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# FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME

## Growing in Grace

**Growing into Knowing**

*John Stima*

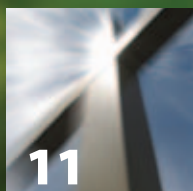
**Instruments of Change**

*John Monroe*

**Growing on the Battlefield**

*Kevin Schaal*

# Growing in Grace



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# Good News for the Elect

Whatever election is, one thing is clear: it is in the Bible.

Whoever the elect are, there is very good news for them in 1 Peter 1:1–9, which is a perfect text to which we should apply the old saying, “Don’t miss the forest for the trees.” Peter is writing to believers scattered throughout Asia Minor (v. 1). We can safely apply his letter to all believers, not just those living in that geographical region today. He describes them as “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (v. 2). The two words “elect” and “foreknowledge” are the subject of passionate debate and even confusion.

Don’t miss the simple truth that Peter is using the word elect to declare the FACT of election, not the PURPOSE of election. Likewise, he is declaring the FACT of foreknowledge, not the SUBJECT of foreknowledge. Explanations of the purpose and subject may be appropriate and helpful in the proper time and place, but to insist that 1 Peter 1:1, 2 provides a settled argument on election and foreknowledge is to go beyond the text. Worse, it is to cloud the subject and can deprive believers of the great encouragement that is certainly in the text. Don’t miss it!

Looking down to verses 8 and 9, Peter completes his introductory thought that even though we have not seen Christ yet, we love Him and rejoice to know that now that the process of sanctification has begun in our lives we can rest in the confidence that it will be completed. To teach us how to bear up under trials, it is as though Peter is telling us, “Christians, listen. Rejoice! If you have any part of this great salvation, you are going to have all of it!” He is not telling us who can have salvation; he is telling Christians that since they have it, they are going to get the rest of it. Those who have been saved from the penalty of sin are being saved from the power of sin and will someday be saved from the very presence of sin.

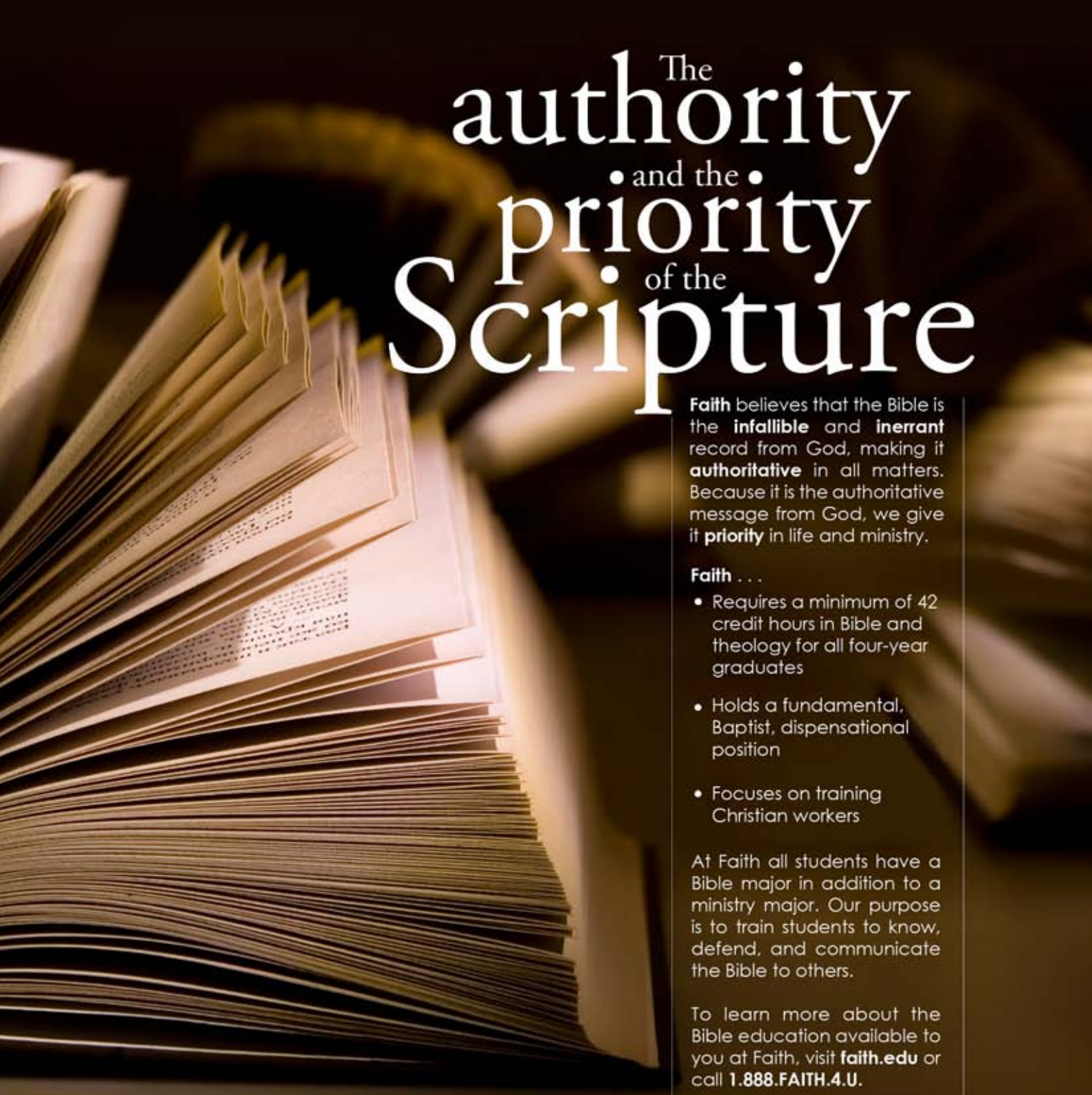
In the meantime, the great attributes of God’s omniscience and omnipotence are the mainstay of our spiritual growth. Knowing those attributes and resting in them will produce growth in grace. Peter explains them in verses 3–7. First, in verses 3–5, he tells us about the living hope we have because of the resurrection of Christ. Here Peter states simply what Paul develops thoroughly in 1 Corinthians 15. Second, when our living hope is realized, we will receive a lasting inheritance, reserved in Heaven for us. For now, he assures us that it is God’s power that keeps us through faith unto salvation that will be fully revealed in the end. I believe we can take full confidence in these verses that saved people should look forward to the blessed hope of the resurrection, that they will receive eternal rewards and then know fully the things that must be trusted by faith for now. Clearly, that is the message of 1 Peter 1:3–5.

And because that is true, we can face trials and suffering with rejoicing (vv. 6, 7). Peter tells us we greatly rejoice for this temporary period of life on earth (he calls it “a season”), knowing that suffering and trials are necessary (“if need be”). He actually describes them as potentially overwhelming, crushing, multiple trials (“in heaviness through manifold temptations”). As you read the articles to follow for a better understanding of “growing in grace,” take encouragement from Peter’s words in this text. Don’t get bogged down in the endless debate over election and foreknowledge. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, the promises here are for you, now. You are going to live in Heaven forever and be rewarded for your faithfulness. That is certain.

For now, you will face suffering and trials to the degree necessary to help you grow in grace. But you can rejoice in those trials, knowing that when you stand before Christ, you will hear Him say, “Well done!” You will then fully know 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.” So, dear Elect, there is very good news for you in 1 Peter 1:1–9. Don’t fret over things you can’t figure out; rest in the things that are so clear you don’t even have to try to figure them out.

—John C. Vaughn





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**T**hank you so much [for the Jan/Feb 2012 issue, "Protecting Our Children"]. As I read it I thought how many others should have access to it. I have four to five ministers in my own family. Not just ministers, but leaders, parents . . . many should read this.

Thanks for making it available. I will send it to many people and make good use of it.

God bless you all. *FrontLine* is the best magazine of its kind as far as I'm concerned. . . .

*Carole Massey Reyner  
End Times Biblical &  
Cultural Researcher  
Wallace, CA*

**W**e just received [the Jan/Feb 2012] issue of *FrontLine* and have just begun reading it. After reading the first two articles, we were thinking, "This issue needs to be made available to all pastors and church workers." So we are rejoicing this morning over your wonderful offer of a PDF file of this issue. We will be forwarding it to several pastors we know here in Korea as well as the US.

*Bill and Linda Stewart  
Haven Baptist Church  
Kunsan, South Korea*

**T**his action to make this issue of *FrontLine* magazine available to everyone regardless of membership in the FBFI is outstanding. I work in the field of crisis communication and find many churches living in a false sense of safety because they are doing the Lord's work. It is critical that churches prepare a plan, implement it, and keep it current. This publication is the most comprehensive, honest and relevant group of articles I have seen . . . a must-read for every pastor.

*Bob Jorgensen  
President  
Andover Group*

**T**hank you for the special online edition of *FrontLine* that dealt with sexual abuse prevention. As a chaplain for the Elkhart County Sheriff's Department, I met with five very fine detectives, and I gave them the material to help them see what savvy churches are doing to support them in their investigations. . . .

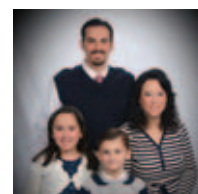
*Pastor David Harper  
Bible Baptist Church  
Wakarusa, IN*

**Dr. David Innes** recently celebrated thirty-five years as the pastor of Hamilton Square Baptist Church of San Francisco.



**Faith Baptist Church of Longmont**, Colorado, is celebrating their fiftieth anniversary as a church. Dr. Rick Cross is pastor. Mr. Dan Perryman serves as principal of Faith Baptist School.

**The Horkavys** are church planters in Buckeye, Arizona. Their family currently has 71% of their support through Open Door Baptist Mission. Their ministry website is [crossroad-az.org](http://crossroad-az.org).



**Nerio and Aida Gil** serve the Lord in Venezuela. They praise the Lord for their youth camp held in February, the evangelistic campaign held at the end of February, for seven recent professions of faith, for the continuation of the construction of a dining facility at their church to meet ministry needs, and for sparing Nerio in a vehicle accident. The Gil family may be contacted through email at [nerida118@hotmail.com](mailto:nerida118@hotmail.com).



**Joel and Sarah Arnold** are on deputation to serve as missionaries in the Philippines with Gospel Fellowship Association. Their CD is a blessing to *FrontLine* and may be ordered or downloaded through their website: [everytribeandtongue.com](http://everytribeandtongue.com).

**Evangelism Foundation, Inc.**, has been in existence since 1982 and has helped thirty young men pay their school bills at BJU and become members of the BJU Alumni Association with an annual award at Commencement. Some of these men have gone into revival work, some to the mission field, some to pastorates, and some to youth ministries. We have material videotaped for presentation to churches and groups and individuals to acquaint them with what we are doing and to request their support for this ministry. Recently we have decided to merge with the Master's Foundation, Inc., in Missouri. The Evangelism Award will continue through that

## We want to hear from you!

Let us know what you like or don't like about *FrontLine*. Address your comments to **Managing Editor, *FrontLine***

**2801 Wade Hampton Blvd, Suite 115-165, Taylors, SC 29687** or send them by e-mail to [info@fbfi.org](mailto:info@fbfi.org).

You may request that your letter not be published or that your name be withheld, but anonymous letters will not be accepted.





# Growing into Knowing

The Pinnacle of  
Progressive Sanctification

Clearly, the growth required in progressive sanctification moves the believer away from a bad thing and toward a good thing. The bad thing is “the error of the wicked” which draws the believer away from his “own steadfastness.” The good thing, the thing that brings “glory both now and for ever” is that believers are to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Peter ends his second epistle with this very salutation.



Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen (2 Pet. 3:17, 18).

In one sense, growing into knowing is the pinnacle of progressive sanctification. The goal of spiritual growth for the preacher is certainly not an amazing pulpit presence, not to become a leader in Fundamentalism, nor just to preach at a particular conference, nor to have the most popular blog, nor to consider himself holier than the guy down the road. In this life we will never “know it all.” But we must be growing into knowing more and more. That is why the Biblical goal is to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, who has not left us without example and exhortation regarding what that really means: exemplifying the love of Christ by loving God and man. Christ’s explanation to the expert in the Law was that loving God was the first and great commandment and the second and equally great law was loving man (Matt. 22: 36–40).

To illustrate, we know that Abraham knew God and therefore he truly trusted Him (Rom. 4:3). Further, we know that God knew Abraham and trusted him to obey and lead his household into God’s blessings (Gen. 18:19). Centuries later, when the children of Abraham debated who Jesus really was—whether He could be the Christ—He cried aloud, “Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me” (John 7:28, 29).

In the blindness of their spiritual immaturity, the Pharisees could not see that Jesus Christ was the Divine Messiah. They could neither experience nor exemplify the love of God. They could not grow because they would not know. He stood before them, but they would not see Him for who He really was. In a sharp exchange, Jesus made it clear for all who would see.

Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am (John 8:53–58).

## Love for God, Love for Others

I am so thankful for my godly heritage and for all the teachers and pastors who helped to get me started on the right path. I was raised a separated, Fundamental Baptist and, by God’s grace, I will die one. But I have not yet come to the end of the pathway. I have never belonged to a denomination so there is no need to separate from a denomination. I started a church, so there is no one else to blame for wrong doctrine, methodology, or music. The question for men like me is, “Now what?” First, we must realize that, according to Matthew 22:36–40, the essence of the entire Old Testament is to love God fully and to love your neighbor as yourself. Without that love, the Old Testament is essentially a closed book. The ultimate purpose of sanctification (growth) and Biblical separation is to foster a proper love for God and others.

This love is key to understanding the impact of the cross. As Jesus was ready to be offered for the sins of the whole world, He spoke to his disciples in John 13:34, 35, stating, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” The identifying mark of a disciple of Christ to the world around him was a love for his fellow believer. That must be the identifying mark of Fundamentalism today. In the old West, rustlers learned to change the “brand” on stolen cattle. Today, pride changes the “brand” on Bible believers; whether it is pride of position or intellect, pride is carnal self-love. It is neither love for God nor Biblical love for man. Pride is the identifying mark of spiritual immaturity.

Not only Peter but Paul as well gave the admonition: “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15). The proper balance of truth and love allows the believer to grow—to be more Christlike. In my experience I have found Fundamentalism to be doing a good job with truth. Truth is fundamental to Biblical love. Those who nurtured me spiritually have faithfully stood for the truth. Yes, young Fundamentalists have a great heritage and should be thankful for it and should show respect to those who have led the way for us, making many sacrifices on our behalf. The task before us is not to judge the level of love in a previous generation but to demonstrate Biblical love to those around us. We will be “the older generation” all too soon. We will rue the day when the disrespect on display on the Internet is turned against us by those who follow behind us on this path.

Peter’s second epistle is a treasure trove of guidance on growing into knowing what really matters. He opens that letter with a simple plan for growing in Christ. He declares the sufficiency of Scripture (1:3, 4), then lists the building blocks,



in order, that we are to place on the foundation of Christ (1:5-7). Each successive virtue “grows” upon and flows from (as it were) the one before it. Beginning with faith, the growing Christian adds virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, and brotherly kindness. Then on that sturdy structure of Christian character, he places the capstone: love. The pinnacle of Christian sanctification is love. He is most Christlike who glorifies Christ by reflecting His love to those around him.

**You cannot have  
God-honoring  
holiness without  
godly love; you  
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honoring love  
without godliness.  
God’s attributes  
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tized for human  
convenience.**

#### **Holiness vs. Love?**

Because Fundamentalism was forged in a battle for truth and holiness, at times it seems to surrender the Biblical emphasis on love to those who would pit it against doctrine. The unhappy result is that separatists are accused of being unloving (sometimes rightly so!) and compromisers are seen as more loving. But holiness and love are inseparable. You cannot have God-honoring holiness without godly love; you cannot have God-honoring love without godliness. God’s attributes cannot be prioritized for human convenience. His character is in perfect balance. God is perfect in holiness, love, justice,

mercy, grace, and peace. He cannot be more loving or more holy.

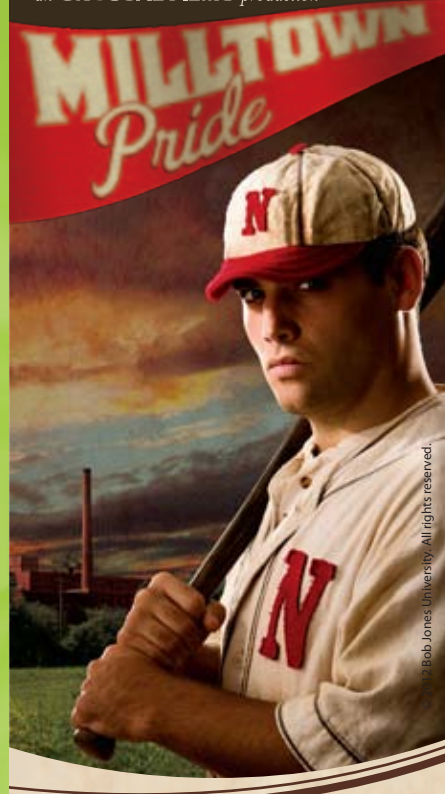
Progressive sanctification—growing in grace—brings joy each day as we continue to experience the love of Christ in our life. For me, experiencing the love of God is no mere emotional feeling or intellectual realization. It is a spiritual experience that occurs when the Spirit of God, through the Word of God, informs my spirit, which then knows with life-changing faith what it needs to know to develop virtue, then knowledge and the rest, all the way to genuine love. That love is then as real as the Spirit of God who lives inside of me. God’s Spirit witnesses with my spirit that I am a growing child of God as I reflect Christ more each day and therefore I will love those around me more and more. As I progress in my Christian walk, I am moving from serving God out of obligation and duty to serving Him out of love and gratefulness. When I regress into serving merely out of duty, I tend to become discouraged as I wonder whether my service is adequate. But when I serve out of love, I know that as long as Christ is glorified, I am satisfied.

By God’s grace, we live in Philippians 3:12: “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” By God’s grace, we die to self and strive to live like Christ. The flesh strives for carnal greatness, but unselfish, godly love is the greatest of all, according to 1 Corinthians 13:13. If God’s love is the greatest of all, then growing into knowing that kind of love must be the pinnacle of progressive sanctification.

John Stima planted Monroe Baptist Church thirteen years ago in Monroe, Washington, which is thirty minutes from Seattle. He and his wife, Linda, have three children.



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# Instruments of Change

In Romans 8:29 we learn that God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

That is the ultimate end of all things—that God is going to make us, His people, like His Son Jesus Christ. That is why we were created originally. With the fall of man, we marred God’s original intent for us to be like His Son. Because of the fall, we need to be re-created.

If you know Christ as your personal Savior, you have been re-created. You are a new creation in Christ Jesus, and the purpose for being re-created is the same purpose that God originally created you: to bring glory to Himself by reflecting the likeness of His Son. In fact, the apostle Paul called this the “prize.” He said, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). The prize that Paul was referring to was not Heaven. The prize is something that we can enjoy before we get to Heaven.



Heaven is the ultimate end, the full payment of that prize, but for the apostle Paul, the prize was Christlikeness.

Sanctification is the doctrine of how change into the image of Christ takes place. What are the instruments of change? What is it that God uses to promote godliness in our life? Second Corinthians 3:18 captures it: "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." All the instruments of change, all the answers as to what God uses to bring about godliness

in our lives are found in this verse. In other words, Biblical change is all about beholding God's Word. It is there that we find the glory of the Lord. Giving God a glance every now and then will not do. Beholding the glory of the Lord is making an effort to really scrutinize, to study, to meditate, to lean into it because we have great inter-

**Biblical change is all about beholding God's Word. It is there that we find the glory of the Lord. Giving God a glance every now and then will not do.**

est. What is the byproduct of beholding the glory of the Lord? It is godliness. In the here and now you cannot have godliness except as the byproduct of beholding the glory of the Lord. It's the byproduct of that exposure that we are changed into the same image from glory to glory—literally from one level of glory to the next level of glory, which again communicates that this is a process that we're involved in. Wouldn't it be great if that were an event in the here and now? Wouldn't it be great if we no longer struggled with our sins and our vices and our temptations and distractions of life? It would be wonderful if we were just rid of all that, but the fact is that we dwell in this body of flesh, and we will continue to struggle with all those things.

**Sanctification is that process whereby the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make the people of God like the Son of God amidst the circumstances we face in the providence of God.** So here we basically have four things: We have the agent of change (the Spirit of God); the means of change (the Word of God); the model for change (the Son of God), and we have the context for change (the providence of God).

Because the agent affecting Biblical change is the Holy Spirit, we must personally respond to Him. Probably the most neglected member of the Godhead in our Fundamental circles is the Spirit of God. When we hear the Word of God, which is called the sword of the Spirit, we must personally respond to Him and to His work in our lives. For example, we need to respond to His work of *conviction* which shows us our sin and to His work of *illumination*, showing us the Savior; His work of *assurance*, showing us our security in Christ; His work of *intercession* for us before the Father; His work of *empowerment* giving us the grace to do what God requires. Because the agent of change is the Spirit of God, we must respond to His work.

**Sanctification is the process whereby the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make the people of God like the Son of God amidst the circumstances we face in the providence of God.** Second Timothy 3:16 and 17 tells us that the Word of God is sufficient to do four things: teach doctrine (teach us what is right), reprove (teach us what is wrong), correct (teach us how to make the wrong things right), and instruct (teach us how to keep things right). The Word of God is the means whereby we are taught how Biblical change takes place. We must skillfully use it in these ways. That is how the teachable believer is equipped for every good work. We must daily read the Word and study it and meditate upon it and hear the Word preached and taught.

**Sanctification is the process whereby the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make the people of God like the Son of God amidst the circumstances we face in the providence of God.** God is on a mission to redeem and restore fallen man back to the image and likeness of His Son to the praise of His glory. Now if the model for change is the Son of God, then we must build a vibrant personal relationship with Him that comes only by beholding Him in the Word of God with an illuminated understanding, communing with God and obeying God. Peter talks about Christ's character as he lists those virtues of self-control, endurance, knowledge, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. Do you want to know what Christ looks like? Then study each one of those characteristics and the nature of Christ. The model for change is the Son of God!

**Sanctification is the process whereby the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to make the people of God like the Son of God amidst the circumstances we face in the providence of God.** All that change is taking place amidst the circumstances that we face in the providence of God. The providence of God is the Creator's superintendence of His created world. If sanctification is taking place in the context of life, then we must demonstrate knowledge of and confidence in God's sovereign and loving control of our lives by trusting, obeying, and yielding to the circumstances that He arranges for us. Life is the context in which change is taking place—the context in which the Spirit of God is using the Word of God to change the people of God into the image of the Son of God, and all that's taking place in all the circumstances of life. What circumstances do you find yourself in right now? It's not the circumstance itself that does the changing. Real change takes place through the Word of God. The only way we can make sense out of the circumstances of life is through the Word of God! If we don't understand anything else, we can always understand that God is trying to make us like His Son Jesus Christ, and that is always a good thing. That's what Paul called the "prize." If we didn't know anything else except that, that's enough! God is up to making me like His Son.

John L. Monroe pastors Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina.





# Saved, Saved, Saved

## Why Are Our Teens Getting Saved Over and Over?

The church teens head off to summer camp, the Christian school invites a special speaker to a spiritual emphasis week, the youth group goes to a youth conference—and many of the church teens “get saved.” These are not the visitors who were invited, not the problem kids in the youth group, but the teens who have grown up in the church and who surely seem to be saved. Some are elated at the “salvation” of these young people. Others, however, are concerned about these repeated salvation experiences.

### Causes of Repeated Salvation Experiences

There are a number of causes for the repeated “salvation” of our teens. First, some of our teens get saved because they need to. They may have been talked into a profession when they were too young. They may have done what everyone else was doing. For whatever reason, they were lost and needed to be saved. We rejoice that these teens have come to faith in Christ.

A second cause for repeated salvation experiences may be a lack of personal holiness or fidelity to Scriptural teachings. This brings conviction by the Holy Spirit and can create a frustration with sin. The person may then presume he is lost. First Corinthians 5:1–5 tells of one of the least spiritual Christians in the New Testament. A man was

living in an adulterous relationship with his step-mother. Paul condemned the man’s actions and the church’s response to his actions. However, Paul did not declare the man lost. Instead, he argued for action by the church for the salvation of the man’s soul.

A third cause for repeated salvation experiences is the misapplication of Scripture. While 1 John 2:19 seems to indicate that there are unbelievers in the church, John’s purpose was to convince believers of their salvation. The next few verses are verses of assurance. A preacher who focuses on the fact that there are lost people in our churches is missing John’s message.

Doubts of salvation can be created by wrong teaching or bad theology. Sometimes teens hear a statement like, “Don’t tell me you’re saved if you’re doing \_\_\_\_\_ or you’re not doing \_\_\_\_\_.” The blanks vary from preacher to preacher, but the theme is the same. Some teens do not remember what they said when they got saved and are afraid that they may have said the wrong thing. Some teens succumb to the existentialism of the day and fear that they did not mean what they said the last time they “got saved.” This argues for an assurance of salvation based on *feelings*. Some teens become concerned that they did not know enough when they got saved. There *is* a minimal content to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1–4). However, there is only one gospel, and it is good for children, adults, and teens. Some teens have been told that if they didn’t weep when they were saved,

they probably are not saved. Some teens are concerned that they did not have enough faith when they got saved. Some teens have been told that if they are not living the Christian life, then they are lost. Then they are told that if they *are* living it, well—just remember, works don't save.

These causes can be further compounded by poor illustrations. An evangelist told this writer of a deacon's daughter who was struggling with the assurance of her salvation. She had heard the statement, "You can be a deacon's kid and be lost," so many times she had become convinced that she was lost. This evangelist's response was, "You can be a deacon's daughter and be saved." Both are true statements, but we rarely hear anything like the latter.

A significant problem is a confusion between salvation and sanctification. A believing teen under the conviction of sin may conclude (especially under wrong preaching) that he needs to get saved. He goes forward for salvation and goes away happy. The sin problem remains, however, because he has not dealt with the real issue in his life. This may be done in ignorance; or it may be done because the teen refuses to deal with the actual problem in his life. By "getting saved" again, he will feel better, at least for a while.

## A Theological Solution

How can we help our teens understand the assurance of their salvation? First, there needs to be a clear presentation of the gospel. This will bring conviction of the need of salvation to the lost and assurance of salvation to the saved. The gospel never needs to be modified for the sake of a response. There is a theological danger in having a person who does not have assurance simply go through the steps of salvation to "make sure" he is saved. If he is not convinced of his lost condition, how can he be converted? If he is already saved, the procedure may make him feel better for a time, but the real problem (whatever it was that created the doubt in the first place) has not been resolved. He will soon lose his assurance for the same reason he lost it before. For the believer, the guilt of sin should result in restoration, because we cannot lose our salvation. It is often easier for a teen to "get saved" than to deal with real sin in his life. Paul's answer to the carnal Christian of 1 Corinthians 3 was not salvation. His solution was maturity. His declaration was not, "Get saved." It was, "Grow up."

Teens also need a clear understanding of sanctification. *Positional sanctification* takes place at salvation. First Corinthians 6:11 states, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed." *Progressive sanctification* is the ongoing process of becoming like Christ. It is based on our position in Christ, and

it is guaranteed, although the speed and areas of maturing differ from individual to individual. This writer is convinced that sanctification begins at salvation, but he is equally convinced that there are numerous crisis decisions that take place throughout a person's life, especially when that person is saved at a young age. As believing children grow up, they face new problems and sins in their lives: they discover other kids (and struggle with sharing); they discover money (and have to deal with greed); they discover the other gender (and are introduced to lust); they have to choose a career (and learn to deal with ambition); and on and on. Children exercise a childish faith, which, when genuine, grows into a mature, obedient faith.

*Eternal security* (or perseverance or preservation) is a doctrinal truth. *Assurance* is a feeling, the confidence that sins have been forgiven and salvation is truly secured. Good Bible preaching that includes what salvation is and why a person needs to become a Christian, what happens to a person at salvation, and what sanctification is and how it works in our lives is important for the people to whom we minister.

Rather than focusing on our church members being lost and in need of salvation, we need to "shepherd" the flock, feeding them, protecting them, and encouraging them in their Christian life.

Larry Oats serves as dean of Maranatha Baptist Seminary (<http://www.mbbc.edu/seminary>).



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# Growing on the Battlefield

The spiritual battle that Christians face is not imaginary. It is real and personal. The enemy is not the hazy “force” of the *Star Wars* movies. Believers wrestle with, for lack of a better way of saying it, persons. Not human beings, but real persons nonetheless. Satan and his demons are authentic characters and are genuinely active in this present world. If Christians could actually see with their eyes the spiritual activities going on around them, they would be shocked.

## A Real War

In Ephesians 6:11–17 the apostle Paul describes the war going on around and within followers of Christ. The enemy is organized and coordinated. He is at war with God and His purposes in this world. Every believer is engaged in this spiritual fight, and it is not just with the carnal desires within.

So, what does the battle look like? Unlike the wild imaginations of the horror movies, the battle is subtle. In fact, Satan’s activities are often so subtle that believers often miss the plain descriptions of his activities within familiar passages of Scripture.

Consider Jesus’ comment to the disciples. In Luke 22:31 Jesus directly told Peter that Satan desired to test Peter and the rest of the disciples (the “you” is plural) as wheat. The best indication is that Satan intended to “shake” the disciples like wheat is violently shaken when it is sifted. Jesus told Peter that He was acting as their intercessor so that their faith would not fail in the test to come. Jesus did not pray away the test; rather, He prayed that the disciples’ faith would persevere through it.

Satan also tried to disrupt the early church. In Acts 5, when Ananias and Sapphira lied to the congregation and the Holy Spirit regarding the funds from the sale of property, Peter, under inspiration, turned to Ananias and asked, “Why has Satan filled your



heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" The passage indicates that Satan has **suggestive access** to the minds of believers but not **control** over the actions of believers. He "whispers in our ears." The accusation by Peter is that Satan had filled their hearts to lie to the Holy Spirit, yet Ananias and Sapphira were responsible for surrendering to the satanic suggestions. Remember that not every thought that pops into your head is necessarily the product of your own imagination or the prompting of the Holy Spirit. It can also be satanic in origin. You must be vigilant to walk in surrendered communion with the Holy Spirit. You must always test your inmost thoughts by the perfect standard of the Word of God.

Satan knows when you are weakest and most vulnerable and uses those occasions to entice you to spiritual failure. Paul told the Corinthian believers not only to be faithful to one another in marriage, but also for married couples to give themselves physically to one another as a matter of spiritual protection (1 Cor. 7:5). He reasons that Satan will use a couple's physical estrangement in marriage as an occasion to tempt and trip otherwise faithful believers.

Other passages also record satanic activity. In 1 Thess-

**It is entirely possible that some of the deep and dark thoughts that are sometimes considered signs of depression are actually evidence of a believer under spiritual attack.**

alonians 2:18 Paul tells the Thessalonian church that Satan had been successful in hindering his plans to visit them. We do not know if Satan had some sort of control over the circumstance or if someone's sin, through satanic suggestion, had waylaid him. Second Timothy 2:26 indicates that Satan blinds and ensnares the lost, taking them captive to accomplish his will. He also blinds them to the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4). He snatches away the seed of the Word so that it cannot take root in their souls (Luke 8:12).

In one of the more difficult passages of the New Testament (2 Cor. 12:7-9), Satan's messenger becomes Paul's thorn in the flesh. God does not rebuke or remove this demonic being from tormenting Paul. Rather, He gives Paul the strength to endure the test, making Paul's weakness the very reason he must depend upon the grace of God. When we read this passage, we often automatically dismiss the "messenger" as some sort

of literary personification of the difficulties that Paul endured. But that would be a mistake. There was a real, personal demon at work, and by God's permission he became Paul's lifelong unwelcome companion.

It is entirely possible that some of the deep and dark thoughts that are sometimes considered signs of depression are actually evidence of a believer under spiritual attack. This is not to say that all depression is a result of spiritual warfare but that believing Satan's lies can produce discouragement and depression in the soul of a believer. He is a liar, and if he can use lies to paralyze a believer, he will do so.

### **Christ's Example**

Satan's temptation of Christ is not unusual except that it is upon Jesus Himself. Certainly the appeals of Satan in the moments of Jesus' physical weakness were unique to His divine character. But the rest of the New Testament clearly reveals that the activity of tempting, similar to what Jesus endured, is common for all believers.

So, what should I do with this renewed awareness of the world around me? Initially, just that—be aware! Do not walk through life oblivious to the spiritual realities that surround you just because you cannot see them. You are in a war, and the enemy can attack at any moment and from almost any direction. When temptation is upon you, it is not the time to hunt out the weapons, polish them up, load them, and depend on their efficiency.

He is an enemy that you must respect, but that you need not fear. He cannot *make* you do anything. You must anticipate and prepare for his attack during moments of weakness and vulnerability. Your love for others should drive you to be aware when they are in times of frailty and weakness so that you can provide present counsel from the Word, encouragement and support, as well as intercession.

Since Satan's primary weapon in spiritual warfare is a lie, you must constantly familiarize yourself with the truth of God's Word. Jesus rebuked Satan with the Word of God. He must have intended to teach something as He did it. After all, He did not *have* to quote the Old Testament to speak inspired truth; anything He would have said would have been God's Word—He is God, after all. Yet He chose to quote the Old Testament as an example for believers. We must test everything by God's Word and seek the enlightening work of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to Satan's lies. Confess all sin immediately and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit so that you might depend upon the power of His grace in your hour of weakness.

There is so much more that the Bible has to say about spiritual warfare. But the first step is to recognize how real and present it is.

Dr. Kevin Schaal is the church planter and senior pastor of Northwest Valley Baptist Church in Glendale, Arizona. NWVBC has planted five churches in Arizona and Mexico. Dr. Schaal serves as chairman of FBFI. He and his wife, Sandra, have five children.





# The Day of the Jump

**Doug Nab**

Sometimes I am asked why I jump out of a perfectly good airplane. I tell people that jumping out of airplanes is easy. People who sink in boats on purpose are crazy. (Our submarine guys like that one.)

My name is Doug Nab, and I have the honor of serving as the Chaplain for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces (Airborne). I have been in the Army for eleven years—five years as an enlisted infantryman and six years now as a chaplain. All of my military time has been in airborne units. I have fifty-five jumps out of varying types of aircraft. There would be more, but I have been in Iraq a lot. I have jumped from helicopters, big airplanes like the C-130, and little ones that hold about twelve people. I have jumped at eight hundred feet above ground level and up to 2100 feet. Jumping can be a stressful event for soldiers of all ages and ranks. God has given me a great ministry to those who exit an aircraft in this way.

Usually, a jump day starts very early in the morning. Soldiers are manifested to make sure we have everybody. We then conduct refresher training before every jump. It is called Sustained Airborne Training. Jumpers are required to go through what they will do when jumping. We then head over to a sawdust pit and practice Parachute Landing Falls. After that we practice how to control static lines. Static lines are what activate a jumper's parachute once he exits the aircraft. Jumpers are then reminded of what to do in case a parachute activates in the plane, the red light comes on, or they are a jump refusal. We generally have



I get the sense that jumpers feel better when the chaplain makes sure they are ready to go.

**Doug Nab**



around two hours of training before the jump. Every effort is made to make sure the jump is as safe as possible.

Once we arrive at the airfield, parachutes are issued to jumpers and they begin "rigging up." During this time I conduct an Airborne prayer. I pray for the jumpers' safety, wisdom for the pilots and jumpmasters, and a soft landing. This is a voluntary prayer for the group, but I have never had anybody turn me down. I trust this prayer honors God and also reminds our soldiers that God is with us in fearful or stressful moments. Many times after a jump a soldier will share his appreciation for the prayer.

After the prayer I inspect jumpers. I am a qualified Army jumpmaster. When I was enlisted, I completed this tough three-week course. Being a jumpmaster is a great opportunity to minister as well. When I am inspecting a jumper, I can ask how he is doing—"How is the family?" "Anything I can pray for you about?"—and basically getting to know the jumper better. Inspecting jumpers builds confidence. I get the sense that jumpers feel better when the chaplain makes sure they are ready to go.

Once we board the aircraft, I give the jumpers their commands. I tell them when to stand up, hook up their static lines, check equipment, and when we are getting close to the drop zone. I get to hang outside the door of the aircraft and look for reference points. That is a lot of fun. Once the doors come open or the rear platform comes down, jumpers' eyes get really wide. During this moment, I always ask the Lord

to watch over the jumpers and keep them safe. Once the green light comes on, I lead the jumpers off the platform. I give the command, "Follow me!" Out of the aircraft we go!

All of my jumps are at night. I close my eyes when I exit. The parachute takes four to six seconds to open, depending on how fast the aircraft is going. Those few seconds are a wild ride. Once the parachute opens, you check the canopy and make sure it is good. You look for other jumpers because you don't want to get entangled in the air. You then float down to the ground. It is a beautiful moment to be suspended between heaven and earth. The landings can be a little harsh if you don't follow your training. Praise the Lord, I have always been able to walk away from my jumps. I always say a silent prayer of thanksgiving once I am on the ground.

The opportunity to be a chaplain for Airborne soldiers is an amazing blessing. These soldiers are some of the finest in our military. I feel like a shepherd in every sense of the Biblical picture. I can lead them in the proper path. I can protect them from danger. I can give them confidence that their shepherd is with them. Christ has called me to be an Army chaplain, and the ministry to jumpers is but a part of that. Yet the day of the jump is a great opportunity to bring God to soldiers and soldiers to God.

FBFI CH (CPT) Doug Nab is stationed at Eglin AFB, Florida, with the 3/7 SFG (A) Unit. He and his wife, Kristi, have two daughters.



When I am inspecting a jumper, I can ask how he is doing— "How is the family?" "Anything I can pray for you about?"





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# My Israel Expedition

Have you ever had a mental image of someone you heard on the radio, then met in person and realized he was completely different than what you had visualized? Or have you ever imagined what it would be like to be deaf and after forty or fifty years, through medical technology, finally to be able to hear the strains of a cello or the blare of a trumpet? Or what would it be like to be colorblind and then suddenly be able to see the vibrant reds and purples of a sunset or the intensity of a rose in bloom? Our perceptions of many things are often based on incomplete or secondhand information.

Taking a tour to Israel is like seeing a black-and-white world in color for the first time. I had read about many events in the Bible that took place in the Promised Land, but without experiencing the land of Israel, my perception was limited to my knowledge from other people, books, news media, videos, or photos from others. So much of what we believe from the Bible took place in this tiny strip of land, yet our understanding of the events and places is limited from not having experienced it firsthand.

I had the privilege to go to Israel on two separate tours, the first in 2008 at the age of twenty-two and the second when I was twenty-five. What I learned and experienced changed my life. Biblical events and history became reality as I saw these places, not just as words on a page, but as actual places where God was directly involved with His people. As I looked over the Valley of Megiddo, I could visualize the battle of Armageddon taking place. Walking the ancient streets of the Old City of Jerusalem, I saw a blind man begging and thought about how Jesus healed a blind man while He was *here*. Seeing the sun over the Valley of Sorek I imagined how it must have been when the sun stood still for an entire day. So many stories in the Bible suddenly made sense and came alive as we studied the topography of the land. At Michmash it became clear to me how difficult it was for Jonathan and his armor bearer to climb up the side of a ravine and defeat a Philistine garrison. The Sea of Galilee was beautiful, peaceful, and so much smaller than what I expected. In front of my eyes were places where past events had taken place, but also where current and future events will be taking place. Anyone who has been to Israel will tell you that you will never read your Bible in the same way again.

***"The experience in Israel that I was given for my graduation was truly invaluable. It provided me with a whole new understanding when reading my Bible, something that has reaped benefits for me ever since."** Joe, youth pastor*





I am so thankful that I was able to go in my twenties rather than later in life. A day hardly goes by where I do not think about what I learned and enjoyed in Israel. Where else can you float on the Dead Sea and get a free facial with dead sea minerals, get a camel-riding license and take a trip back in time to visit Abraham (with an Australian accent) in his tent, swim through Byzantine ruins, bond with friends on the Mediterranean, or breathe in the spices and incense as you walk on some of the oldest streets in the world? And the food . . . falafel, shawarma, hummus, fruit, olives, freshly baked bread (some baked over an open fire), Jerusalem bagels, St. Peter's fish (complete with a coin in its mouth), cheeses and yogurts processed on a nearby kibbutz, desserts, pastries, havla, and the list could go on.

Not only did I have the best couple weeks of my life, my Christian worldview became more complete as I understood and came to know God in a deeper way. You could say I was no longer colorblind. As a young college graduate, this is exactly what I needed to begin the next stage of my life. The best advice I could give anyone would be to GO, experience Israel yourself!

Catherine Duvall graduated from Bob Jones University with a BA in Interior Design. She works at Womble, Carlyle, Sandridge, and Rice Law Firm and is an active member at Faith Baptist Church in Taylors, South Carolina.

*"People should go to Israel because it's the center of the world where the major religions of the world meet and where the Savior of the world walked." Amber, 28*

*"People should visit Israel because it is amazing. It is peace in the midst of turmoil and the only place you can get a Dead Sea facial for free." Ariel, 21*

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# SOUND WORDS

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2 TIMOTHY 1:13

## First Partaker

### Is There a Call?

A few years ago someone sent a question that I think it's important to take up.

Does God call men into the gospel ministry? . . . Some would argue that, since all believers have the Holy Spirit living in them who is able to teach them, any man should be able to understand and then be able to preach the Word of God to others. What do you think about this?

That there is such a thing as a Divine call into the ministry has been almost universally believed by Christians.<sup>1</sup> John Newton stated dogmatically, *None but He who made the world can make a minister of the Gospel.*<sup>2</sup> John Henry Jowett voiced this same view (employing some of Christ's words about the validity of His own ministry), *It is of momentous importance how a man enters the ministry. There is a "door" into this sheepfold, and there is "some other way."*<sup>3</sup>

But if there is such a door, and I believe that there is, how does one go about finding it? Opinions vary. In his 1891 Yale lectures on preaching, James Stalker testified, *I do not know that I have ever seen an entirely satisfactory statement of what constitutes a call to the ministry. Probably it is one of those things of the spirit which cannot be mathematically defined. The variety of calls in Scripture warns us against laying down any scheme to which the experience of everyone must conform.*<sup>4</sup>

Sometimes getting answers to difficult questions is more easily begun by considering negatives first. At least it enables you to narrow the field of legitimate considerations. So I'm going to try to work toward some right answers by dealing first with wrong motivations. Let's sort through some of these and let them winnow the

issue for us. We'll start with motivations that are the most base and conclude with some that, though better, are still mistaken.

### I. LUST FOR ESTEEM

Within the relatively small sphere of a local church, a pastor is generally held in high, if not the highest esteem. He's the leader. He's the speaker. He's up front. His opinion matters most. He's the most highly honored. Naturally, this appeals to some men.

There are at least three notorious New Testament examples of this lust for ministerial glory. The first, of course, is the sect of the Pharisees.

But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi (Matt. 23:5–7).

A second is Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9–24), who before his profession of faith in Christ claimed to be *some great one* and was called by the people, *the great power of God* (Acts 8:9, 10). Losing his popularity when Peter and John came to Samaria, he actually attempted to buy his way back into power (Acts 8:18)! The third example is Diotrophes, *who loveth to have the preeminence* (3 John 9).

Here were men unwilling to submit to others or to play second fiddle. Any man who suspects that he's being driven by this same base hunger for position needs to expose it remorselessly. Confront yourself with the apostle Paul's testimonies to his own decisive determination to deny himself people's accolades. Paul had been one of those glory-mongering Pharisees. But getting saved included being saved from self-seeking. He wrote to the Galatians, *If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (1:10). We speak; not as pleasing men, but God. . . . Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others,*

*"The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits" (2 Tim. 2:6)*

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he testified to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:4, 6). What is the consequence of a glory-renouncing ministry? *We are fools for Christ's sake . . . we are despised*, Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:10). Brothers, let's be certain of this one thing whenever we counsel a would-be aspirant to the ministry: there's no one who is being divinely called through insistent appeal to his ego by a green-eyed demon of selfish ambition. *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish* (James 3:15).

## II. LUST FOR MONEY

Balaam is the Bible's notorious Exhibit A of a hireling prophet (1 Pet. 5:2, 3; 2 Pet. 2:15). But he was by no means a rare case. Christ warned that there were many wannabe shepherds preceding Him who were nothing but thieves and robbers (John 10:8). And there have been many, many after Him. In his classic work *The Christian Ministry* Charles Bridges includes an entire chapter assessing this problem.<sup>5</sup> Why? *Covetousness in ministers*, he laments, *has almost grown to a proverb*.

It's not that most men will ever make a great deal of money in the ministry. But even smaller ministries can provide attractive benefits: an office, a computer, an automobile or mileage reimbursement, health insurance, and a retirement account. There may be a housing allowance and a tax-free book reimbursement. Perhaps school tuition for the staff's children. And ordinarily a pastor's position isn't quite as insecure as it would be if he were employed out in the world. So a man doesn't have to display lust for great wealth in order to betray that he's laying a covetous hand upon the ministry. He may only be thinking, *Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread* (1 Sam. 2:36).

There's also a subtle kind of inverse form of this. You encounter young men whose notion is that they'll enter the secular work force first, make enough money to be essentially independent financially, and then they'll enter the ministry. They're sometimes well intentioned. *No church would have to pay me much of a salary, or I could then go to the mission field without having to ask churches for support*. Sometimes middle-aged men, who've already made their fortunes, entertain the same kinds of thoughts. *Now that I'm fairly well set maybe God could use me in the ministry*.

I can think of several reasons why these ideas aren't actually very good. But to stick to the main issue under discussion here, what kind of post-secular ministerial lifestyle is this man imagining? No mortgage? Fairly new appliances, comfortably stocked 401-K, dependable cash flow, late-model automobiles? A nice, comfortable, cushy material platform from which to minister without much financial pressure? I don't think he's got the right picture. It's certainly not a Scriptural paradigm.

A preacher needs financial pressure. (Though I hope no church member reading this will take it to be his God-assigned ministry of helps to see that his pastor gets it! Let God see to that Himself, in His own ways and at His own times.) It may be one of God's best ways

of putting him on his knees, just like He does with other Christians. It's often God's way of wringing his heart so that he can feel experientially with his people in their common needs. It may be God's way of humbling his proud spirit. Most of the time, it's simply part of the Lord's plan for keeping his preachers dependent upon Himself for even their most ordinary needs.

Ask yourself if you're willing to do what Lloyd-Jones did when he entered the ministry after having begun a promising medical career. He gave away his savings to his extended family before he took a church. C. T. Studd did a similar thing before he went to the mission field. Richard Baxter had a prenuptial agreement with his wealthy young fiancée that she wouldn't give him her money when they were married but that she'd use it for charity.

An overseer must be one *not greedy of filthy lucre* (1 Tim. 3:3; cf. Tit. 1:7). He must take the oversight of God's flock without regard for *filthy lucre* (sordid gain; 1 Pet. 5:2). Paul warned Timothy, *The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows*. He charged him, *But thou, O man of God, flee these things* (1 Tim. 6:10, 11). Actually, a true minister must be prepared, like Paul, to forgo even his legitimate right to financial compensation (1 Cor. 9:14, 15). He's got to be able to call both God and man to testify, *For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness* (1 Thess. 2:5).

## III. A DISLIKE OF ORDINARY LABOR

Very closely related to the previous wrong motivation is the vague disinclination to train for an ordinary vocation and to be satisfied with common labor. Sometimes it's due to an unscriptural understanding of the sacred significance of all vocations. Sometimes it's due to carnal sloth.

Men who entertain the notion that somehow the ministry is an easier task than secular employment are simply uninformed about the nature and schedule of a pastor's or missionary's life. The average number of hours an active minister spends at his "job" in a given week is startling. *How many?* I asked a friend who pastors a flock of about 250 with the help of two assistants. This man is one of the most disciplined I know about his weekly routine. His answer? *I've kept track of that for many years. It's right at fifty-five a week*.

I was surprised. I would have thought he gave even more time to it than that. But then he is very disciplined. Most men with a church of 250 are probably giving another five to ten hours a week to their ministry. Many of them would say, *It's pretty much all that I do*. Often that's what it takes, especially to find the time in the midst of a staggering amount of pastoral and administrative work to prepare two or in most cases three even reasonably adequate messages. Just that pulpit preparation is hard, hard work.

Jowett cautioned and exhorted, *Preaching that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. If the study is a lounge the*

pulpit will be an impertinence. It is, therefore, imperative that the preacher go into his study to do hard work.<sup>6</sup>

That's what it's going to take. Lazy man, beware! But most sobering, think ahead to that inescapable day when you will give an account (Heb. 13:17). *The man who finds the ministry an easy life will also find that it will bring a hard death*, Spurgeon warned.<sup>7</sup>

#### IV. UNHEALTHY PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

I don't really know how to describe this next false motivation. I'm talking here about inner struggles for a sense of self-worth, for a fleshly sense of spiritual superiority, or to mask insecurity. The ministry becomes some men's way of dealing with years of parental, sibling, or classmate rejection. Another pastor once remarked to me that he had observed that the pastoral office often attracts insecure men. No doubt he's right. This doesn't mean, of course, that an insecure man shouldn't aspire to the ministry. But he certainly mustn't aspire to it in the vain hope that advancing into a ministerial office will supply his need for self-confidence. The ministry requires more personal transparency than any other profession. Your life is an open book. Your family lives in a fishbowl. Your smallest failures or humanities are uncomfortably conspicuous, closely scrutinized, and widely reported. I can't think of an occupation in which you are more vulnerable. By its very nature and demands the ministerial office itself *feeds*, not cures, insecurity.

#### V. THE URGING OF WELL-MEANING PEOPLE

Many a young man has felt pressured to enter the ministry by the hasty, unwise urging of otherwise wonderfully helpful Christian people. Well-intentioned family members, close friends, respected pastors, or enthusiastic evangelists have a tremendous amount of influence on a young man who is surrendered, dutiful, and submitted to the spiritual authorities in his life. And actually, these are the very people who often are in the best position to recognize the Lord's hand upon a man. But there's a critical distinction between spiritually objective advisors and emotionally subjective ones. Think of the mother of James and John, requesting earnestly that her sons be elevated in the kingdom (Matt. 20:20, 21). Is she spiritually objective? Charles Bridges wrote, *Happy that person who can say with the Apostle, that it is "through the will of God," and not through his own, or that of his parents, that he is in the sacred Ministry.*<sup>8</sup> That brings us to another pitfall that is very closely related.

#### VI. A MISUNDERSTANDING OF ENTIRE, SPIRITUAL SURRENDER

There was a young man in the first church I pastored who was a handful. One Sunday afternoon I counseled with him and asked point blank when he was going to turn his life over to the Lord. *I'd be afraid to do that*, he responded defensively. *How come?* He answered in the twinkling of an eye: *Because God might tell me to be a preacher.*

This is the Luther syndrome. He's twenty-one, a university student, and returning to school after a visit home, when a terrific lightning storm frightens him out of his wits. The storm must be God's wrath. *Help me, St. Anne! I will become a monk!* he cries.

One of the best cures for the Luther syndrome is a careful reading of Romans 12:1–8. These verses direct every one of us to make an unreserved presentation of our entire life to Jesus Christ. But they are followed by a catalog of *varied* gifts exercised by surrendered Christians. Identical surrender (Rom. 12:1, 2), but diversity of gifts (Rom. 12:6–8). And that brings us to the issue of spiritual gifts. Some men who shouldn't do it nevertheless enter the ministry due to . . .

#### VII. AN INACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF SPIRITUAL GIFTEDNESS

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones told of the case

of a young man who was a very good scientist and who had done well, and was doing well, in his own line. He came to me saying that he was sure that he was called to be a preacher. But immediately I knew that he was wrong. Why? Not because of any special insight on my part, but simply because he obviously could scarcely express himself even in private conversation leave alone in public. He was a very able man, but he obviously had not got the gift of communicating. He could not speak freely; he was hesitant and halting and doubtful, and diffident in his whole manner of speech. I did my utmost to prevent his going forward for training. However he would not listen to me because he was so certain of his call. He became a theological student, did very well at Oxford, and eventually was ordained. I think I am right in saying that altogether he had three different churches in about seven years. Then, and as the result of that experience, he came to see quite clearly that he had never been called to preach. He returned to scientific work and is doing well there. That is where he always should have been, because he lacked this essential particular gift of speech.<sup>9</sup>

Preaching, of course, is the central task of a preacher, and we are talking about the call to do that—to preach. In a second installment, next issue, I want to take up the matter of the speaking gifts necessary to preach. But the ability to preach isn't the only gift required by a minister. Preachers require people to listen to them. Generally, this means that a preacher is going to be a pastor. And pastoring people involves much, much more than preaching. That raises yet another area in which a man can be mistaken about the call.

#### VIII. A MISAPPREHENSION OF THE RANGE OF GIFTS NECESSARY

Charles Jefferson warned of a tendency to glorify preaching while at the same time despising pastoring. It is visible, he says,



in the sentiments entertained by many young men entering the ministry. They say quite openly that they despise pastoral work. Study they enjoy, books they love, preaching they revel in. But as for shepherding the sheep, their soul hates it. They like to feel that they have special gifts for the pulpit. When their friends prophesy for them a glorious pulpit career, their heart sings. The work of the shepherd was an abomination, we are told, to the ancient Egyptians, and so it is to all pulpit Pharaohs who are interested in building pyramids out of eloquent words.<sup>10</sup>

That is a rather biting assessment. But it exposes the big point here. The ministry has preaching at its core. No doubt about that. But when a man thinks about entering it, he needs to envision himself spending most of his time someplace other than in the pulpit or even bent over an open Bible. How do you feel about the call to spend a lot of your time in the car driving back and forth to the hospital? Or planning? Or organizing? Or talking on the phone? About chairing countless committee meetings? About counseling every kind of human problem you can imagine, and many that you can't?

Or how do you feel about making up a bulletin every Friday, about leading just a few faithful saints on visitation every Saturday morning, about answering seemingly innumerable e-mails every week, some good, some bad, some *really* bad? Are you feeling called to set up the chairs, straighten the hymnbooks, vacuum the carpet, clean the bathrooms, and tidy up the lobby on Saturday nights or early Sunday mornings? You may have to.

Any experienced pastor could expand this list to a daunting degree. The point wouldn't be to intimidate but to caution that a call to preach is always a call to do much more than preach.

## IX. AN INTENSE INTEREST IN BIBLE STUDY

I think it's safe to say that a man shouldn't consider himself to be a candidate for the ministry if he doesn't possess this. But it's not necessarily the evidence of a call to preach. Every believer is directed to delight in and meditate unceasingly on the Word of God (Ps. 1:2). Some of the most earnest students of Scripture I've ever known have been women.


Retired pastor Al Martin, in a message entitled "Six Wrong Reasons for Aspiring to a Teaching Ministry," cautions (I'm paraphrasing):

At conversion, every new believer experiences love for the brethren, understanding of truth and love for the truth. These can be mistaken for qualifications for ministry, especially in a day when the level of commitment expected of a new convert is so low. In

such a climate, when someone is simply acting like a normal, Biblical Christian, it may appear to others that he has an exceptional love and understanding. They will encourage him to seek the ministry, when in fact, he is simply feeling and thinking like normal Christians are supposed to.

## X. A SINCERE DESIRE FOR EXCEPTIONAL INTIMACY WITH GOD

This is the desire to experience the awe, the solemnity, the sacredness, the spiritual weightiness of lonely, secret communication with God. I can only say that if you enter the ministry without receiving God's call to it, you will find that you will enjoy less intimacy with Him than you did before you entered it. The study can be as barren as the backside of Moses' desert when there is no burning bush divinely kindled and no sovereign voice that has summoned you to go to deliver His people.

The liberated demoniac implored Jesus that he might accompany Him (Mark 5:18), but the Savior sent him home. David seems to have gazed with longing on the priests and Levites whose calling was the Tabernacle's sacred precincts with their nearness to the Lord: *Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts* (Ps. 65:4). But David's calling was to the palace. 

<sup>1</sup> There are, however, a few exceptions to this. See, for instance, Gary Friesen's "The Ministry and Wisdom" in *Decision Making and the Will of God* (317–30). Interestingly, however, apart from his dismissal of the element of a Spirit-generated sense of inner constraint, Friesen's model of how to determine whether one should enter the ministry comes down to very much the same thing as the traditional view.

<sup>2</sup> *The Works of John Newton*, V, 62.

<sup>3</sup> *The Preacher: His Life and Work*, 10–11.

<sup>4</sup> *The Preacher and His Models*, 52.

<sup>5</sup> "The Spirit of Covetousness," 138–44.

<sup>6</sup> *The Preacher: His Life and Work* (114, 116–17).

<sup>7</sup> C. H. Spurgeon *Autobiography*, II, 308. Read his wife's account of "A Typical Week's Work" (309–30) in her husband's ministry at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. She testified, *Surely, there never was a busier life than his; not an atom more of sacred service could have been crowded into it* (329).

<sup>8</sup> *The Christian Ministry*, 93.

<sup>9</sup> *Preaching and Preachers*, 111–12.

<sup>10</sup> *The Minister as Shepherd*, 30–31.

# Bring . . . the Books

*Coming to Grips with Genesis*

*Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth* (ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury) is dedicated to “understanding that the Bible clearly and confidently teaches creation *ex nihilo* in such a way as to make the idea of a ‘young earth’ not only reasonable, but certain” (p. 13). The book is a compilation of fourteen essays, several written by former students of Dr. John Whitcomb, the father of the modern young-creationist movement and the book’s dedicatee. The articles are scholarly and readable, producing a compelling argument against modernist interpretations of Creation and the Flood.

“The Church Fathers on Genesis, the Flood, and the Age of the Earth” by James R. Mook (Chair of Systematic Theology at Capital Bible Seminary) demonstrates that the Church Fathers in general held to a traditional understanding of the literal days of creation, a relatively young earth (6000 years), and a universal flood. In “A Brief Overview of the Exegesis of Genesis 1–11: Luther to Lyell,” David Hall summarizes the most noteworthy theologians from 1500 to 1830 and demonstrates that notable Christian leaders uniformly espoused a literal view of creation and a young earth.

Hall’s article lays the foundation for “Deep Time and the Church’s Compromise: Historical Background” by Terry Mortenson, a PhD in the history of geology from England’s Coventry University. His thesis is that “deep time” (the belief that the earth and universe are millions or billions of years old) is based on speculation rooted in anti-Biblical philosophical assumptions and that the embracing of this false concept by Christian leaders will result in spiritual shipwreck. Comfte de Buffon (1707–88) first suggested that the earth was three million years old. Buckland and Sedgwick, two Anglican ministers, perpetuated deep-time thinking and claimed harmony with Scripture. The latter trained Darwin in old-earth thinking, which Darwin applied to the theory of slow biological evolution (1859). Charles Lyell (1797–1875) then promoted a radical uniformitarianism where historical processes of geological change occur at present-day rates, jettisoning the view of former geologists who held to a young earth and catastrophic global flood. By the end of the nineteenth century, most geologists considered the age of the earth to be in the hundreds of millions of years. These developments rested on two false assumptions: (1) everything can be explained by time, chance, and the laws of nature; and (2) physical processes are always the same in manner, rate, and intensity. Their motivation was to free science from theology. Lyell said that “the physical part of geological inquiry ought to be conducted as if the Scriptures were not in existence.”

What place should science hold when interpreting Scripture? Richard Mayhue tackles that question in his essay “Is Nature the 67th Book of the Bible?” Opposing

Hugh Ross’s axiom that nature is “a sixty-seventh book of the Bible,” Mayhue (dean of the Master’s Seminary) accuses Ross of fallacious proof-texting for his axiom. General revelation is limited to the knowledge of God, is for all time and to all people, and is accessible by normal human senses. The authority of Scripture, however, is higher than any alleged information received by general revelation and is the final interpreter of all factual information.

Having established the priority of special revelation, how does one approach the text itself? Todd Beal, chairman of Capital Seminary’s OT department, addresses that question in “Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1–11.” Beal argues that the only proper approach to Genesis 1–11 is to regard it as historical narrative to be taken literally. Two corollaries proceed from this thesis: (1) the same hermeneutic applied to Genesis 12–50 should also be applied to chapters 1–11, and (2) extrabiblical literature such as ancient Near Eastern texts should not ultimately be determinative for the meaning of Genesis. Beal condenses the multiple approaches to Genesis into four categories and successfully defends the historical, grammatical interpretation of Genesis 1–11 against various hermeneutical attacks.

Zeroing in even further, Steven Boyd (ThM and PhD in Hebraic and Cognate Studies) makes a case for “The Genre of Genesis 1:1–2:3: What Means This Text?” Recognizing that Genesis 1:1–2:3 is both a “magisterial literary composition” and a “foundational theological treatise,” Boyd demonstrates that this pericope is a “literal historical account” resulting in the conclusion that “the earth is thousands . . . not billions of years old.”

Trevor Craigen takes up the question, “Can Deep Time Be Embedded in Genesis?” Craigen’s thesis is that “time of unlimited duration, stretching far backward into antiquity” is not embedded as an integral part of the text; particularly, “Adam and Eve are exactly five days younger than the heavens and the earth.” Craigen summarizes Hasel’s seminal article on *yom* (“day”) and contrasts the literal day view with geology’s time scale of loosely connected events (“an endless dark corridor, with no landmarks to give it scale”).

The second half of the book is even more compelling than the first. This volume evidences scholarship, continuity, sequential development, and Biblical conviction. Every pastor should have this work in his library if he wishes to accurately defend young-earth creationism. ☞

“. . . when  
thou comest,  
bring with thee  
. . . the books”  
(2 Tim. 4:13)

Michael Harding serves as senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Troy, Michigan. He and his wife, Jennifer, have four children.



It has always been essential for preachers to ground their sermons in a text. But I'm persuaded that post-modernity necessitates our doing so far more conspicuously. That is, I believe that the nature of contemporary culture compels us to establish *visibly* and *indubitably* that our content is what texts are actually saying. We simply cannot assume any longer that our church members (let alone unsaved visitors) give us a pass and accept complacently that our sermon's theme, proposition, and points are actually in the text simply because we, their pastors, are preaching as if they were.

For those who aren't sure what visible, indubitable grounding of sermons in Scripture looks like, Puritan preaching provides a helpful, though certainly not an unimprovable, model. Puritan sermons generally consisted of three parts: doctrine, reasons (or explanations), and uses (or applications). The doctrine was often what we would call a proposition. But rather than simply being announced, it was carved out of the text right before the congregation's eyes through careful exegesis. Here's a lightly edited example from the introduction to John Flavel's message on John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

We have, **First**, The incarnation of the Son of God plainly asserted. **Secondly**, That assertion strongly confirmed.

(1.) In the assertion we have three parts.

1. The Person assuming flesh: Ο Λογος, "The Word." That is, the second Person in the most glorious Godhead. Called the Word, either because he is the scope and principal matter, both of the prophetic and promissory word, or because he expounds and reveals the mind and will of God to men, as verse 18 explains, The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared or expounded him.

2. The Nature assumed: σαρξ, "flesh." That is, the entire human nature, consisting of a true human soul and body. For so this word σαρξ is used in Rom. 3:20. And the Hebrew word בשר, which answers to it, is used this way in Gen. 6:12.

The word "flesh" is used here, rather than "man," on purpose to enhance the admirable condescension and abasement of Christ; there being more of vileness, weakness, and opposition to "spirit" in this word than in the word "man." Hence the whole nature is denominated by that part called "flesh."

3. The assumption itself: ἐγένετο, "he was made." It is not "he was" (as Socinus would render it, designing thereby to overthrow the existence of Christ's glorified body now in heaven) but "he was made," that is, he took or assumed the true human nature (called "flesh" for the reason before rendered) into the unity of his divine person, with all its integral parts and essential properties, and so was made, or became a true and real man by that assumption.

The apostle speaking of the same act, Heb. 2:16, uses

another word, "He took on him," ἐπιλαμβάνεται, or he assumed. . . . And when it is said, he was "made flesh," misconceive not, as if there were a mutation of the Godhead into flesh. For this was performed "not by changing what he was, but by assuming what he was not," as

Augustine well expressed it. As when the scripture, in a like expression, says, "He was made sin," (II Cor. 5:21), and "made a curse," (Gal. 3:13). The meaning is not, that he was turned into sin or into a curse. No more may we think here that the Godhead was turned into flesh and lost its own being and nature because it is said he was made flesh. This is the sum of the assertion.

(2.) This assertion ["that the word was made flesh"] is strongly confirmed. He "dwelt among us," and we saw his glory. This was no phantasm, but a most real and indubitable thing. For ἐσκηνώσεν ἐν ὑμῖν, he "pitched his tent," or "tabernacled with us." And we are eye-witnesses of it. A parallel to that is 1 John 1:1–3—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life . . . declare we unto you." Hence note,

Doctrine: That Jesus Christ did really assume the true and perfect nature of man, into a personal union with his divine nature, and still remains true God and true man, in one person forever.

Because this approach to introducing a sermon is so foreign to our own, we may have to read back through it a couple of times in order to grasp its strengths. Don't let the Greek words distract you. We can do the same kind of visible exegesis without citing actual Greek or Hebrew expressions.

Here are the take-aways for grounding our messages more visibly in the text. (1) Compel the congregation to really look at the text. Often our introductory stories actually distract people's attention away from the text. (2) Explain the text's exact words and expressions patiently and accurately. (3) Present these explanations logically, in an orderly sequence. (4) Clarify why these explanations are significant. Under point 1 Flavel explains *why* Jesus is called the Word, under point 2 he explains *why* "flesh" rather than "man" is used, under point 3 he carefully differentiates "he was" from "he was made," alerting his people to the importance of this distinction by warning of a Socinian heresy and by quoting Augustine's memorable words for distinguishing right and wrong interpretations. (5) Use the exact words of our explanations in our sermon theme or proposition.

Here's the way to increase our preaching's authority immediately, this very next Sunday—cut the Scripture straight conspicuously. ☞

**"Rightly  
dividing  
the Word  
of Truth"  
(2 Tim. 2:15)**

# Windows

## Servants behind the Scenes

In every great work of God there are those who serve behind the scenes. Before Joshua forded the Jordan, he was the minister of Moses (Exod. 24:13). Before Elisha wore the mantle of Elijah, he poured water over the old prophet's hands (2 Kings 3:11). Before David ruled Israel, he played the harp for Saul (1 Sam. 16:23). As it was in Bible times, so it is in our times. The Savior has His servants behind the scenes.

### Behind the Scenes in Prayer

Charles Finney (1797–1875) has long been considered a chief figure in America's Second Great Awakening. Finney is called by some the Father of Modern Revivalism. Whether or not one agrees with Finney's theology, no one can doubt Finney's impact on America's religious landscape in the nineteenth century.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of February in 1832, the *Rochester Observer* printed an article entitled "Reform in Rochester." The article said, "Among other improvements effected this past year, indicating the prosperous condition of the village, there is none perhaps that marks more distinctly the progress of improvement than the fact that the circus building has been converted to a Tallow Chandler's Shop, and our old Theatre into a Livery Stable." Finney preached in Rochester in 1831. There were 10,000 living in Rochester at the time. Over 800 professions of faith were recorded.

Behind the scenes of Finney's labors is a little-known "shadow servant" by the name of Reverend Daniel Nash. "Father Nash," as his friends called him, was a lackluster pastor from upstate New York. Born in 1775, Nash did his best to tell others of Christ, but his impact was quite minimal. At the age of forty-eight, Nash did what seemed unthinkable. He resigned his pastorate to devote himself to partner with Charles Finney in prayer.

In 1831 Daniel Nash said, "I am now convinced that it is my duty and privilege and the duty of every other Christian, to pray for as much of the Holy Spirit as came down on the day of Pentecost, and a great deal more. . . . I have only just begun to understand what Jesus meant when He said, 'All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'"

Father Nash would arrive in the towns and cities

in which Finney was planning to preach weeks ahead of the evangelist. Renting a modest room, Nash would seek out saints who would participate with him in pre-meeting prayer. Daniel Nash seldom if ever attended the preaching services.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of December in 1831, Daniel Nash died. He was only fifty-six. His grave is in northern New York not far from the Canadian border. The headstone reads, "Daniel Nash / Laborer with Finney / Mighty in Prayer / Nov. 17, 1775–Dec. 20, 1831." Charles Finney's Rochester campaign (1831) was one of his last. Following the death of Father Nash, Finney's great public campaigns were discontinued.

In every generation God is looking for those who would be behind the scenes in prayer—shadow-servants of the Heavenly King.

*"To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, 'A window shalt thou make in the ark.'"*

*Charles Spurgeon*

***Behind the scenes of Finney's labors is a little-known "shadow servant" by the name of Reverend Daniel Nash. "Father Nash," as his friends called him, was a lackluster pastor from upstate New York. Born in 1775, Nash did his best to tell others of Christ, but his impact was quite minimal. At the age of forty-eight, Nash did what seemed unthinkable. He resigned his pastorate to devote himself to partner with Charles Finney in prayer.***

### Behind the Scenes in Labor

Few have ever heard of Thomas Allen Reed. Yet I am pleased to have a framed copy of his work prominently displayed in my office. While I know little about Mr. Reed, he is one of my heroes. I know that he was faithful to church every Sunday. I know that he listened with rapt attention to his pastor's sermons. After the service was over Mr. Reed



remained entirely focused on the message that he had heard. In fact, Mr. Reed stayed focused on his pastor's message until he had shared it with multiplied thousands. Mr. Reed was the chief transcriptionist to Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

On the wall in my office hangs a handwritten page from a sermon preached by Spurgeon on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July in 1881. The "proof-page" which occupies my frame was first written by Mr. Thomas Allen Reed. Reed's writing is identified by the black ink. On top of Mr. Reed's hand-written manuscript, Mr. Spurgeon has scratched out words and added others. Spurgeon wrote with blue ink. Each Monday, Mr. Reed provided Pastor Spurgeon with a rough manuscript of the previous day's messages. Spurgeon dutifully edited the work and sent it off to his publisher, Mr. Joseph Passmore (another "shadow servant"). The path of the great *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* flowed from Spurgeon's tongue, through Reed's pen, to Passmore's press.

Thomas Allen Reed. What will his reward be in Heaven? When the Lamb sits upon the throne and brings forward the books, Mr. Reed will rejoice and share in the rewards earned by the "Prince of Preachers."

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***Each Monday, Mr. Reed provided Pastor Spurgeon with a rough manuscript of the previous day's messages. . . . The path of the great Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit flowed from Spurgeon's tongue, through Reed's pen, to Passmore's press.***

### **Behind the Scenes in Sacrifice**

When I was a child, my father was the pastor of a church near Endicott, New York, and taught Greek at Practical Bible Training School (America's second-oldest Bible institute, which has since been renamed Davis College). Because of the proximity of our church to Practical Bible Training School, we were privileged to have a number of the faculty, staff, and administration in attendance. One of the school's faithful employees, Mr. Daniel Conn, became a friend of our family. He was the groundskeeper for forty years. In his book *The Vanishing Ministry* Dr. Woodrow Kroll shares an interesting story about the sacrificial ministry of Mr. Conn.

In the last summer of his life, he planted 3,300 marigolds on the campus, plus other flowers. One night, I was awakened at 3:00 a.m. in my campus home by the sound of running water. I bounded out of bed to see if a faucet was leaking in the kitchen or bath-

room. None was. I could still hear water running. After an unsuccessful search all through the house, I heard a noise outside. Going to the window, I saw Mr. Conn watering tulips as I remember.

I said to him, "What's the matter? Can't you sleep?"

"Sure I can sleep," he responded, "but this is the best time to water these flowers." He was watering the flowers at 3:00 a.m. Initially, I thought he was crazy, but that's not crazy; that's commitment (p. 74).

I last saw Daniel Conn in the spring of 1975. Even before I picked up Woodrow Kroll's book and was reminded of dear Mr. Conn, I had often thought of this humble servant, recalling the day that he came to the parsonage in which we lived to bore a rather substantial hole in a concrete wall with an impressive jackhammer. I never heard Mr. Conn speak in public. I never really spent time with him in conversation. Yet the life of this behind-the-scenes servant had touched mine, Woodrow Kroll's, and countless others' through the silent, substantial sacrifice of his service.

### **Behind the Scenes with the Gospel**

Along with his father and two brothers, John Millican built New England's largest greenhouse, the Lexington Gardens, in Lexington, Massachusetts. Pepperidge Farms would purchase the Millican family's greenhouse, and with the proceeds John would launch two more very successful businesses, the Pleasant View Gardens and the Millican Nurseries in Loudon, New Hampshire.

In 1991 Dr. Ed Nelson came to Trinity Baptist Church in Concord, New Hampshire. He was invited to teach soulwinning. As I rode to Boston's airport with John Millican, he confessed that he had never won a soul to Christ. That fact motivated him to take Ed Nelson's classes.

One day John told me that he was a relatively unemotional man. He could not recall ever having shed a tear. John didn't cry at his mother's funeral. He loved her. He simply did not cry.

After a Sunday morning service in January of 1992 John Millican was compelled of the Spirit of God to invite my in-laws, Milton and Betty Erickson, into my office after a Sunday morning service. I had preached the gospel. My in-laws were unsaved. John knew that my in-laws were lost, and he knew how to share the good news. Having brought them into my office, John Millican asked them if they knew they were saved. Because of his kindness to them, both my father-in-law and my mother-in-law prayed and trusted Jesus as their Savior.

My wife, Linda, had been praying for the salvation of her parents for sixteen years. When John brought my in-laws from my office into the foyer, there were tears of joy streaming down his cheeks. His first souls for the Savior and his first tears! Thank God for servants behind the scenes. ☞



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# "I Wish I Had Gone to Israel

Barry Webb and Bill Hall

In January my wife and I had the opportunity to participate in a pastors' familiarization tour to Israel. Going to Israel was something we had always dreamed of doing. When we found out about this trip, it seemed like an absolute answer to prayer. The cost of the trip was very reasonable, and our treatment on the trip was "top shelf"! The accommodations were first rate! The food was fantastic!

Making this trip in the company of other Fundamental Bible-believing preachers and their wives also made this a most pleasant experience. Our guide, Arie, was tremendous! His knowledge of the Israeli people, the Hebrew language, and most of all, the Bible gave him insights that made us hang on to every word he spoke. I was thankful my wife was there to take pictures while I was taking notes! The various evening meetings with special speakers gave us a much better understanding of the Jewish people and of what the country and the believers in it are facing daily.

Many preachers wait until they are older and retired to make this kind of trip. The earlier a preacher can go the better! I believe every pastor should be required to make this trip and that every church should endeavor to send him. Being able to be where the events of the Scriptures occurred and to see the environment that led to the Bible's teachings are indispensable to a pastor's being able to communicate a greater understanding of the Bible to his people. These pastors' familiarization tours take place every two years. If you are a pastor, you should sign up for the next one *now*! You will be thankful, and so will your people!

—Evangelist Barry Webb

On our recent trip to Israel we tried not to hold everyone up because of our age, but in reality, I think we did a little better than some of the younger ones! All the walking we have done for years did pay off!

The tour was edifying, educational, inspirational, and emotional. We'll never forget the first sight of Jerusalem as we exited the tunnel! Also, we could not have had a better guide or bus driver! Arie had such a knowledge of the Scriptures and such a warm heart. (Afterward we went on YouTube and watched him conduct the *Messiah* that he had translated into Hebrew!)

Our accommodations and tour bus were excellent. It was a blessing to have such a compatible and positive group—I don't think it could have been any better.

My only regret is that we did not go in our younger years. It would have added so much to our ministry, my preaching, and our own personal study of the Scriptures. Let me encourage pastors of any age, but especially the younger ones, to go in 2014. I am going to make it a point in all our meetings to promote the trip and especially urge churches to send their pastors and their wives, their assistants, and their evangelists. It will add greatly to the ministry of the church. It is also important that you go with a good group with a good Hebrew teaching guide.

It took us about a week afterwards to feel "normal" again, but I think we've about made it! Shirley says she's ready to go again! It was the trip of a lifetime for us, and, as Arie predicted, we have relived something of the trip every day since getting home.

—Evangelist Bill Hall






# Sooner"





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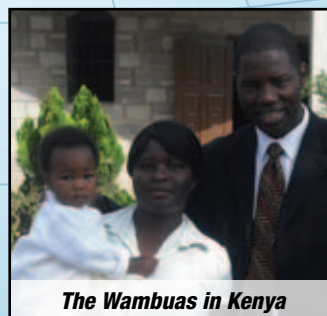
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Great wit, bad character. —Blaise Pascal

Run the straight race through God's good grace.  
—John Samuel Monsell

But for the grace of God, there goes John Bradford.  
—John Bradford

Grace is the absence of everything that indicates pain or difficulty, hesitation or incongruity. —William Hazlitt

There are so few who can grow old with a good grace.  
—Sir Richard Steele

Grace is young glory. —Alexander Peden

The law detects, grace alone conquers sin. —Augustine

Wit is the salt of conversation, not the food.  
—William Hazlitt

It is a greater work of God to bring men to grace, than being in the state of grace, to bring them to glory; because sin is far more distant from grace than grace is from glory. —John Trapp

Grace comes into the soul as the morning sun into the world; first a dawning; then a light; and at last the sun in his full and excellent brightness. —Thomas Adams

Grace is but glory begun, and glory is but grace perfected.  
—Jonathan Edwards

Divine grace was never slow. —George Herbert

Growth in grace . . . consists in doing the same works over and over again better than before.  
—Thomas Bridge

We do not keep ourselves virtuous by our own power, but by the counterbalance of two opposing vices, just as we stay upright between two contrary winds. Take one of these vices away and we fall into the other.  
—Blaise Pascal

There is no reason to be given for grace but grace.  
—Ralph Venning

What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?  
—Henry Francis Lyte

God gives His gifts when He finds the vessel empty enough to receive them.  
—C. S. Lewis.

All grace grows as Love to the Word of God grows.  
—Phillip Henry

There is nothing but God's grace. We walk upon it; we breathe it; we live and die by it; it makes the nails and axles of the universe; and a puppy in pajamas prefers self-conceit.  
—Robert Louis Stevenson

The growth of grace is the best evidence of the truth of it; things that have no life will not grow.  
—Thomas Watson

Compiled by Dr. David Atkinson, pastor of Dyer Baptist Church, Dyer, Indiana.



"To preach the gospel in the regions beyond . . ." 2 Cor. 10:16

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## Northwest Regional Fellowship

The Northwest Regional Fellowship of the FBFI was hosted by Galilee Baptist Church in Kent, Washington, March 12–14. The theme of the conference was “Faithful to Our Lord/Focused on His Word.” Dr. Larry Oats of Maranatha Baptist Bible College blessed us with the Biblical foundation of our Fundamentalist heritage. Dr. Wendell Heller encouraged the pastors, Christian workers, and lay people with the blessings that result from the service of one obediently committed to the Lord and His Word. A number of other pastors from the region also participated with speaking responsibilities. Although the snow-packed passes prevented the attendance of many from the eastern part of our region, we rejoice that a very good number of servants attended. All agreed that this meeting was a time of refreshment and challenge. We will pray more effectively for each other as we return to local areas of service.

## Three Rivers Regional Fellowship

Pastor Don Harrelson and the people of Cumberland Bible Church in Cumberland, Maryland, hosted the April 2–3 Three Rivers Regional Fellowship. “Growing in Grace” is the theme of the national meeting in June, and it was the theme of this regional fellowship. Dr. Vaughn spoke Monday night, and Pastor Jim Baker from Tabernacle Baptist in Virginia Beach, Virginia, was the keynote speaker Tuesday night. The Tuesday morning sessions were covered by pastors in the Three Rivers Region—Pastor B. J. Worley from Berkeley Springs, West Virginia; Pastor Bob Harrison from Baden, Pennsylvania; and Pastor Dan Fox from Elkridge, Maryland. These three men did a commendable job with their topics.

Pastors from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia attended the fellowship. Monday night’s strong attendance continued Tuesday with additional pastors arriving for that day only. The Cumberland Bible Church did an excellent job preparing for the fellowship, including excellent meals and well-planned excursions.





## Samuel's Love for God's Truth, Part 2

In the last article I discussed how Samuel had compassion on Saul, a man whom the Lord was through with. Many of God's people today have a wrong attitude toward other believers who have broken God's law and gone contrary to the teaching of Scripture. Whenever a believer falls spiritually, we are never to rejoice. Proverbs 17:5 says, "And he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." Whenever we hear of a believer's falling, we are not to say, "I knew that was going to happen." First Corinthians 10:12 warns us, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Whenever anyone falls into sin, it should grieve us. No one is above temptation, and we ought to be tender toward anyone who ruins his life by sin.

Many years ago I had a meeting in a northern state. We closed on Friday night and started another meeting in the same state the following week. On Monday I received a devastating phone call. I walked into the place where my wife and I were staying and broke down and wept—my wife thought someone had died. I told her that the pastor we had just held meetings with had been caught with another woman and had resigned his church. It grieved my heart as I thought of the consequences to his life, the sorrow to his wife, and the shame to his children.

Samuel wept over Saul as well; however, Samuel's compassion did not lack character. Samuel was more concerned about the purity of God's message than he was about the preservation of a man's position. Genuine compassion does not lack fortitude to do right; its backbone is made of spiritual steel. It weeps over sin but will always confront the cause of that sin, and that leads us to the second observation about this man of God.

Samuel's love for God's truth was portrayed not only by compassion but also by confrontation. In 1 Samuel 15 we find that the Lord had clearly instructed Saul to smite the Amalekites. When God said to destroy them, He meant for Saul to completely wipe them out and all they had. The message could not have been any clearer—total annihilation! But Saul did not do what God had commanded; he spared the animals and the king of the Amalekites. When Saul came back from the

battle, he said in 1 Samuel 15:13, "I have performed the commandment of the LORD." But Samuel replied in verse 14, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

Whenever a man violates God's commandments, he must be confronted, for no man is above God's authority, no man is beyond God's law, and no man is higher than God's statutes! Samuel knew that Saul had sinned, and he confronted him. Why? Because Samuel feared the face of God more than he feared the face of a king. Samuel was bold and courageous, and he stood up to the king and exposed him for what he was—a man of disobedience. Then Saul, with the heart of a coward, said in verse 15, "The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God." Samuel responded in verse 22, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Samuel was saying in essence, "Saul, it is never right for you to violate what God commands."

So far we have seen that Samuel's love for God's truth was revealed by compassion and then by confrontation. But third, his love for God's truth was portrayed with deep conviction. In 1 Samuel 15:23 Samuel said, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king." In verse 28 he said, "The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day."

Samuel's conviction ought to make us evaluate what kind of love we have for the Lord. If we elevate love above God's truth, we will always be compromising in our dealings with sin. But if we leave love out, we will be harsh and cruel in our dealings with people. But if we have a love for God's truth that is coupled with obedience to God's commandments, then we will have the kind of love that the Lord wants us to have. So whenever we have to deal with someone who has disobeyed God, there will be compassion in our hearts combined with a courage that confronts the sin and a deep conviction against the sin. Our prayer should be, "Lord, give me a love for Your truth like Samuel's."

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## PROVERBS: UNDERSTANDING HOW TO

So far this miniseries on Proverbs has explored basic background issues of authorship and audience, kinds of proverbs, structure in groups of proverbs, and a definition of proverbs (“a portable saying in poetic form expressing a general observation conditioned by a particular worldview”—in Proverbs it is a *Biblical* worldview grounded especially in the Pentateuch).

The last column ended with the observation that a proverb’s *compactness* or *terseness* is what makes it memorable, but that same quality is also a limitation that prevents proverbs from addressing variables or exceptions. “Like father, like son” makes a generally valid observation; on the other hand, we all know there are exceptions where the proverb, in fact, doesn’t apply. Likewise, “Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him” is generally wise counsel; but that it is not always the best course is obvious from the next verse: “Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.” In short, a proverb can say something, but not everything.

So we recognize exceptions to proverbs generally. And we can see that we have to acknowledge such exceptions even in Biblical proverbs, or 26:4 and 5 really do hopelessly contradict. All this raises an important question. If proverbs, by definition, are general observations, not ironclad absolutes or infallible promises, what is the value of Biblical proverbs over any other proverbs? And how are we to interpret and apply them? That’s what this column aims to investigate.

### Proverbs and Absolutes

First, by definition and function, proverbs are not designed to convey absolute, categorical truth. We readily acknowledge that in secular proverbs, but we are loath to say the same of Biblical proverbs. But remember, a Biblical proverb is still a *proverb*. If we want to insist that it is an absolute truth always valid in every single instance then (a) we have a hopeless contradiction in a passage such as 26:4, 5, and (b) it is no longer a *proverb* because that’s not what proverbs are.

Here’s an example: “Behold, every one that useth proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter” (Ezek. 16:44). That’s the Bible’s version of “like father, like son.” The particular application of the proverb in this case is absolutely true (just as “like father, like son” is in certain specific instances true), but

the proverb itself is no more a categorical absolute than our version; it’s not intended to be.

Second, by definition and function, proverbs are not designed to convey infallible promises. Again, we have no trouble recognizing that with our “early to bed, early to rise” proverb. No one seriously takes that as an ironclad promise. “But”, someone may object, “surely *Biblical* proverbial promises are different.” Are they?

Here’s an example: “The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened” (Prov. 10:27). Is that true? Generally, yes. It is certainly prudent counsel in God’s moral universe. “But,” if it’s an infallible promise, how does one explain a David Brainerd or a Robert Murray McCheyne—both godly young men who died by the age of thirty? On the other hand, how do you explain a Voltaire or a George Burns who, though ungodly men, lived to a ripe old age? The exceptions don’t mean the proverb is wrong; they mean that the proverb is a *proverb*—a generally valid observation.

Here’s another example: “There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief” (Prov. 12:21). What about Job? God tells us (three times) that he was a uniquely just and godly man. And the Bible uses the same word, “evil,” to describe what happened to him (Job 2:10; 42:11). To insist that the proverb is an absolute with no exceptions would be to undermine the clear teaching of Job (not to mention many real-life experiences). So is the proverb wrong? No, the proverb is a *proverb*.

Here’s one more: “Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner” (Prov. 11:31). Most interpret this “recompense” as negative retribution, not reward. If the righteous are chastened in this life for their sins, how much more will the wicked be? The apparent implication of the verse (that the wicked will *certainly* receive their just deserts *in the earth*), clearly has its exceptions in real life. Exceptions prevent a proverb from being an absolute, but exceptions don’t negate the general rule or principle behind the proverb, which in this case is that there is no safety or security for the wicked.

Any thinking reader will raise questions about such apparent discrepancies between certain proverbial statements (such as these) and the reality he sees around him—whether in his own experience or in history or even within the Bible itself. We set up ourselves for discouragement and disappointment and even bitterness with God if, through our misunderstanding of what proverbs are and



# INTERPRET AND APPLY THEM (PART 3)

how they work, we nourish expectations that God does not extend in Scripture. This happens when we fail to read our Bibles observantly, contextually, and, as Kidner aptly puts it, “with our wits about us.”

## Clarifying the Issue

None of this is to say that God is tricky with the fine print, but He does expect us to read intelligently and thoughtfully, not simplistically and selectively. When misread, Proverbs can become a breeding ground for discouragement and disappointment. It is our fault if we forget that we are reading *proverbs*. God may sometimes graciously overlook our innocent ignorance and condescend to an honest, if ill-informed, faith (and not only in our interpretation of poetry or proverb but our misreadings of other passages as well). But that does not mean we should be presumptuous of God or careless in our interpretations.

This is also not to suggest that most proverbs are riddled with exceptions. The point of this section is not to conclude, “You can’t rely on this statement in the Bible because it’s only a proverb, after all.” Here is a crucial observation: if you read the proverbs in Proverbs carefully you will notice that *only a small minority of proverbs are even stated in a form that admits exceptions*. The majority of proverbs are not in a form where exceptions are even an issue. Most either reflect moral absolutes affirmed elsewhere or simple statements of uncontroversial “common sense.” Sample some passages for yourself. For example, read 14:1–8 or 15:1–9. There you read things such as “where no oxen are, the crib is clean,” or “a false witness will utter lies,” or “the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness,” or “the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.” These are not tentative or debatable; they are obvious. That’s how most proverbs are—thoughtful and observant, but obvious.

I need to take a moment to engage Bruce Waltke’s approach to this issue in his very fine two-volume commentary on Proverbs. Waltke takes a slightly different approach to this issue. He writes, “The popular evangelical solution that these are not promises but probabilities, though containing an element of truth, raises theological, practical, and psychological problems by stating the matter badly.” Instead, he advises other considerations. “First, the promises are partially validated by experience. The sober, not the drunkard (23:29–35), the cool-tempered, not the hothead (15:18; 19:19; 22:24; 29:22), and the diligent, not the sluggard usually experience health

and wealth.”

But there are two problems with Waltke’s own argument here. First, he, too, is still forced to fall back on probability language. His own use of phrases such as “*partially* validated” and “*usually* experience health and wealth” actually confirms the viewpoint he is arguing against. Second, none of the passages he has cited is stated as a promise, only obvious observations about the tendencies of human character and behavior. In short, he has addressed and solved passages that need no solution.

## Proverbs and Parables

Perhaps I can illustrate the function of “proverb” with an analogy to the function of “parable.” The literary function of proverbs is akin to that of parables. For example, is Luke 12:16–21 an actual, historical event? After all, it’s in the Bible; so doesn’t it have to be a true story? No, it’s a “parable” (12:16); that’s not what parables are and that’s not how stories function. By definition, a parable is a story to make a point, not necessarily an actual, historical event (even though it may read like one).

So “parable” is another genre that does not intend to be taken in absolute terms but is to be understood and interpreted according to its own nature and function. Forcing a “proverb” into the mold of an absolute is like forcing a parable into the mold of historical narrative and insisting that there really had to be a Jew who got mugged on his way to Jericho and helped by a Samaritan, because the story is in the Bible.

## Proverbial Exceptions?

Time for a test to see if you’ve been paying attention.

**Question:** Are there *any* proverbs that can be said to express an “ironclad promise of what is universally true”? What about this one: “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5, 6). Is that an ironclad promise? Universally true? Timelessly reliable?

**Answer:** Of course. *But it’s not a proverb!* Note the location (3:5, 6) and remember that Proverbs 1–9 are, in fact, not “proverbs” at all, but wisdom discourses. Let’s try another one.

**Question:** “Stolen waters are sweet, and bread

Continued on next page

eaten in secret is pleasant” (Prov. 9:17). Is this true? (Do you have your wits about you?) After all, it *is* in the Bible. And it’s *not* in the proverbial section of Proverbs. But why might this statement be suspect?

**Answer:** Even in Proverbs, sometimes context can be interpretationally significant. Consider the source in the context (9:13–16). These are the baited words of a lying seductress! This is the Big Lie that finds its source all the way back in Genesis 3 (“Ye shall not surely die”). The plain fact is, stolen water tastes just like legitimate water. Stealing it doesn’t affect the taste. In the end, it’s all just water. Pilfered bread greedily eaten in secret tastes no different. Is it true that sin is pleasurable? Certainly—temporarily to the flesh. But not because this verse says so. The Bible paints a bigger picture with more accurate details.

**Question:** “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3). No trick here—it’s in the “proverbs” section of Proverbs. Is this an ironclad promise? Universally true? Timelessly reliable?

**Answer:** Yes, because it affirms a moral absolute that is affirmed elsewhere in revelation (the *Biblical worldview* we talked about earlier).

That leads to the need for another clarification. Some proverbs *include* or *express* moral absolutes (e.g., those that describe the character or actions of God); these do not admit exceptions, not because they are *Biblical* proverbs (because as we will see, other *Biblical* proverbs do admit exceptions) but because they express moral absolutes rooted in revelation elsewhere. This is not a criticism of the reliability of Scripture; it is a comment on the central characteristic of the “proverb” genre.

What exactly is the difference, then, between a Biblical

proverb and a non-Biblical proverb? Are they both equally authoritative? Or equally nonauthoritative? Is Solomon no more reliable than Ben Franklin? Biblical proverbs are not *definitionally* or *functionally* different from other proverbs, or they wouldn’t be proverbs. But Biblical proverbs are superior to other proverbs in three ways: (1) the dynamic of divine direction of the writer and inspiration of what is written; (2) the dynamic of the writer’s regenerated, revelation-conditioned mind; and (3) the dynamic of the writer’s divine gift of unusual wisdom and insight (cf. Eccles. 12:11).

Proverbial literature is always shaped by the worldview of its cultural context. Every proverb is an extension of its originator’s worldview. The prevailing culture provides the “lens” through which people see life and therefore through which they express their observations proverbially.

What makes Biblical proverbs *different* is that they convey the inspired values and principles under which life generally operates in God’s moral universe—the *world seen through the lens of reliable Biblical revelation, not fallible human opinion*.

What makes Biblical proverbs *reliable* expressions of general truth is that they arise out of and express that Biblical-philosophical framework.

What makes Biblical proverbs *Biblical* is not simply that they happen to appear in the Bible but that they are filtered through a distinctively Biblical worldview that is conditioned by God’s revelation. Solomon saw the world very differently than did Ben Franklin or Mark Twain or Mahatma Gandhi.

Proverbial literature is one of the channels through which the Lord breathed out His revelation. Proverbs are *divinely inspired guidelines of wisdom given to govern our thinking and acting*—general principles that affirm the presence of an absolute value system which is often at variance with the world’s value system. Job and Ecclesiastes (also Wisdom literature) confront the occasional exceptions to these general principles.

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**Offensive Mural**

Some things are just too offensive for public tastes. Elizabeth Bierenday, a high schooler in Rhode Island, designed a mural to depict the stages of a boy's life to decorate one of the school hallways. The mural included his infancy, teenage years, graduation, and eventual marriage. So what was so offensive? The marriage depicted a man and woman.

School Superintendent Peter Horoshack commented that the "depiction of the young man's development [. . .] may not represent the life experiences of many of the students at Pilgrim High School." For that reason, the happily married couple was painted over.

This article can be referenced at <http://now.msn.com/living/0406-school-mural-controversy.aspx>.

**Bus Advertising**

An advertisement created by Core Issues Trust will not be permitted to be used as paid advertising on city buses. The ad states; "Not gay! Post gay, ex-gay and proud. Get over it!" was a parody on an advertisement that had run on the bus system previously, created by Stonewall, a pro-gay organization. That add read, "Some people are gay. Get over it!"

A spokesperson for the London Transportation authority provided the following statement as rationale for denying the ad: "This advertisement was brought to our attention yesterday afternoon by our advertising agency,

[CBS Outdoor], and we have decided that it should not run on London's bus or transport networks. We do not believe that these specific ads are consistent with TFL's commitment to a tolerant and inclusive London. The adverts are not currently running on any London Buses and they will not do so."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/ex-gay-bus-ads-banned-by-london-transport-officials-73205/>.

**Jesus, the Only Way**

Lifeway Research recently conducted a study of 1000 Protestant pastors regarding the way to eternal life. While the term "Protestant" covers those who would label themselves Evangelical and those who would not, the results were still surprising.

The survey asked the question, "If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity."

Seventy-seven percent of the pastors questioned said that they strongly disagree with the statement, and seven percent somewhat disagreed. Another seven percent somewhat agreed, and five percent strongly agreed. Three percent said they are not sure.

When the Evangelical label was considered, eighty-five percent strongly disagreed with the statement as opposed to fifty-seven percent of the non-Evangelical Protestants. Two percent of Evangelicals surveyed agreed with the

statement, while eleven percent of the non-Evangelicals agreed.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/christianity-the-only-means-of-eternal-life-some-pastors-disagree-73147/>.

**Geneva Speech on "Human Rights"**

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave a speech from Geneva on December 6, 2011, to mark Human Rights Day. Near the beginning of the speech she rightly noted, "It is [a] violation of human rights when people are beaten or killed because of their sexual orientation or because they do not conform to cultural norms about how men and women should look or behave."

Her speech, however included a twisted message regarding the issue of "gay rights." "It is a violation of human rights," she posited, "when governments declare it illegal to be gay." She used her speech to equate religious objections to homosexuality with honor killings, widow burnings, and mutilations.

"In each of these cases," she said, "we came to learn that no [religious] practice or tradition trumps the human rights that belong to all of us."

This article can be referenced at [http://townhall.com/columnists/michaelbrown/2011/12/15/hillary\\_clintons\\_gay\\_rights\\_speech\\_and\\_american\\_hypocrisy/page/full/](http://townhall.com/columnists/michaelbrown/2011/12/15/hillary_clintons_gay_rights_speech_and_american_hypocrisy/page/full/).

**Liberty in Controversy Again**

Liberty University recently extended a speak-

ing invitation to Mark Driscoll, pastor of the Mars Hill Church in Seattle. The controversy is being raised by alumni regarding the invitation. Tim Guthrie, pastor of the Arlington Baptist Church in Knoxville and former trustee at Liberty, remarks, "I know Liberty throughout the years, in fact Dr. [Jerry] Falwell Sr. was somewhat known for bringing in a little bit different kind of speakers and a wide variety and sometimes controversial, but *never* did he ever bring in someone who promoted smut and the . . . filth that Driscoll promotes."

Driscoll's recent work, *Real Marriage: The Truth about Sex, Friendship, and Life Together*, is overtly graphic and inappropriate reading for his Christian audience.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.onenewsnow.com/Culture/Default.aspx?id=1579124>.

**Free Speech under Fire**

The city of Williamsburg, Virginia, has received complaints from a couple of merchants regarding Christians street preaching and handing out gospel literature. The city council is planning to enact an ordinance that would restrict free speech in the market and historical areas of the town. Ironically free speech will be relegated to free speech zones.

Michael Marcavage represents the organization Repent America. He argues the unconstitutionality of

the ordinance: "This is just another example as to how the local governing officials are trying to silence unpopular and controversial speech."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.onenewsnow.com/Culture/Default.aspx?id=1577406>.

### Islamization

The Florida Family Association (FFA) is sounding a warning siren in Tampa, Florida, regarding the influence of Islam in the public schools. Steinbrenner High School in Tampa has extended several invitations to the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) for student body lectures on *sharia* law and other forms of Islamic propaganda.

This area is already being compared to Dearborn, Michigan, where the Arab/Muslim population is greater than fifty percent of the whole. David Caton, president of FFA, stated, "Dearborn is almost lost because 50 percent of their population is Arabic-Muslim. They can elect and dominate the government there. But we have a smaller population [of Muslims] in Tampa than Dearborn, and we're already having non-Islamic leaders embracing their progressive agenda."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.onenewsnow.com/Culture/Default.aspx?id=1577134>.

### Paganism and Witchcraft

A British school system has elevated the history and practice of paganism and witchcraft to be taught alongside the religious perspectives of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The syllabus was prepared by the Cornwall Study Group. Religious education is a part of every student's curriculum. Children above the age of five will be taught predominantly about Christianity. "It is clear

## NOTABLE QUOTES

**B**ut in the whole Law, there is not one syllable which lays down a rule as what man is to do or avoid for the advantage of his own carnal nature. And, indeed, since men are naturally prone to excessive self-love, which they always retain, how great soever their departure from the truth may be, there was no need of a law to inflame a love already existing in excess. Hence it is perfectly plain, that the observance of the commandments consists not in the love of ourselves, but in the love of God and our neighbor; and that he leads the best and holiest life who as little as may be studies and lives for himself; and that one live worse and more unrighteously than he who studies and lives only for himself, and seeks and thinks only of his own.—John Calvin

**T**he ones who can pray so that God will hear their prayers, and give them whatever they ask, are those who study the Word of God every day of their lives to find out what the will of God is, and to do it every time they find it, and who further than that, make it their study to become thoroughly acquainted with God, so that they know instinctively what will please God and what will displease God, and in every action of their lives seek to do the thing that pleases God, whether it pleases men or not, and not to do the thing that displeases God, no matter who else may do it.—R. A Torrey

**H**ave you ever thought about the wonderful truth that Christ lived a perfect life in your place and on your behalf? Has it yet gripped you that when God looks on you today He sees you clothed in the perfect, sinless obedience of His Son? And that when He says, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased," He includes you in that warm embrace? The extent to which we truly understand this, is the extent to which we will begin to enjoy those unsearchable riches that are found in Christ.—Jerry Bridges

**T**he great controlling factor is not the needs of people, but the command of Jesus. The source of our inspiration in our service for God is behind us, not ahead of us. The tendency today is to put the inspiration out ahead of us—to sweep everything together in front of us and make it conform to our definition of success. But in the New Testament the inspiration is put behind us, and is the Lord Jesus Himself. The goal is to be true to Him—to carry out His plans.—Oswald Chambers

that Christianity should predominate at each key stage and should feature in no less than 60% of the religious education taught. The other religious traditions should occupy no more than 40% of RE time over the key stage," the syllabus reads.

The *Daily Mail* article points out that in Cornwall, the council estimates that there are between 600 and 750 pagans out of a total population of 537,400. In a 2001 census survey, 42,000 people in the British Isles identified themselves with paganism—making it the seventh largest religious designation.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/paganism-and-witchcraft-placed-alongside-christian-studies-in-uk-schools-73313/>.

### Another New Translation

Thomas Nelson Publishers is producing a new English translation called *The Voice*. It does not make any claims about being more accurate—with good reason. The translation has replaced "Jesus Christ" with "Jesus the anointed one." It has removed the term "angel" and prefers "emissary" to "apostle."

Frank Couch is the lead editor of *The Voice*. He reasons that literal translations have made the Bible less understandable. That is "why it has been necessary for commentators and preachers to spend so much time explaining what the words in the original language mean before the lay reader can understand fully a text of Scripture."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/new-english-translation-of-bible-omits-jesus-christ-apostle-73325/>.

Compiled by Robert Condict, FBFI Executive Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.

*Newsworthy* is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the FBFI.



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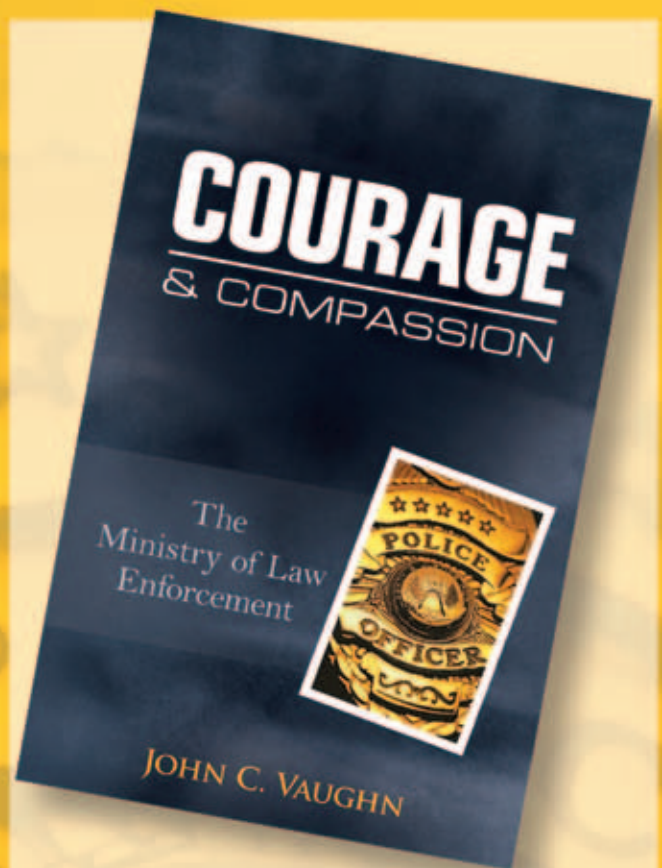
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foundation. May God bless you and *FrontLine*.—*Bud Lyles, President, Evangelism Foundation, Inc.*

**Tim and Eileen Sneed** are church planters of Metro Baptist Church in San Diego, California. Their Sunday morning service attendance now averages in the forties. They ask for prayer to be able to buy a larger home to accommodate their Sunday and Wednesday night services. You can learn about their ministry at [metro baptist church.net](http://metro baptist church.net).

**"Kirtland Bethel Bible Church**, which I have pastored for the past twenty years, is a result of a merger between Bethel Bible Church of Wickliffe, Ohio, and Kirtland Bible Baptist of Kirtland, Ohio.

"I was raised as a Roman Catholic and didn't hear the gospel until I was twenty years old. My wife and I had joined the Army together on the 'buddy plan' in September 1974. In October 1975 our next-door neighbor, a chaplain's assistant, shared the gospel with us, and we were saved shortly thereafter. The Lord called me to preach while I was in the Army in Panama City, Panama.

"Upon being discharged in 1978, I attended Columbia Bible College and then transferred to the Bible Institute of Ohio. I sensed the Lord's leading to plant a church in the city of Wickliffe, which was seventy-five percent Roman Catholic. We were able to hold our first worship service in July 1983, where we met in a school for nine years before we merged with Kirtland Bible Baptist (which originally was Kirtland Bible Church, a church planted in 1957 by Pastor John Ashbrook's ministry in Mentor, Ohio).

"Kirtland is a historic Mormon city, being the second city visited by Joseph Smith. There are twelve churches which include three 'stripes' of Mormonism in our city of 7800 people (the original LDS, Reorganized,

and Restoration Branch). Plus a Catholic church of 3200 people makes soul-winning a challenge. By the Lord's grace, we are averaging about eighty in attendance.

"My wife and I have been married thirty-seven years and have three daughters, a son, and three grandchildren. I will be celebrating twenty-nine years in the ministry in July this year." —*Pastor Douglas E. Browning*

**David and Vicky Bennett**, along with their children, are serving the Lord under Silent Word Ministries, which specializes in deaf ministry. They may be contacted through their ministry website [silentwordministries.org](http://silentwordministries.org).

**Yoichi and Yoko Izu** serve the Lord in Iruma, Japan. On Easter Sunday of this year they held a special service. Some of those invited to come declined because it was Buddha's birth-

day. Many Japanese think highly of Buddha, but the Izus are there to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the only true Savior.



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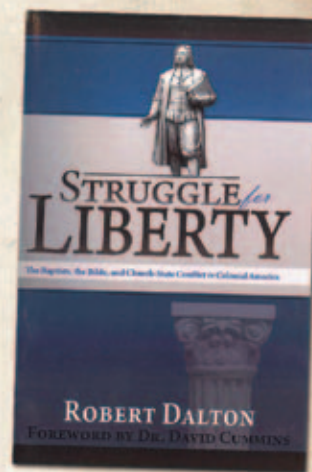
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# The Double Cure

The first verse of the hymn “Rock of Ages” ends with these words: “Be of sin the double cure, Save from wrath and make me pure” (*Majesty Hymns*, 451). Interestingly, some hymnals have an alternate reading: “Be of sin the double cure, Cleanse me from its guilt and power” (*Hymns for the Living Church*, 149.) Fortunately, both versions refer to the same two cures for sin.

The first cure is salvation from God’s wrath by being cleansed from the guilt of sin. This cure is called *justification* and refers to a change in God’s records when we trust Christ as our Savior whereby all of our sins are blotted out and Christ’s righteousness is credited to us. When Paul describes justification in Romans 4, he refers to David’s statements in Psalm 32: “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Rom. 4:8) and “the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works” (Rom. 4:6). This righteousness is not our own since it is apart from our works and

comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22).

The second cure involves cleansing from the power of sin by being made pure. This cure is called *regeneration* or *the new birth*. This is a change in our lives whereby the Holy Spirit breaks the control of sin and indwells believers, giving them life and enabling them to obey God. In Romans 6:12 Paul admonishes his readers, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof,” and in Romans 8:13 he insists, “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Both justification and regeneration occur instantaneously and simultaneously when we put our trust in Christ, but there is a *logical* order in which justification logically precedes regeneration. In Colossians 2:13 Paul states, “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him [regeneration], having forgiven you all trespasses [justification].”

Justification is also described as sanctification. In Hebrews 10:10 the writer speaks of



God's will and says, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." This is a positional sanctification. In contrast, progressive sanctification is accomplished by the written word of God. In His high priestly prayer Jesus says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

### 1. Regeneration makes progressive sanctification possible.

Stated another way, birth makes growth possible. Paul could ask the Roman believers, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1, 2). Therefore we are to "reckon [ourselves] to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). Being made dead to sin refers to that aspect of regeneration in which the Holy Spirit breaks the control of sin, while being made alive to God refers to that aspect of regeneration in which the Holy Spirit gives us life, indwelling us, and enabling us to obey God.

### 2. Progressive sanctification is a process throughout the lifetime of a believer.

In Philippians 1:6 Paul could say, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." This is why it is called *progressive* sanctification. It is not instantaneous and will not be complete until Christ returns. As Paul tells the Thessalonian believers, "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1 Thess. 3:13).

### 3. Progressive sanctification is the responsibility of both the believer and God.

Believers are admonished to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). In 1 Peter 1:14–16 believers are moreover exhorted, "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

In Philippians 2:12 we read, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Believers here are commanded to cultivate and develop, to work *out* and not work *for*, their salvation. They are to do it with fear and trembling, showing it is possible to fail in this endeavor, remaining spiritually immature believers.

But it is also clearly taught in Scripture that God is responsible for our progressive sanctification. In the very next verse we are told, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

### 4. Progressive sanctification is accomplished by obedience to the written word of God.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonian believers, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Thess. 4:1–3).

### 5. Progressive sanctification is accomplished by yieldedness to the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:25 states, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Hebrews 10:19–25 states at least three specific tools God has made available to us in our responsibility to walk in the Spirit.

*Prayer.* Hebrews 10:19–22 reads, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, . . . And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

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without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)" (Heb. 10:23).

*His people.* "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another" (Heb. 10:24, 25).

Article 12 of the 1878 Niagara Bible Conference Creed summarizes the Biblical teaching concerning progressive sanctification: "We believe that we are called with a holy calling to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the Spirit that we should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh; but the flesh being still in us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage needs to be kept constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence to the dishonor of His name."

Dr. Myron Houghton is a senior professor and chair of the Systematic Theology Department at Faith Baptist Theological Seminary in Ankeny, Iowa. Prior to teaching at Faith, he taught at Denver Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary. Dr. Houghton is the author of *Law and Grace* (Regular Baptist Books).



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