells of a miraculous event—John was sentenced to die a horrific death by being plunged into boiling oil in front of an audience in the Roman Colosseum. Amazingly, he came out with no harm done to his body! It is said that, on seeing the incredible deliverance, the entire audience believed in Jesus. The authorities then banished John to a deserted island. He survived even this ordeal, and died a natural death in his old age.

Despite the continual persecution, the church increased daily in its early days. These brave and passionate men and women had lived with Jesus

Himself, and the blood they shed for Jesus' sake only served to water the growing church.

These martyrs were only the first of many millions who have suffered for Christ over the past two thousand years. Jesus has continued to build His church, and today it is still expanding in the world. Nothing will ever stop the Church from proceeding on its triumphant course until the day when the forces of evil will be defeated forever and God's kingdom comes in its fullness. Until then, let's be a part of the faithful church, along with the martyrs and true believers of all ages. ~

Adapted and revised from
Foxe's Book of Martyrs, John Foxe, 1563.



Somewhere in Matthew 5

Unscramble the hidden verse (NKJV).

elt uory lhtgi os ihens frobee nme, htta hety yma ese yruo dogo
owrks nda lfgryio yoru rheFta ni evaneh.

Reference: _____



Free on the Inside

Prisoners encourage Prisoners

No Longer a Slave to Sin

While passing through this wicked world, I've been a slave to sin;
I've trod across the blood of Christ time and time again.
I've walked in pride and thought that I would make it on my own,
But now I've read the Word of God and trust in Christ alone.

Alone by faith He saved my soul; alone He set me free.
Alone He paid the price, and paid it just for me.
Alone He put me in His book, adopted by the King,
And one sweet day He'll call me up; in glory I will sing.

Sing about His precious blood and sing about His grace,
Sing about the mansions high; He's built for me a place.
Sing about the streets of gold and gates of pearl so bright,
And sing about the days ahead, without the fear of night.

Sing about the fellowship with all the saints above,
And sing about our lovely life with those we need and love—
Yes, need and love from up above, where never will I be
A slave to sin or lost again; that's not the life for me!

Glen M. Taylor, Western Correctional Institution, Cumberland, MD



—TESTIMONY— LEARNING THE POWER OF PRAYER

David A. Day, Wakulla Correctional Institution, Crawfordville, FL

For quite some time I've been looking for spiritual answers in my life; and I have learned that the only way to obtain them is through real, heartfelt prayer. So I pray every day from the depth of my heart, and I cry out to God for answers and for understanding about the failures in my life. No matter how much understanding and intellectual knowledge I tried to tell myself I had, and no matter how much I believed I could work things out on my own, I somehow continued doing things contrary to Biblical principles, and ended up failing.

However, God used my prayer time to teach me a lesson I'll

always remember: nothing of eternal importance is ever accomplished without prayer. Prayer is foundational to God's plan for me to bear fruit.

In a book by E. M. Bounds called *Treasury of Prayer*, he wrote, "Failure to pray is failure along the whole line of life; he who does not pray, robs himself of God's help and places himself where God cannot help him. Faith, hope, and patience are dead in a prayerless life."

In my belief, prayer is a spiritual reality, a dynamic force. People who have not learned to seriously pray are still living on the edge of the natural level and find it impossible to accomplish



Nothing of eternal
importance is
accomplished
without prayer.

their spiritual goals. Some days prayer does require a lot of effort, but it is our greatest force.

I've learned too that without prayer, I cannot live in a way that pleases God. So if I expect answers or help from God, I need to do my part and pray. Scripture even tells me to take everything about my personal life to God in prayer. (Luke 18:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 Timothy 2:8, James 5:13). If I do this, He will give me the desires of my heart (Psalm 37:4). When I do go to God in prayer, it is important that I have faith; I must believe

that He knows what is best. Also my motive must be pure, and I need to glorify Him in prayer.

I do this when praying for others as well. I have found that intercessory prayer is a good ministry, and I always pray in Jesus' name (John 14:4). Romans 8:28 says God will cause everything to work together for good for those who love Him. This is my prayer for all of you.

With the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, I lift you up in the power of prayer, and ask that you are blessed as you rise each day. ~

This Day

Oh Lord, please help me make it through

This day is what I ask of You.

I feel as if I'm all alone,

And like a child, even though I'm grown,

I need Your comfort holding me,

And Your guidance I need to see.

I feel lost and need to be found;

I need to know that You're around.

I know You are, so this I pray:

Just let me make it through this day.

Laina Sims, VSPW, Chowchilla, CA

—TESTIMONY— A COMPLETE CHANGE

Henry Smith, South Woods State Prison, Bridgeton NJ

My name is Henry Smith. I am 58 years old, and was born in Columbus, Ohio but raised in New Jersey. I fathered three children: Lakasha, deceased; Jessica, 33; and Henry Jr., deceased. My participation in the street life resulted in my using alcohol and drugs, dropping out of high school, and ending up in state prison several times. I began wondering why I kept finding myself in prison, and seeking to discover who I am. A saint I wasn't.

One December night in 1982, a thunderstorm developed, and it seemed like the lightning would hit the jail I was in. Afraid to lie on the steel bed with lightning so close, I stood up most of the night. I had boasted that I was the man who could handcuff lightning and throw thunder in jail, but the fear of death gripped my soul.

One day I found myself sitting in Bible study listening to a Christian say, "Someone's life needs to be freed from the box

it is in, and only Jesus can free you. He is willing to come into your heart if you are willing to let Him in." I accepted Jesus as Savior and struggled to let Him be Lord of my life; but soon He was Lord!

Because of pride, I failed to use the resources available to me, and I fell back into drug and alcohol abuse. "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Considering myself backslidden, I traveled to my sister's apartment one weekend. I wanted to get away from my daily routine at home because I wasn't happy there, even though it was my responsibility to make the best of my bad situation.

Walking around the house, I felt all right, but every time I sat down, I became dizzy. Once, when I stood up and walked into the hallway, I fell. I remember my sister standing over me looking down and saying, "What is wrong with you?"

I replied, "I'm dying."

She quickly responded, "You are not dying, you are drunk!" Then things went dark. I awakened to find myself unable to move, lying on something hard.

A voice said, "Henry, I want you to preach my word."

I said, "Who are you?" The voice replied, "I am the author of life and death; I can take life."

All of a sudden, I started gasping for breath, and saying, "OK, OK."

back to South Bound Brook. You would think I would have obeyed the voice, but I didn't. I continued to drink! Other things happened during the first months of 1988, but in May of that year, an alcohol blackout landed me back in prison. The notorious three strikes law netted me an extended term sentence of 25 to life.

Asking for forgiveness restored me, and I changed inwardly. Prison became my



**Prison became
my school.**

The voice said, "Or I can give life," and my breathing returned to normal.

Then I said, "OK Lord, what do you want me to do?"

The voice said, "When you rise up from here, I want you to go preach my word." All of a sudden, a cold chill came over me, and I awoke to find myself lying on the floor.

When I got up, I looked at my sister and told her I had to go home. I thought about that moment during my entire drive

school. Being open and honest with truth and sincerity, my path is to live righteously as a man of God.

I am building a new life, which started many years ago, to accomplish the best that God enables me to do. Since being in prison, I've obtained a bachelor's degree in Religious Education, a master's in Ministry, and in January of 2015 I will be awarded a doctorate in Ministry. To God be the glory for my changed life. ~

Accepting the Gift

Surrounded by walls, feeling crazed and confined,
Confounded in halls like a maze in design.
Defined by the crimes I commit in frustration,
Suspended in time by my mind's isolation.
Collections of memories, trapped in the glass,
Reflections as dark as the shadows I cast.
The past an illusion, and freedom a dream,
Conclusions as hopeless as destiny seems.

The worry and weariness weaken my will
In a vacuum too rapid and vacant to fill.
I'm feeling impossibly lost in this hole,
But then I hear something that stirs up my soul.
My cellmate is reading aloud from the Bible;
He senses I no longer value survival.
He is trying to save me and transform my fate;
He hands me the book and says, "It's not too late."

Accepting the gift, wiping tears from my eyes,
I read as Christ preaches and suffers and dies.
I read and believe in the Lord's resurrection;
I feel the warm glow of God's love and protection.
With newfound perspective on my situation,
I fall to my knees, and I pray for salvation.
I thank God for Jesus, and all that He gave;
With the help of a friend, my soul has been saved.

S.D. Marshall II, Dallas County Jail, Dallas TX

—TESTIMONY— A CHANGED MIND

Willie J. Thomas, Liberty Work Camp, Bristol, FL

I was heavily addicted to crack cocaine since the early 1980's, and if the Lord had not intervened by allowing me to come to prison in April of 2007, I truly believe I would have smoked myself to death literally and spiritually. I was not seeking God or anything right; I lived a very reckless life and was destined for hell. But God, my God, delivered me from sin

and shame, and today life has meaning! So I'm incarcerated, but I'm not in prison. In fact, when I was outside, I was really in prison because my mind and motives weren't right.

I thank God for Jesus and a changed mind. I'm not where I ought to be, but I'm so grateful that I'm not what I used to be. Thank you in advance for praying on my behalf. ~

I've Heard Some Say

Lionell Jenkins
Tomoka Correctional Institution,
Daytona Beach, FL

I've heard some say they don't believe
In God or Jesus Christ.
I've heard some say that Mom and Dad
Are the ones who gave them life.
I've heard some say that they don't need
To pray or go to church.
I've heard some say that they don't feel
Any sorrow, pain, or hurt.
I've heard some say they can't depend
On anything but luck.
I've heard some say that it's no use;
I'll never amount to much.
But Jesus says to trust in Him,
And you will never go astray.
He also says that in the clouds
He will return someday.
Trust in Him and He will help you
Through the hardest times.
He'll never leave nor forsake you,
And His mercy is divine!

—TESTIMONY— WHY AM I HERE?

Anonymous

“Why me, Lord?”

Does this sound familiar? “How in the world did I end up in this mess, and why?” Are you mad at God, the sheriff, the judge, and the DA? Perhaps you are mad at everybody in general—“poor me!”

For close to a year I struggled with all this and more. I tried to justify my sin and made excuses. In the end nothing worked, and I ended up on my knees in confession, seeking forgiveness.

I was a slave to my desires, which I saw as needs. I was helpless, caught in a trap of my own design. I was playing a game with God that was doomed from the start. I see that now, but I didn't see it then.


“Why not?” you may ask. Because I “knew” too much, and because I did not listen to what my preacher was saying. With “itching ears,” I heard only what I wanted to hear. And now, my fellow prisoner, I am paying the price.

When I first started saying I was sorry, I meant that I

was sorry I got caught! All of this comes clear once you are brought to your knees, and the Holy Spirit removes the scales from your eyes.

“Wrongfully arrested!” you may say. “Unjustly tried!” you may also plead. “Sentence too harsh!” Need I remind you that there was another Man who could have complained of the same injustices? But He bore it all in silence. And His sentence was much harder than ours.

So, now that you and I are behind bars and locked up so that we may be set free, just what are we supposed to do? Behind bars or no, our job remains. Jesus said “Go ye therefore into all the world...” I'll let you finish it. It's in the Bible, in Matthew 28:19.

Consider the value of one soul—the contrast between eternal life and the fires of hell. The immense value of one soul is beyond compare. Reach out and share Jesus with a lost person today, and you too may discover why you are where you are today. 

A Trinity of Happiness

Three things will make you happy
When they happen to you;
Someone to love, something to do,
And something to look forward to.

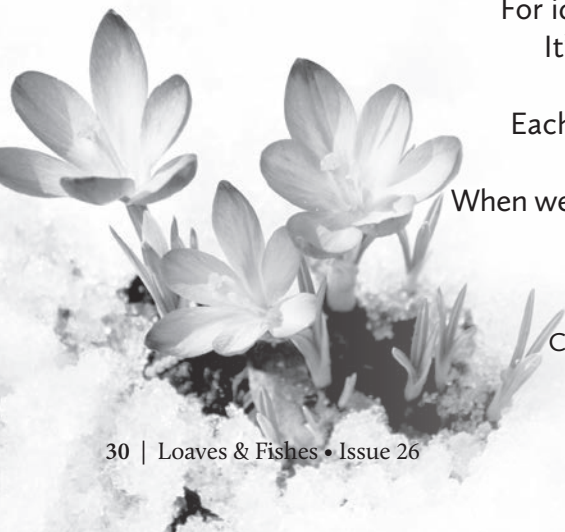
You will find in your friends and loved ones
A joy you've never known,
And a comfort just in knowing
That you are not alone.

Something to do will fulfill you
If the something is worthwhile;
For a job well done is lots of fun
And always brings a smile.

Having something to look forward to
Is last but never least,
For idleness breeds emptiness;
It's the nature of the beast!

Each life must have a purpose
For which we daily strive;
When we use the gifts God gave us,
We truly come alive!

Anthony Bevedetto
Columbia Correctional Institution
Lake City, FL





the **Ingredients of Faith**

Let me share with you
What the Bible said:
"If you have faith without
works,
Your faith is dead."

The Bible says we are
To love one another;
That is why we can't
Have one without the other.

But first there has to be
A spiritual willingness
To add to your faith
With diligence.

The Bible says
We are to walk in obedience,
And we will learn to include
These ingredients.

In order for your faith
To have significance,
Add to your faith
Virtue, knowledge, and
temperance.

In these aspects
Your faith must grow;
Then patience and godliness
Will soon follow.

Along with brotherly kindness,
Charity, which is love—
These are the words
The Bible is speaking of.

This is why the Bible says
To add to your faith,
For without these ingredients,
Your faith is a waste.

Rhonda Jones, Corrections Department, Niantic, CT

Three Mysterious Influences

Denny Kenaston

*“Unless the Lord builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it.”*

Psalm 127:1a

I would like to turn our attention to three of the most important areas of child training. These areas are the most exciting aspects of all because they cover the divine perspectives of child training. The word *mysterious* means “beyond human power to explain or understand,” and that word is a good way to describe this chapter. We want to look behind the scenes and see the dynamics of a living God working in the lives of our children. We want to look at three different ways in which God builds our houses. In His own hidden ways, God prevails on our sons and daughters to build holy generations for Himself.

These three means of God’s influence still depend very much on us parents, although it is God who does the mysterious work. I have shared many things for

parents to do in our pursuit of godly seed. This is right. However, if we do not have the element of a living God in our homes, the do’s and don’ts will not have much affect.

I have been alluding to this divine element all through our study. Now I want to center on the impact of God’s presence in our homes. The lack of God in the home is the foremost reason for failure and loss. I mentioned

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Denny Kenaston and his wife, Jackie, were delivered by God from the drugs, drunkenness, and immorality of the 1970’s hippie culture. From that time on, Denny devoted much of his energy to igniting a vision for godly homes based on Christ-centered, Biblical principles. His book, *The Pursuit of Godly Seed*, shares the wisdom God gave him during many years of raising a godly family and serving as a pastor. We pray that this selection from the book will challenge you and change your heart and home.

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in chapter 20 how parents are confused about a wayward child. Many parents have shown their children the things they should do. However, they have not shown them the person behind it all: Jesus Christ. Let's look at three ways God wants to influence our homes.

1. The Powerful Atmosphere of the Spirit

"For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring; they will spring up among the grass like willows by the watercourses." One will say, 'I am the Lord's'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob."

Isaiah 44:3–5a

These verses are so dear and sweet to me that I can hardly write them without crying. O, what precious promises God gives to us fathers and mothers as we endeavor to raise up a godly seed!

Let me begin by asking you a question: what kind of water is mentioned in the first verse? Is God talking about giving us a drink of water as from a glass? Or is God promising us a deeper drink than that? We know the answer; God is talking about the

water of His Spirit, the fountain of living waters. My heart cries out to God continually for more of this water in my own life.

We should also consider the word *thirsty*, for this is a key word in this conditional promise. Living in a country where it's easy to get a drink of water, I'm not sure many of us really understand the depth of this word *thirsty*.

I have been making visits to Africa for about sixteen years. Over there I have learned what it means to be thirsty. I have learned the hard way that I dare not drink just any water while I am there. I have been deathly sick because I unwisely drank when I was thirsty. So I have to wait sometimes for three hours before I can get water that is safe to drink. By then I am very thirsty. That is the kind of thirst God wants us to picture here.

Isaiah 44:3 is talking about the spirit of a beggar. In Matthew 5:3, Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." When we get really thirsty for God, the living God, as David was in Psalm 42, then He will surely come and pour out His Spirit upon us from on high.

When this happens, something else happens also. God pours His Spirit upon our seed—

that is, on our children. This is a very motivating verse to me. I have it on the wall of my large living room to remind me continually of this promise. I need to remember that God's blessing on my children is dependent on my thirst for God. We could say that, to the degree I am thirsty for God, to that degree God will pour out His spirit on me, and to that degree He will bless my seed. What an exciting promise this is! I want God's Spirit upon my children; I want this desperately. This is a promise that I pray to the Lord concerning my children.

Let me explain how this promise is fulfilled. As God pours His Spirit out on me and my wife, it runs over and falls

on our sons and daughters. We are to be a cup that is full and running over in our house. The children are the recipients of that overflowing life.

I have used my two younger sons in meetings to illustrate what God is saying. I have the two of them sit down on the platform of the church. Then taking a glass in one hand and a pitcher of water in the other, I start pouring water into the glass. I hold the glass over the two boys, as they looked up expectantly waiting for the water. As the glass fills, I keep on pouring, and the water overflows the glass and pours down on the boys. This is a powerful picture; sometimes I have broken down and wept as the water has fallen on their heads.

This lesson illustrates the mysterious influence of the Spirit of God upon our children. God's plan for our families is that they grow up in an atmosphere of the Spirit—an atmosphere of the presence of God. God is present in my house; what better way to raise my family!

Think about a small child playing at his mother's feet while she is working in the kitchen. Little ones are so open to every influence around them, and they receive all day long. How



As God pours out His Spirit on you, it will run over and affect your children.

powerful it is for this child to live in a house where the influence of the Spirit is falling upon him through his parents every day! This is the picture we see in these verses.

Young Hudson Taylor grew up in a home such as this. The mercy drops were always falling on him from the time he was a small child. Those mercy drops fell in the form of godly parents and earnest prayers for China. It is no wonder that by the age of six, he said to his father, “Dad, when I grow up, I will go to China.”

For the past two years, I have been studying the biographies of godly homes. In my studies, I have noticed that many of the choice servants God used grew up in one of these Spirit-filled homes. An atmosphere of the Spirit prevailed over the home as they were growing up. I believe this is one of the greatest keys to securing the next generation. We must be spiritual. This is not just an option, it is imperative.

In Verse 4, God gives us a lovely picture showing the result of such an atmosphere. He says our children will be like “willows by the watercourses.” This is the same analogy used in Psalm 1: “a tree planted by the rivers of water.” A willow tree planted



**How powerful it is
for a child to grow
up in a house full
of the influence
of the Holy Spirit!**

by the water will grow; it will prosper exceedingly.

A tree planted somewhere else gets water every now and then when it rains. It will grow. It will mature and eventually bear fruit, but not like the tree by the water. Some Christian homes are like this; the children get some water every now and then, maybe through a belated family devotion or special meetings at church. This is surely

better than nothing—thank God for what they do get—but this is not what God planned for them.

When we as parents are wholly consecrated to the Lord, seeking Him with our whole heart, this creates an entirely different setting for the children. We become the “watercourses”—rivers of living water flowing continually through the house. The children are to be planted beside us, the spiritual parents. As we walk with our God day by day, He pours out living waters on us. These waters overflow to the rest of the family, and all prosper.

Do you see the vision, parents? Isn't it an inspiring perspective? Oh, what a difference this will make in our child training! This is so much more than simply having family devotions once a day, although I don't want to discourage you if you are doing that; I want to spur you on to higher ground. Many of us have a somewhat Old Testament view of training a child: teach them, train them, spank them, and so on. All this is good, and I do it all. However, we are New Covenant Christians who have received the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Father. We must move on into the realm of spiritual child training. All the practices God

has taught us must be graced by the Spirit of the living God.

The question arises here: what do we want to pass on to the next generation? We are to pass on “the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3b). What is “the faith”—a system of teachings and doctrines? We all know the answer; it is a vibrant faith, an abundant life in the spirit, along with teachings and doctrines. God has provided the easiest way for us to do this: “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18b). The Greek tense beautifies and magnifies this verse exceedingly. It can be paraphrased this way: “Be being continually filled and controlled by the Spirit.” If we parents follow this Biblical command, our children will prosper in the atmosphere of the Spirit.

I don't want to shock you, but sooner or later we must come to grips with what God is saying about the Christian life, and about child training. Let's face it, most of the church is losing the next generation; something drastic is wrong. I know it is so because of all the letters I receive from parents crying over their children. They are looking around them and seeing the youth in the churches filled with the world, and they want help.

There is one more promise in these verses that we should observe before we move on to the second influence in this chapter. In the fifth verse, we find the fulfillment of every sincere Christian parent. Children who grow up under this blessed atmosphere will choose the Lord. The sense of the words denotes an enthusiastic choice: “I am the Lord’s.” This is what we are all working, praying, and longing for.

This is the longing of my heart. I want my children to rise up on their own and choose the God of their father. This is not simply a baptism or a confirmation class. This is a whole-hearted surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ, which brings a total regeneration of their inner man. Genuine salvation for my children—oh, what a joy when this happens!

Dear parents, we can have this most excellent joy. It is a promise that shall be fulfilled. If we are willing to walk with a clear heart under an open heaven, God shall bring it to pass.

2. The Power of an Enthusiastic Anointed Example

“Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His command-

ments. His descendants will be mighty on earth; The generation of the upright will be blessed.”

Psalm 112:1–2

In the passage above, the Psalmist begins his presentation of these precious promises with praise. That seems fitting to me because God’s promises fulfilled make the heart overflow with praise. These promises are conditional, but they are not presented in a commanding way. Instead they present an endearing snapshot of a truly godly man and the influence he has on his children. The example of a godly father is the second way God mysteriously works in the lives of children.

A little proverb expresses this truth like this: “More is caught



**I want my children to
rise up and choose the
God of their father.**

than taught.” This is no small statement. It can be an encouraging or devastating thought, depending on where you are with the Lord and how you live before your children.

The Holy Spirit has painted us a portrait of a spiritual man who loves the Lord with all his heart just as commanded in Deuteronomy 6. He fears the Lord, which means he sees the Lord always before his face. This fear is a reverence for God, not a state of being afraid of Him. This godly man loves the Word, delights in it, and rejoices in obeying it. He is a “Psalm 1” kind of father; a nut, a fanatic. He is excited about living the Christian life. He has moved beyond the duty of the Law, and into the beauty of the Law. This wholehearted father has children living around him in his house all the day long. How do you think he will affect his children?

Some years ago, I spent my Saturday preparing a sermon to preach the following day. As I arrived home, little Esther met me with this question: “Papa, do you have to preach tomorrow?”

I thought for a moment before I answered. My heart was overflowing with the message I had prepared, and I love to preach. So I told her, “No, sweet-

heart, I don’t have to preach. I *get* to preach!” Then we had a lesson on the joys of serving God.

This is the way it is with this man in the psalm. His Christian life is not a “have to” thing, but rather a “get to” thing that he does with all his heart. To put it in New Testament language, he loves to go to church, he loves to read the Bible, and he loves to tell others about Jesus. I picture a man full of enthusiasm; he is living out his Christian life with joy, and the commandments of God are not grievous to him. Again, this man has children who live in his house under his care. They will be affected by him. What kind of teacher do you think he will be when he is teaching his family—dry and dutiful, or fresh and lively? We all know the answer. He may not have all the abilities he needs, but his excitement will make up for that.

The effect this man will have on his children is a bit mysterious. Their hearts will be moved in his direction by an unseen hand. Enthusiasm is contagious; it has a way of getting hold of you and carrying you along. You find yourself wanting to do what the enthusiastic person is doing. You want to be like him because you admire him.

What we love, our children also will love. We have seen it in our families—if a father is a sports fan (short for fanatic), usually the son also will love sports. That is just the way it is. My children all love to garden. Do you know why? I love to get out there, put my hands in the soil, and make something grow. When spring comes, garden fever settles in on all of us. It's my fault; I take the blame for it.

This principle works whether it is applied to good things or bad things. It is powerful if used for the good and the right, but destructive if it involves a love for the wrong things. I enjoy working hard, and so do my boys. That is just the way it is. Whatever we set our affections on, our children will want to do. Because of this, we fathers need to be fanatics about the kingdom of God.

My mind goes to the testimony of William Booth. He was a fanatic for the kingdom of God. I studied his life in detail for a Home Histories article I wrote for the *Remnant* magazine.

William Booth loved the Lord extravagantly every day. We have already looked at how this man affected the generations after him. This was one of his secrets. He lived a dedicated life



**Whatever we set
our affections on,
our children will
want to do.**

before his family, and they all wanted to do the same. Coming home after a street meeting, he would tell all his children the beautiful things God had done. They anxiously waited for him to come home and share. Each of the eight children was allowed to go along with dad after they became twelve years of age. They could hardly wait, although they knew people would throw rotten tomatoes at them. How do you get a twelve-year-old to look forward to a rotten tomato in the face? You enjoy it yourself and make it a privilege.

When I am teaching on the home, parents often come up to me and ask, “Brother Denny, how do you get the children to

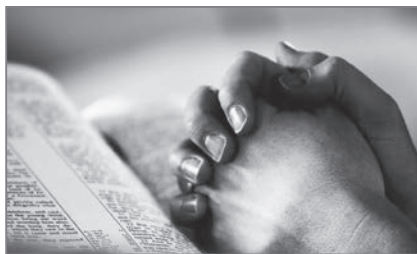
fast, to get up early, to read their Bible, and to do many other things? Are these laws in the house that they must obey?”

The answer is no, we never force these kinds of things on the children. These are voluntary disciplines that must be embraced with a willing heart, or they don't come out right. The key to these issues is an enthusiastic example. These are precious disciplines at our house. If a father or mother joyfully turns his or her plate over at breakfast time, and then follows that with a joyful testimony of blessings in the fast, it is not hard to get a child to fast. We have always had a problem with them wanting to fast when they were a bit too young. David is eight years old right now, and

he enters into a fast with the rest of the family. He has been doing this for about two years.

So where does all this enthusiasm originate? This is a good question. I am not referring to a fleshly generated excitement. There are men who are experts at being excited. They are paid thousands of dollars to give one enthusiastic speech. I am not implying this. But we must find a way to get from the “I-have-to-do-it” side of all this to the “I-get-to-do-it” side. The answer is the Spirit of God. Here we are back to being spiritual again.

The Greek word for enthusiasm is *enthusiasmos*. It literally means “God insidedness.” This comes from the root word *eu-theos*, or “in God.” We are talking about a God-inspired life that we live out as an example to our children. God is inside me, moving me, inspiring me, and empowering me to live my Christian life. And my children are watching this example every day. Look at some synonyms of the word *enthusiasm*. They are *whole-heartedness*, *fervency*, *spirit*, *eagerness*, and *zeal*. We already know we are to live our lives “heartily as to the Lord” (Colossians 3:23). God has us in a corner, and there is only one way out of all this; we must



Young people need a father or mother to intercede in prayer for them.

learn to walk in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Really, we are talking about basic principles of discipleship. Love these principles, live them, teach them, and the children will follow you. The question is, what kind of children do you want? The sky is the limit. You have a whole Bible packed full of principles to live by. Whatever you want your children to do, if you will love it with a joyful heart and live it out yourself, they also will want to do it. Do you want your child to be a soul winner? Then go for it with all your heart. Show them and tell them what a blessing it is to win souls, and soon they will be out fishing with you. It is far more exciting to fish for men than it is to fish for fish, isn't it? They will catch the fever if you have it. When all our child training is over, we will all have what we were willing to settle for. Let us pay the price of personal revival and watch what happens in the children.

3. Prevailing Intercessory Prayer

This last mysterious influence is also a spiritual one. You cannot work prayer up in the flesh. Nobody prays prevailing prayers except a person with a clear conscience and a clear

relationship with God; but those who abide in this state can pray powerful, prevailing prayers that move the hand of God to change the lives of their families. This could be the most powerful of all the influences we have already described.

"Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches; pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord. Lift your hands toward Him for the life of your young children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street."

Lamentations 2:19

This text flows from the heart of Jeremiah. He was a prophet who loved God's people deeply but was misunderstood by them because he spoke of judgment. In Lamentations, judgment has fallen, and Jeremiah is pleading for the children. I am afraid America is in a similar state, but she doesn't know it. My heart has united with this man's heart many times when I was up in the night. I choose this verse to open the last part of the chapter because the prayer described is clearly not regular prayer.

Jackie and I pray for the children continually. It is a regular part of our devotional life. When I send the children to bed at

night, I always have a season of prayer with them and for them. We are always praying for the children. However, the prayer I want to talk about here is deeper than this routine prayer.

I am referring to those times when you are caught up in the Spirit, and the inspiration of prayer is upon you. This is intercession, when a man or woman lays hold on the horns of the altar and won't let go. This kind of praying must be done for your family. There must be those times when you are absolutely broken before God for the needs in the home.

There are times in the life of a child when he needs someone to pray him through a certain issue. As young people mature, sometimes they lose their vision of what is right. This is when they need a father or a mother who will intercede for them and pray them through their difficulties.

There is something sweet about the middle of the night. It is needful to rise from your bed while others sleep and pray effectual, fervent prayers. Many parents have no vision for this. They often wait until there is a tragedy, and then they get earnest and pray.

I remember reading the story of James Stewart's mother.

James was an evangelist from Scotland in the early 1900s. God used him mightily in Eastern Europe before Hitler and Communism. His mother was a devout woman of prayer. She had dedicated her son to God at birth, but in his early teens he was all wrapped up in soccer. At fourteen years old, he was on the road to becoming a star player.

This dear "mother in Israel" was not about to let that happen. Day after day she arose in the night to intercede for her son. She resisted the devil in Jesus Christ's name. This continued for several days until she had prayed through. She got a witness from the Spirit that her son was going to come through. The night that James was converted, he was on the soccer field in the middle of the game; heavy conviction seized him on the spot, and he surrendered by the end of the game. When he walked into the house that night, his mother was not even shocked, for she had heard from the Lord already.

This is the kind of prayer I am advocating. It is my conviction that we need to be praying this kind of prayer in the good times. We need to plead with God for our children while things are going well. We need to pray our children through to God's

will while they themselves are sincerely wanting it.

Some time ago someone described to me the effectual, fervent prayers of his mother. He told how he had heard his mother pray fervent prayers when he was a little boy. He had heard her cry out to God as she dedicated her children to Him. She had asked God to use them and to bless the generations to come. What was the outcome of her prayers? Three of her sons and four of her grandsons became preachers, and we haven't seen the end of the story yet.

My heart is overwhelmed again to realize how much we can touch the generations even after we are dead and gone. Our intercessory prayers can touch the lives of our children, our grandchildren, and our great-grandchildren. O that God would raise up mighty men and women of God who know how to get hold of God, who know how to touch heaven for the lives of their children.

Andrew Murray prayed this kind of prayer. Eight generations of Murray descendants have risen up to serve God since that godly man prayed for his generations. I discovered this in a recent study of his home and his father's home. I was amazed

at this godly man's far-reaching influence as I studied for one of the Home Histories. Eight generations have come from his prayers. He believed in praying for the generations to come; I do too. I have spent much time in prayer for the generations that shall come from my children. Brothers and sisters, our prayers can chase after our descendants long after we are gone. Let us chase them with our prayers. God is on His throne.



**Your prayers can chase
your descendants long
after you are gone.**

Wailing Women

*"Thus says the LORD of hosts:
'Consider and call for the mourning
women, that they may come; and
send for skillful wailing women,
that they may come. Let them make
haste and take up a wailing for us,*

*that our eyes may run with tears,
and our eyelids gush with water...'
Yet hear the word of the Lord, O
women, and let your ear receive
the word of His mouth; teach your
daughters wailing, and every-
one her neighbor a lamentation."*

Jeremiah 9:17, 18, 20

In this section on prayer, I feel this is an appropriate place to plead with you sisters to pray for the men. This is part of the mysterious way God works in a home. Mothers, the most powerful way for you to touch the lives of your children is to pray for your husband.

When things were looking pretty bad in Israel, God called the women to gather and wail for the men. I wonder what would happen if all the mothers in our land would begin to intercede for the men. I have laid a lot of responsibilities upon the shoulders of the men, because God does; but the men need your prayers. Your prayers can be part of that mysterious influence of God in your home. You have no idea what God could do if you would pray. Sisters, take up a wailing for us. We know that we have missed it in many areas. We know we have made a lot of mistakes. We have grown up in a generation without leaders, and most of us

are not the leaders we ought to be. We readily acknowledge it. Take up a wailing for us. Go and get hold of God.

Another word to you mothers: don't complain to your daughters about their father. Teach them how to wail. Teach them how to sigh and cry and pray before God. Again, the kind of prayers we have in mind are deep ones. Sure, you pray for your husbands, but we men need some intercessors who will travail and prevail with God. These verses in Jeremiah present an awesome picture: a whole group of men, so broken that water gushes out of their eyes. Pray that God will make us thirsty with a deep longing in our hearts for more communion with Him.

Prayer

Father in heaven, have mercy on us. We have seen Your standard clearly presented in these words. What can we say? We fall so short of Your plan and purposes. Make us spiritual men and women, whatever the cost. We now see how important it is to walk with God. Send us a personal revival that can be seen by the children.

In Jesus Christ's name.

Amen.



The Man in the **SAFFRON ROBE**

The red sun was just setting behind the rugged peaks of the Himalayan mountains in India. Their snow-capped edges were alive with color. The little village of Chakdara (Chäk'där-ä), clinging to the hillside, was ablaze, too; but it was ablaze with excitement. Gopal (Gō'pal), the only son of the Rajput (Räj'pōöt), had disappeared. His father had not discovered his absence until evening because he thought he was tending the goats on the hillside.

For months there had been trouble in Gopal's family because he was a Christian. This seemed like a terrible disgrace to the proud father. He was a Rajput, a member of the ruling and fighting caste of India. Surely it couldn't be that his son had become a Christian. The landowner beat his son. He starved him. But Gopal would not change his mind. And now—now he was gone!

Samuel Stokes, the American, was gone too. He had given all his possessions to the poor so he could be a sadhu (sä'dōō) or holy man. After three days of prayer,

he had put on the saffron yellow robe worn by the sadhus. He knew the Indians would listen to a sadhu when they would not listen to an American sahib (sä'ib) or boss. Samuel Stokes loved his Indian friends and he wanted them to know his Savior.

"The American sadhu is gone and my son is gone. They must have disappeared together," thundered the Rajput. "We will find them."

The Rajput and a large group of villagers left in the cold still night. They were determined to bring back the boy. But days later the weary hillmen straggled home, bitterly disappointed. They could not find Gopal.

Days passed without news. Weeks stretched into months but still no sign. The Rajput busied himself with his goats and small black oxen, but inside he nursed his anger. He would not forget!

Slowly the winter passed and the streams became swollen with the melting snows. Then news came. A peasant had seen Gopal in a village higher up the valley.

“The Rajput’s son is at school in the plains,” reported the peasant. “The foreign sadhu himself has baptized him a Christian. They say the boy is an excellent scholar. In four days’ time the sadhu comes to Bareri to see his friends at the house of the tea-planter’s widow.”

The foreign sadhu was coming! It was the Rajput’s chance. He could scarcely wait. On the third day he gathered the men of the village and told them his plan.

“The man who bewitched my son shall die!” said the Rajput.

“We will go to meet the sadhu. By the widow’s house we will lie in wait for him. The man who bewitched my son shall die.”

At dawn, armed with bamboo poles and knives, the hillmen left Chakdara. Gopal’s cousin Ram was among the men as they scrambled down to the river, crossed the swaying bridge above its rushing waters, and climbed swiftly to the opposite slope. Nearing the road by which the sadhu must come,

they proceeded cautiously. One man went ahead alone, and then returned to report.

“In the widow’s house are two sadhus. One is a foreigner, but not the one we seek. We must wait.”

The party hid among the pines below the bungalow. A few yards lower a watchman was stationed to give warning. Hour after hour they waited. The stillness of the mountains was broken only by the sound of the cattle bells among the pines. Dusk fell. Ram was beginning to grow restless when suddenly a dog barked in the distance. The hillmen seized their weapons. The next moment the watchman came running on noiseless feet.

“He is coming!” he whispered.

“Are you sure?” asked the Rajput.

“He is short, barefoot, red-haired. He wears the saffron robe. I tell you, it is he!”

There was a tense pause, then with a wild shout the hillmen attacked. Men dashed from the bungalow. After a few moments of confusion, the hillmen fled, leaving the sadhu on the ground with a terrible wound in his forehead.

Daring as it was, Ram remained behind the rest, de-

terminated to learn more about the sadhu. Then he would take word to his uncle, the Rajput. Hiding near the inn he hoped to overhear the men's talk. His patience was rewarded and this is what he heard

The police had been informed immediately. The sadhu was not dead. For hours he had lain delirious while his friends nursed him continuously. What most impressed the villagers, however, were the sadhu's words as he regained consciousness.

Over and over again he prayed, "Father, forgive them... Father, forgive them." Then he begged, "Don't tell the police. Don't tell the police."

Ram waited no longer. He must tell his uncle. As fast as he could, he made off through the pine forests, slipping over rocks and steep grassy slopes down to the river. Then up the winding path to Chakdara. But Ram was too late. The police had already raided the village, making many arrests. The Rajput and his men were taken miles away to the prison at Simla (Sīm'lā).

Snatching a bit of food, Ram was off again. This time he was going to the prison at Simla. He must know what was happening. He ran along the winding mountain track with the steady loping

rhythm of a hillboy. Above him were the brilliant stars. The first golden sunbeams crept over the ridges and down into the deep blue valleys just as he entered Simla. For days Ram haunted the police station, not daring to ask questions. He might be recognized. Somehow he managed to keep himself alive, getting work and food as best he could. One day as he hovered outside the courtroom, the door opened, and out walked the Rajput and his men. They were free! As they

Why had the sadhu risked his life to help the men who tried to kill him?

took the road which led to Chakdara, they told Ram their story.

"The sadhu himself pleaded for us. Unable to walk, he was carried by litter from Bareri. Fifty miles! He saw the deputy commissioner not once or twice, but many times. And now we are free. The deputy commissioner was angry and threatened us, but he released us, every one."

That night the village buzzed with talk. Why had the sadhu risked his life to plead for the

men who tried to kill him? Why did Gopal want to leave them to become a Christian? No one could give the answers.

Years passed. One day Gopal and the sadhu returned to Chakdara. Again the village was ablaze with excitement, but this time there was rejoicing in

Gopal's home. Now the Rajput and the hillmen were eager to listen to the sadhu as he told them about his Savior. The good news spread quickly and it was not long until the whole village had heard about the Master. ~

From *Coals of Fire* by Elizabeth Hershberger Bauman. ©1954 by Herald Press. Used by permission.



Word Search Puzzle

John 8:12

Find all the words from this Scripture passage in the puzzle below.

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

O	S	M	C	N	E	C	X	T	H	I	B	T	Y	S	B	C	Q	C
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N	E	T	X	N	J	A	B	S	K	I	J	N	Y	Q	C	E	S	F
E	N	G	K	V	X	I	R	E	J	U	S	P	O	K	E	A	F	W
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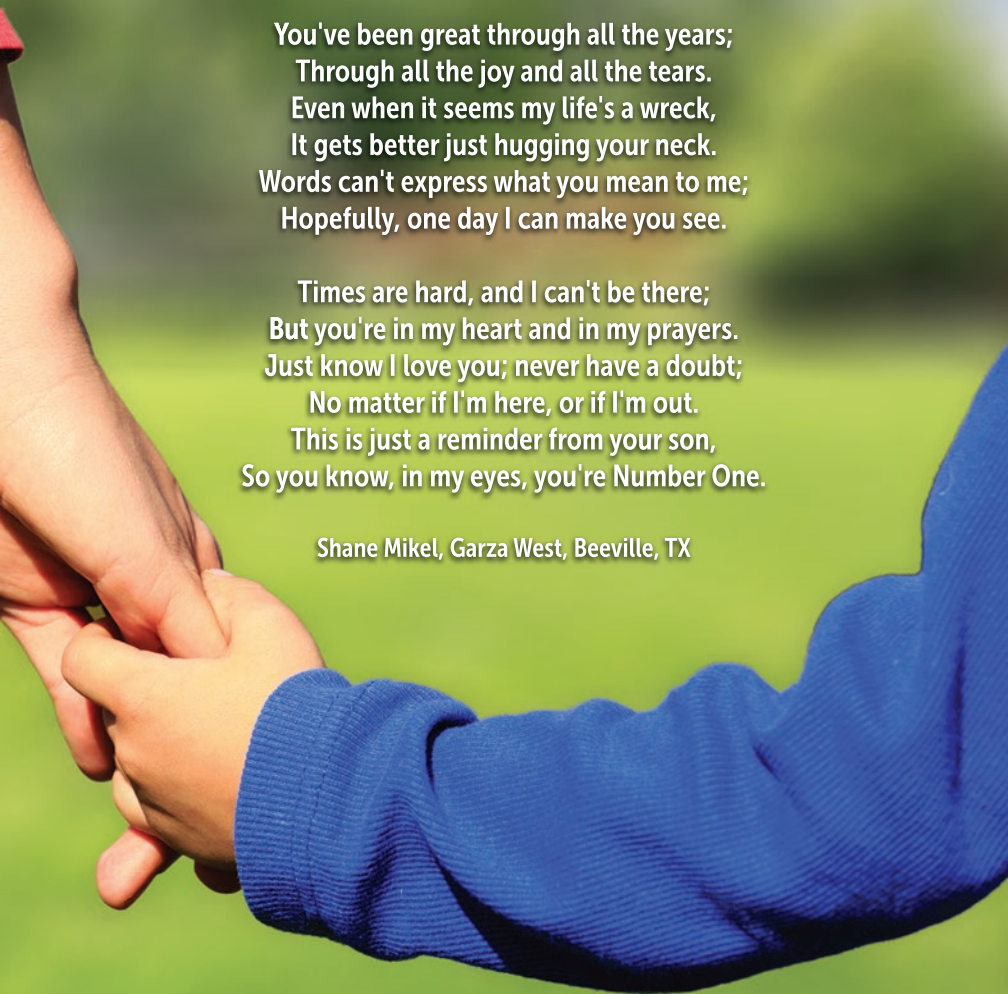
A Mother's Love

There's nothing like a mother's love;
It must be sent from above.
Unconditional love, no matter what you do;
Real love, forever strong and true.
A mother's love will never let you down;
When you need her, she's always around.

You've been great through all the years;
Through all the joy and all the tears.
Even when it seems my life's a wreck,
It gets better just hugging your neck.
Words can't express what you mean to me;
Hopefully, one day I can make you see.

Times are hard, and I can't be there;
But you're in my heart and in my prayers.
Just know I love you; never have a doubt;
No matter if I'm here, or if I'm out.
This is just a reminder from your son,
So you know, in my eyes, you're Number One.

Shane Mikel, Garza West, Beeville, TX



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He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness,
but have the light of life." John 8:12**

