

# The Influences of Sin

CLAUDE B. HOLCOMB

March 10, 1970

Since we are living in a time when the reality of sin is being denied, it might be well for Christians to give more thought to its impact on past generations, and be reminded that the prevailing attitude toward sin today is the result of the influences of sin itself. Total disregard for God's revelation to man has led many to say that nothing is wrong except as a person's own thinking makes it wrong. They tell us there is no such thing as absolute truth, and no definite standard of morals. The idea is that every man is his own god, and what is right or wrong is determined in his own mind. This is anarchy in its boldest posture.

Peter was constrained to write "to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them." Since sin is so subtle Christians should ever be reminded of its deceitfulness. We need to contemplate the lessons of the past lest we let them slip away from us. The impact of sin in man's history is seen in the Bible accounts of Adam's posterity, and "these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition."

Cain called God's way in question, and his presumption led him finally to murder his brother. As the sons and daughters of Adam multiplied on earth, man became so engrossed in the re-enactment of Eden's tragedy that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Repentance on the part of God doesn't mean that there was any vacillation or variation in his nature. It is merely an expression of pain felt in the great heart of the Creator because of the sin of his creature, and emphasizes the infinite love that God has for man. But

justice must be upheld, so man paid the penalty for his perversity, and was destroyed from the earth, excepting the small remnant of Noah's family. God's wrath revealed in the flood was legal wrath rather than emotional. Had it been emotional, it would have been executed without mercy, and that would have been the end of human history. God's mercy is demonstrated in the fact that he gave the antediluvians ample opportunity to escape the consequences of their sin through the preaching of Noah, but they would not repent.

The preservation of the race after the flood was made possible through the small remnant of righteous souls found in Noah's family. But the posterity of Noah was also subject to sin, and in his sons are found again the human proclivities to doubt and question the ways of the Lord. Ham, not completely purged from the vices of the old world, forgets the honor due to a father, and in sinning against his father he sins against God and brings a curse upon himself. He was the progenitor of those who later became the adversaries of God's people, and the sinful influences of Ham are seen in the deeds of his posterity.

It was the influence of sin that led those men to undertake the building of a tower whose top would reach unto heaven. The real motive behind this act was a desire for renown – the pride of life. Their object was to stay together, and thus they would fail to carry out God's purpose to replenish the earth according to his commandment to "bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply therein" (Gen. 9:7). Their fear of dispersion could well have been that the inward bond of unity and fellowship had already been broken by sin, and they were thus seeking to maintain a false sort of unity by this outward means. How presumptuous they were! God sent a confusion of tongues and scattered them abroad upon the face of the earth.

As men are multiplied, sin abounds. The great cities of Sodom and Gomorrah became so violently wicked that the Lord could no longer bear with them, and because not ten righteous souls

could be found In Sodom they were destroyed. This does not mean ten souls who were sinlessly perfect, but ten who through fear of God kept themselves from the prevailing wickedness of the city. So God rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from heaven, executing his legal wrath against transgression of his law. This catastrophe is a permanent memorial of the punitive righteousness of God, and serves to keep the fate of the ungodly before the minds of all subsequent generations.

The fate of Lot's wife also becomes a warning to all ages against the evil of disobeying God, and the danger of "looking back" after having charted a course that leads away from death and destruction. Jesus exhorted the people of his day to "remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). Peter makes reference to Sodom and Gomorrah and says that God "made them an example unto those that should live ungodly" (2 Peter 2:6).

Time would fail to tell of the multitude of individuals whose sins are recorded in divine history, and of the tremendous effects their conduct had on the lives and destinies of men. We could speak of Esau, who despised his birthright and sold it for a morsel of food; of Nadab and Abihu, who presumptuously offered strange fire in the place of that commanded; of the son of Shelomith who blasphemed the God of heaven; of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, who rebelled against the authority God had vested in Moses and Aaron; and of all the cases in subsequent History which so graphically inscribe upon our minds the stupendous impact of sin upon the human family.

The whole story of sin may be summed up in the failure of man to get rid of the lusts within himself. We cannot quite get away from selfishness. To gratify selfish desires we yield to covetousness and sacrifice our souls upon idol altars! Idolatry in our day consists largely in the form of worshipping self. We need to learn the lessons that all these examples in Israel's history teach us. We need to learn that sin on our part begins with the lusts in our own hearts. It is

true that the devil is the originator of sin, and ushered sin into the world through the first couple on earth, but we are not compelled to serve Satan, and we do so only because we are drawn away by our “own lusts, and enticed” (James 1:14). That is why Peter said, “Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11). That is why God gave us all these examples to warn us against the subtlety of sin.

No intelligent person can contemplate the influences of sin upon the human race from the beginning until now, and then with any degree of honesty deny the reality of sin. The idea that sin is only the figment of an imaginative mind, or that any impurity can be washed clean by one’s own thinking, is just another one of the crafty contrivances of Satan to lead souls captive.

Let us therefore exhort one another daily, “lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3 :13).

701 N. Dixon St., Gainesville, Texas 76240

---

## **Questions & Bible Answers – Drinking of Intoxicants**

By Roy Deaver

Vol. 103, No. 08

### **QUESTION**

“Our preacher mentioned recently that with regard to the drinking of intoxicants the Bible does not demand total abstinence. In an effort to prove this position he cited Ephesians 5:18, and stressed the word ‘excess.’ Does Ephesians

5:18 teach that it is all right for one to drink intoxicants, so long as he does not do so to 'excess'?"

#### ANSWER

1. As is recorded in Ephesians 5:18, in the *King James* reading, Paul says: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;..."

It is alarming, frustrating, disappointing, and disgusting that some people who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ persist in efforts to try to justify the drinking of intoxicants. These often stress the words "moderation" and "temperance," and we hasten to emphasize that such usage of these words is a MISUSE of these words. "Moderation" and "temperance" apply to that which is right within itself—not to that which is by its very nature sinful. Does anyone really believe that it is all right to practice sin in moderation? Suppose the thief should say to himself: "I would like to steal three automobiles tonight. But, I believe in temperance and moderation, and so—I will just steal one." One can be "temperate" and "moderate" in eating, because eating is right. One can be "temperate" and "moderate" in sleeping, because sleeping is right.

2. Another word often misused in this connection is the word "social." Reference is often made to "social" drinking. If the word "social" is intended to indicate a proper concern for society, then I can think of no words more paradoxical than the words "social drinking." This is similar to talking about a "civil" war, or an "honest" thief, or a "white" blackbird, or a "sincere" hypocrite.

Further, what about the word "disease"? It is commonly claimed that alcoholism is a "disease." As Peter L. Reamm recently pointed out: "If so, it is the only disease that is contracted by an act of the will. It is the only disease that requires a license to propagate it. It is the only disease that is

bottled and sold. It is the only disease that promotes crime. It is the only disease that is habit-forming. It is the only disease that is spread by advertising. It is the only disease that is given for a Christmas present."

3. In *The Spiritual Sword* of July, 1971, page 22, brother Guy N. Woods writes as follows: "In the light of these facts, it is indeed remarkable that there are those who attempt to justify 'moderate drinking,' and excuse 'social' drinkers. Anything which corrupts that which it touches must be, and is, always wrong; and Christians ought to avoid all participation therein. Actually, it is through so-called moderate drinking that most people become alcoholics." Brother Woods also stresses that "Moreover, indulgence to any extent is wrong because drunkenness is a matter of degree, and begins with the first drop of the fiery liquid." He quotes Dr. Ralph Overman as correctly emphasizing: "When you have drunk one drink, you are one drink drunk!" Brother Woods says: "It follows—therefore— as a simple matter of common sense that one should never, under any circumstances, and for any reason, swallow one drop of alcohol for beverage purposes."

4. The problem now under consideration arises at least in part from a misunderstanding of Ephesians 5:18, and—behind this misunderstanding—lies a translation problem. Many words in our King James Versions do not mean in 1986 exactly what they meant in 1611. Please note that this statement is not a criticism of the King James Version, but is simply a statement of fact, and which points up the constant need for careful study. The English word "excess" as used in 1611 was an accurate rendering of the original. But, as the word "excess" is used in our day, its use in Ephesians 5:18 contributes to a misunderstanding of what Paul actually said.

According to the King James reading, Paul says: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The American Standard Version has: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the

spirit." Paul, in this statement, is not discussing what drunkenness LEADS TO, but, rather, what is already, inherently, IN IT! And, what is inherently IN IT is given us in the word "excess" in the King James reading and in the word "riot" in the American Standard reading. But, the English word "excess" in 1611, following its Latin derivation, meant "loss of self-possession." In drunkenness (and in drinking) there is loss of self-possession. So, the Record says: "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is loss of self-possession."

5. Upon this background, we turn now to look at the lexicons, translations, and other passages. The key word, so far as concerns the present study, is the Greek word *asotia*.

According to the lexicons, *asotia* means: (1) reckless debauchery (Green), (2) profligacy, incorrigibility (Arndt-Gingrich), (3) riotous living (Thayer), (4) an abandoned course (Berry). Barns refers to "that which is abandoned to sensuality and lust."

What about the translations? (1) We have referred to the King James reading and to the American Standard reading. (2) *The Living Bible Oracles* has "And be not drunk with wine, by which comes dissoluteness " (3) *The Revised Standard Version* has: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery..." (4) *The New English Version* has: "Do not give way to drunkenness and the dissipation which goes with it." (5) *Montgomery* has: "Do not be drunk with wine, in which is riotous living..." (6) *Williams* has: "Stop getting drunk on wine, for that means profligacy." (7) *The Pulpit Commentary* says: "And be not intoxicated with wine, wherein is dissoluteness." We keep in mind that Paul is not talking about what drunkenness leads to (though that is certainly involved). He is talking about what is IN it. And, what is IN it is identified and described by the Greek word *asotia*. About this word, Lenski says: "It describes the condition when the mind and body are dragged down so as to be incapable of spiritual functions."

How could anybody be in the condition (to any extent or to any degree) described by the Greek word *asotia*, and claim (with any degree of justification) to be pleasing to God? The etymological significance of this word, is—in fact—“without salvation.”

As indicated earlier, we want to look at this word as it occurs in other passages. (1) We look at Titus 1:6. About an elder, Paul says: “...having children that believe, who are not accused of RIOT or unruly.” (2) It is used in 1 Peter 4:4. Peter says: “...wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess (flood) of RIOT, speaking evil of you:...” (3) Then, in Luke 15:13, *asotia* is used in adverbial form. The prodigal son “...took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living” (literally, living riotously).

6. The notion that Ephesians 5:18 teaches that it is all right in the sight of God for one to drink intoxicants so long as he or she does not do so to an “excess” is unscriptural, antiscritptural, ridiculous, preposterous, and absurd!

We close this document with the following argument:

MAJOR PREMISE: All things which war against the soul are things from which men are commanded to abstain. Proof, 1 Peter 2:11.

MINOR PREMISE: The drinking of intoxicants is a thing which wars against the soul. Proof, consider Hosea 4:11; Proverbs 20:1.

CONCLUSION: Therefore, the drinking of intoxicants is a thing from which men are commanded to abstain.

And, we note, that “abstain” does not mean to practice it in moderation. All persons are commanded to abstain from fornication (Acts 15:29; 1 Thess. 4:3), and this does not mean to practice it in moderation or with temperance!



# **The Blood Of Christ**

*Neal Pollard*

The topic above should cause one's mind to focus on some precise areas. Naturally, the blood of Christ implies thoughts of the "incarnation" of Christ (that Christ took on the form of man, while all God, and, thus, had blood coursing through His veins; Philippians 2:8). The blood of Christ further educes from one's thoughts the atonement Christ made for all mankind through the shedding of His blood at the cross (cf. Hebrews 9:12-14). The blood of Christ also elicits reflection upon the suffering and death of the sinless man from Nazareth (1 Peter 2:24). And on one might reflect.

The phrase, the blood of Christ, appears verbatim in the New Testament in four verses. With each reference one finds important lessons about the function and significance of His blood. Christ's blood is central in the Father's plan of salvation and life within His favor. What does the blood of Christ bring to needy man?

## **The Blood Of Christ Brings Redemption (1 Peter 1:19)**

In 1 Peter 1, one sees the inspired apostle speaking to persecuted (1), predestined (2), purified (2), and pliant (2) people of God. What would cause a Christian to suffer wrong for doing right? What would cause a Christian to search out from the scriptures the terms of election, accept the terms of pardon, and follow the terms of Christian living? Simply, an

understanding of redemption.

Perhaps the verse most loved and quoted is John 3:16. Yet, so beknown and familiar, this verse is sorely misunderstood and underapplied. Jesus, the speaker of the words recorded in this verse, foretells the act of redemption. With His divine foreknowledge, Christ understood that the gift of the Father's only begotten Son (Himself) meant the shedding of His blood at Calvary. The purpose of that shed blood, He knew, was to redeem the lost race of man from the power and hopelessness of sin. Paul says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4,5). By inspiration, Paul reinforces this with Titus (Titus 2:14).

## **The Blood OF Christ Brings Removal (Hebrews 9:14)**

The King James Version uses, in this verse, the word "purge" in translating the effect of the blood of Christ upon the conscience of one to whom that blood is applied. Purge means "to purify, especially of sin, guilt, or defilement" (The American Heritage Concise Dictionary, 1994). Thayer shows the original word translated "purge" in this verse means "free from the guilt of sin" (The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, 312). Clearly, the Spirit-guided writer of Hebrews speaks of the effect of the applied blood of the Savior. The audience of Hebrews, of which modern man is a part, needs some agent to remove the guilt of sin (dead works) from their lives. The blood of Christ is that agent. For the agent to be effective (to do the job it was intended to do), one must come in contact with it. Where does one come in contact with the blood?

Jesus shed His blood when He died (John 19:34). Paul writes "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were

baptized into his death" (Romans 6:3). One cannot literally go over to Jerusalem to a hill called Mt. Calvary and find the man Jesus bleeding to death on a cross. Furthermore, because one cannot do this, one cannot in some literal way reach up to Him and take some of His shed blood and apply it to himself. Thus, there is no literal, physical way for today's man or woman to contact the actual, shed blood of our Lord.

Yet, Revelation 1:5 reveals that Christ, on His cross, washed us from our sins in His shed blood. God would not allow His Son to shed His life-blood and then provide no means for mankind to contact that blood in some way. And, there is a way and only one way. In identical terminology, Acts 22:16 says that baptism washes away sins. In summation, Christ shed His blood in His death. We are buried with Christ in baptism. Christ washed our sins with His blood. We wash away our sins in the act of baptism. The blood of Christ and baptism, inseparably joined, remove the sins of those who recognize and submit to the authority of Christ in being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21).

## **The Blood Of Christ Brings Return (Ephesians 2:13)**

At the creation of man, there was no need for means whereby man could return to a right relationship with Jehovah. The idea in Ephesians 2 that, specifically here, the Gentiles were "far off" implies the need to return. How could they come back to God? Paul stresses the fact that Christ's blood was the only means whereby reconciliation could be made. Thus, Paul penned the glorious fact that Christ "made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself" (Colossians 1:20). As if an inseparable gulf was crossed by Adam and Eve through their sinning at Eden, that gap of sin separated man from God (cf. Isaiah 59:1,2; Note: This is not to suggest that all inherit Adam's sin— the false

idea of Hereditary Depravity – but rather that through Adam sin entered the world, Romans 5:17, and, consequently, all have sinned, Romans 3:23). Not with acts of goodness or meritorious works could man ever earn his salvation (Titus 3:5). Yet, there are conditions that God expects man to meet in order to have past sins forgiven and the restoration of a right relationship with the Father (Titus 2:12; Hebrews 5:9; Ephesians 2:8). By shedding His blood, Christ paved a road of return (i.e., the “narrow road” of Matthew 7:13,14) to take us back to God. There was no access before and without Him and after sin was in the world (cf. 1 Timothy 2:5; John 14:6). How did Christ effect this return with His blood?

He took the first, old covenant God made with Moses and Israel out of the way by dying on the cross (Ephesians 2:12,14-15). He placed all believers in the faith into one body [the church](Ephesians 2:14,15,16; 4:4). He provided the message of reconciliation in commissioning the preached word to all men (Ephesians 2:17; Acts 1:8). He opened the avenue of prayer by His death on the cross, encouraging petitioning the Father to enhance our relationship with Him (Ephesians 2:18). He sets aside a place in the Kingdom [the church] for all the faithful obedient into which all spiritual blessings flow (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1:3; Matthew 16:18-19). To all who obey the commandments of God relative to entrance into His church, reconciliation and return to God are provided.

## **The Blood Of Christ Brings Remembrance (1 Corinthians 10:16)**

As Eden shows the importance God stressed in mankind before the cross to anticipate that great event, this verse shows the importance God stresses in mankind after the cross remembering it. Those washed in the blood of Christ, contacted in baptism, are added to the church (Acts 2:41-47). Therein, those added [Christians] are governed by the Word of God in worship and

conduct. A vital part of New Testament worship is the weekly participation in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). Why has God authorized that Christians do so, and with such frequency?

The answer is "communion." In connection with the Lord's Supper, this word is translated "communion" only once in the New Testament. Yet, the original word from which it is translated is *koininia*, among the most recognized of all Greek words even among those who have little knowledge of that language. Most often, *koininia* is translated "fellowship." "Fellowship" is also employed by the inspired New Testament writers to make reference to the "Memorial Feast." The apostles and early Christians continued steadfastly in the fellowship of the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42). The fellowship of the Lord's Supper was not to be defiled by the presence of idolatry at Corinth (1 Corinthians 10:20), but rather the communion was to be exclusively with the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 10:16, Paul stresses that there is communion. That fellowship is with the blood of Christ, which suggests a multitude of things. First, the blood of Christ places one into the one body (the church— Colossians 1:18)(Acts 20:28). Therefore, the fellowship of the Lord's Supper involves corporate (collective) activity. Together, children of God are drawn closer to one another remembering the Savior whose blood purchased them from sin. This communion, then, is a means of expressing encouragement and thanksgiving together as the redeemed. The Lord's Supper cannot, then, have significance to those not members of the body as there is no celebration and fellowship with Christians. Also, the Lord's Supper provides a communion between the individual Christian and his Lord. Thus, Paul instructs each to "examine himself" (1 Corinthians 11:28). None other can obey the command of self-examination and remembrance for another in the Lord's Supper or in any spiritual matter. Yet, the Lord's Supper is special because of both the sharing with others and the individual responsibility. As an institution, the Lord's Supper is, in

both regards, a crucial means whereby Christians remember the sacrifice, suffering, and death of Christ in shedding His blood on the tree.

The blood of Christ purchased man's pardon (1 Peter 1:19). The blood of Christ purges man's conscience (Hebrews 9:14). The blood of Christ propels man closer to God (Ephesians 2:13). The blood of Christ provides recollection of atonement (1 Corinthians 10:16). His blood was important in prophesy (Isaiah 53:3-5). His blood was important in physicality (John 19:34). His blood is important in perusal (Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:28).

---

## The Seal and Earnest of the Spirit (E. Trimble)

*By Earl Trimble*  
Vol. 107, No. 12

In its noun form the word *earnest* appears only three times in the New Testament (2 Cor. 1:22; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:14). In both of the Second Corinthian verses the word is used in the phrase, *earnest of the Spirit*. In the Ephesians verse it appears in the phrase, *earnest Of our inheritance*.

Thayer defines the Greek *arrabon* (*translated earnest* in these three passages) as "a foretaste and a pledge of future blessedness" (p. 75). Interestingly, Thayer likens *foretaste* to "tasted" as found in Hebrews 6:4 ("tasted of the heavenly gift"), in Hebrews 6:5 ("tasted the good word of God"), and I Peter 2:3 ("tasted that the Lord is gracious"). The idea of

*tasting* is “to partake of, to enjoy, to experience.”

An analysis of these three verses reveals the contextual usage of the word *earnest*.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:5

“Now he that establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

“Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”

Attention is called to three words used in these two verses as defined by Thayer:

1. Anointing (*chrisma*): “a miraculous gift”
2. Seal (*sphragidzo*): “to mark with a seal”
3. Earnest (*arrabon*): “foretaste and pledge of future blessedness”

Notice also the usage of the expression, an *anointing*, as referring to a miraculous gift in I John 2:20, I John 2:27:

“And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things ... his anointing teacheth you concerning all things.”

Brother Guy N. Woods (in his chart #20, used in his debate with Given O. Blakely on the subject of the Holy Spirit) says (regarding the word *earnest*),

*The word is used three times in the New Testament, but always in a figurative sense: in the first (2 Cor. 1:22) it is applied to the gifts of the Holy Spirit which God bestowed upon the apostles, and by which he might be said to have hired them to be the servants of his Son; and which were the earnest, assurance, and commencement of those far superior blessings which he would bestow on them in the life to come as the wages of their faithful services: in the two latter (2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14), it is applied to the gifts bestowed*

*on Christians generally upon whom, after baptism, the apostles laid their hands, and which were to them an earnest of obtaining a heavenly habitation and inheritance, upon the supposition of their fidelity.*

The contextual setting wherein the words (*anointing, seal, and earnest*) are used, show their relativity to the Holy Spirit as being the miraculous gifts that God bestowed upon the apostles and early Christians through agency of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, their primary application was to those of that age and not to us today. The word *anointing* is not applicable to us in any sense, who live in the post-miraculous era. The words *seal and earnest* could be said to apply to us today only in a secondary sense.

Ephesians 1:13-14

“. . . ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's. own possession. . . .”

In commenting on Ephesians 1:13, J. W. Shepherd says, “They [the Ephesians] received the gift of the Spirit in its miraculous manifestation. We do not; but we receive it in our hearts and bring them in subjection to it” (*Gospel Advocate Commentary*, p. 27). Commenting on verse 14 (p. 28), he uses the meaning of Romans 8:16-17 to illustrate the meaning of the *earnest of our inheritance*. He says, “It is rather the very work of the Spirit himself.” Then he explains how the Christian's godly life, as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), is the assurance of God's approval. David Lipscomb adds: “So much of real spiritual blessings as he enjoys is heaven already in his heart; what he has in the work and fruits of the Spirit is for him alike pledge and foretaste.”

Is it reasonable that the Spirit, himself, given to Christians as a seal and earnest for confirming God's approval and guarantee (as some contend) would himself be dependent upon “outside evidence” (i.e., God's word) to confirm his



indwelling? It is the result of the indwelling, and not the indwelling itself, that serves as the seal and earnest. Testimony and confirmation by the Spirit is dependent upon action and not passivity on his part unless there was an effect, the cause would serve no purpose. Some, in contending for a direct, personal indwelling, are ready to admit to direct operations (miraculous manifestations) of the Spirit in the Christian's life today.

Actually the Spirit proves his indirect indwelling, not in being passive, but rather by being active in producing fruit in the Christian as the result of his teaching. This work performed by the Spirit in today's Christian is accomplished indirectly through the medium of the all-sufficient, Spirit-empowered word (John 6:63, John 6:68; Acts 20:32; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12, et al).

---

## Has Man Outgrown the Gospel?

*By Allen Webster*

Vol. 107, No. 11

Time is changing. The new soon becomes old; the modern becomes ancient; the technological breakthrough becomes yesterday's news; the popular becomes lost in the latest; and the up-to-date is soon out-of-date.

Eternal truth never changes. It reads the same today as yesterday and as it will tomorrow. It is "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3). Those who would change it become "accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9) and find that it will meet them in judgment unchanged (Rev. 20:12).

Modern man feels he has outgrown the ancient gospel. He thinks

an absolute standard is obsolete. Exaltation of self and sensuality replace the idea of sin and spiritual death. He ridicules blood and the need for forgiveness. He scoffs at the virgin birth, sinless life, sacrificial death, and miraculous resurrection of Christ. He regards these as myths of a bygone era.

Has Man Outgrown the Gospel?

*Never!* The only way man can outgrow the gospel is to conquer sin. He has not. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" was true in Paul's day and is true today. Sin is still the transgression of the law of God (I John 3:4), which can include violating one's conscience (Rom. 14:23), omitting a duty (James 4:17), and lawlessness (I John 3:4).

*Never!* God, not man, determines what is sinful; sin will not change. Men may call sin by another name, but that will not alter what it really is. Forgiveness is still the most basic spiritual need that man has (Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23). The only way a person can be forgiven is through the gospel (Rom. 1:16).

*Never!* The gospel is the power to overcome temptation (Eph. 6:17), and man needs its power because temptation is still with us. Mankind has not conquered carnal desires. He still gives in to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:15-17). He cannot overcome without the power of the written word (Heb. 4:12).

*Never!* The devil is still "as a roaring lion" walking about "seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). Man is still in danger; therefore he needs the unchanged gospel, for it is God's great power to save. When humans can defeat Satan without the truth, then they will no longer need the truth. They cannot. No one is strong enough to conquer the Evil One without an "it is written" (Matt. 4:1-11).

*Never!* The soul of man needs food. If man could invent a substitute for "soul food," he would not need the gospel, but

he has not. Peter stated that the soul feeds on the “sincere milk of the word” (I Pet. 2:2), and Paul wrote that he could progress to eat “strong meat” from the hand of God (Heb. 5:12-14). The gospel fills those who “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (Matt. 5:6).

*Never!* Man still needs a map to heaven. Men try to invent a roadway to heaven, but these maps will only get one lost. If we follow the road of “faith only” or the lane of “direct operation of the Holy Spirit” or the path of “once saved always saved,” we are traveling a broad way that leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14). Only Christ and his gospel can lead one to heaven (John 14:6). “I must needs go home by the way of the cross; there’s no other way but this.”

Jesus plainly stated the conditions by which men can reach much needed salvation. A sinner must believe in Christ (Mark 16:16), decide to change his sinful life (repent) (Luke 13:5), confess the sweet name of Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4). We can choose to heed these scriptures or harass them, to read them or reject them, to respect them or ridicule them. Still, the same ancient gospel is the cure for all the spiritual ills of men! Why not obey today?

---

## **The Blood of Christ (Outline)**

*By Victor M. Eskew*

Vol. 111, No. 03

### **I. Introduction.**

*A. Jesus shed blood at Gethsemane, in the halls of Pilate, and at Calvary.*

*B. Christians remember his blood each Lord's Day.*

*C. Peter called it "precious" blood (1 Pet. 1:19).*

*1. The word precious means "dear, valuable, costly."*

*2. The blood of Jesus is invaluable.*

## **II. The Precious Blood of the Lamb.**

*A. The blood was real.*

*1. While on earth, Jesus had a human body of flesh, blood, and bones (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8; Luke 24:39).*

*2. Jesus' blood, like ours, was composed of red cells, white cells, platelets, and plasma. It was real blood.*

*B. The blood was royal.*

*1. He was of the house and lineage of David, whose dynasty continues to the end of time (Isa. 9:7; Luke 1:32-33).*

*2. His kingship was mocked during his crucifixion (Mark 15:16-20).*

*3. Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on his eternal throne (Dan. 7:13-14; Acts 2:32-36).*

4. Jesus is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15).

C. The blood was innocent.

1. Jesus did nothing wrong (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22).

a. Judas said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4).

b. The wife of Pilate said, "Have nothing to do with this just man" (Matt. 27:19).

c. Pilate said, "I find no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4).

d. Pilate also said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person" (Matt. 27:24).

2. The people who knew Jesus best could not convict him of sin (John 8:46).

3. If the enemies of Jesus could not convict him of sin, who can?

D. The blood was substitutionary.

1. *Jesus gave himself for us (Titus 2:14).*
2. *Jesus “bare our sins in his own body” (1 Pet. 2:24).*
3. *Jesus “washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5).*
4. *Jesus’ stripes heal us (Isa. 53:5).*

*E. The blood is satisfying.*

1. *God is holy (holiness is a general term for moral excellence).*
  - a. *“The Lord our God is holy” (Psa. 99:9).*
  - b. *“Holy and reverend is his name” (Psa. 111:9).*
  - c. *His pure eyes cannot behold evil (Hab. 1:13).*
  - d. *Men fear God because he is holy (Rev. 15:4).*
2. *The holiness of God demands that sin be punished.*

*a. God is just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).*

*b. God cannot tolerate evil.*

*c. God must judge and condemn sin.*

*d. God can justify sin only by the merit of a substitutionary sacrifice.*

*e. God can only be just if he forgives by a blood sacrifice, because "the blood of it is for the life thereof" (Lev. 17:14).*

*3. Jesus' blood satisfied the demands of divine justice.*

*a. Jesus was made a sin-sacrifice for us, though he knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21).*

*b. Jesus became an "offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).*

*F. The blood of Jesus was effective.*

- 1. It cleanses from sin (Matt. 26:28; 1 John 1:7).*
- 2. It redeems from sin (Eph. 1:7).*
- 3. It gives life to the dead (Eph. 2:4-5; 1 John 5:11).*
- 4. It purchased the church (Acts. 20:28).*
- 5. It was shed once, never to be shed again (Heb. 10:11-12).*

### III. Conclusion.

- A. The blood of Jesus is precious.*
- B. His blood is real, royal, innocent, substitutionary, satisfying, and effective.*
- C. We remember his blood each Lord's Day.*

---

# A Habitation of God Through



# the Spirit

*By Earl Trimble*

Vol. 106, No. 06

Ephesians 2:22 is sometimes cited to support the view that the Holy Spirit personally indwells the Christian in a direct and in-Person manner. Often the question will be asked: "How can God dwell in us through the Spirit if the Spirit does not indwell us?" The phrase, "through the Spirit," in this Ephesians verse, is thought by some to mean that God, being in the Spirit, indwells us indirectly, figuratively, or representatively through (by means of) the Holy Spirit who is literally in us in his own Person.

Does this verse in the Ephesian letter, in fact, teach that the Spirit indwells one literally and immediately, as some affirm? This phrase, "through the Spirit," occurs at least four times in the New Testament (Acts 21:4; Rom. 8:13; Eph. 2:22; 1 Peter 1:22, KJV). An examination of the other three references will show that this phrase, through the Spirit does not refer to an indwelling of the Spirit. Notice the similar usages of these four references:

- 1) "...who said to Paul through the Spirit..." (Acts 21:4)
- 2) "...through the Spirit do mortify the deeds..." (Rom. 8:13)
- 3) "...a habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22)
- 4) "...obeying the truth through the Spirit..." (1 Peter 1:22)

Notice the similar meanings of this phrase, "through the Spirit" in these four references:

"And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem" (Acts 21:4). The Holy Spirit made known to the disciples at Tyre that Paul would be in danger of his life if

he returned to Jerusalem (see also Acts 21:10-14). Here "through the Spirit" means "by the Spirit" (ASV). That is, the Spirit had warned the brethren of the danger that awaited Paul at Jerusalem. This information given the disciples by the Spirit was inspired revelation.

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:13). Who would argue this means if those Roman Christians would mortify the deeds of the body "through the Spirit" that indwelt them, they would live? It is apparent Paul was telling them if they would mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit's teaching, that is, according to what the Spirit taught, they would live.

"In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). How are Christians built together for a habitation of God? Is our being built together accomplished by the Spirit as he literally indwells us? If so, then would our being built together not be a direct operation of the Holy Spirit? Again, in this Ephesians 2:22 reference, the phrase "through the Spirit" could have been rendered "by the Spirit." Our obedience to the Spirit's teaching builds together as "a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). This verse does not allude to a direct, personal, immediate indwelling of the Spirit. It is a misapplication of Ephesians 2:22 to use it to teach that the Spirit indwells us literally in his own Person.

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love on another fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). Who would affirm that one's "obeying the truth" is effected "through the Spirit" that literally indwells him? We know that one obeys the truth through, or by, the Spirit's influence exerted through, or by, the inspired Word of God. The Spirit's only influence upon the human heart or conscience is through the message of the inspired Word of God, and never by direct operation. In like manner we are built together for a

habitation of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit through the influence exerted by the Spirit in the inspired Word of life (John 6:63-68).

---

## Working the Works of God

*By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs*

Vol. 121, No. 08

The Bible teaches that works have nothing to do with salvation, and it teaches that works are necessary to salvation.

Still, the Bible does not contradict itself.

How can this be? How can the Bible say two things that seem to be diametrically opposed and yet not contradict itself? It would appear to be self-evident that works cannot be both necessary and unnecessary to salvation.

Since the Bible is inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17), it must be true and therefore cannot contradict itself. Truth, in order to be truth, must be coherent. If two statements contradict, either one or both of them must be false, but there is no way they can both be true. How, then, do we deal with the fact that the Bible says works are not necessary to justification, and also says that we are justified by works?

Some assume a “take your pick” attitude and go blithely down the path not knowing how to reconcile the two statements – and, possibly, not caring. The honest person however cannot do this and must either reject the Bible or find a logical way to harmonize the two statements.

# Various Works

To understand the Bible we must define its terms correctly. It is necessary to understand accurately how Bible writers use the word “works” (sometimes “deeds”), or we will be confused. A survey of how the Bible uses this word will help us to avoid the confusion of misunderstanding. A failure to understand something correctly leads to incomprehension and perhaps unbelief.

Following is a partial list of “work(s)” mentioned in the Old and New Testaments:

- The work God does – Gen. 2:2; Judges 2:7; Ps. 71:17; 1 Cor. 12:6; John 6:28-29; John 10:37; John 14:10
- The work man does in providing food and shelter – Gen. 3:17-19; Exod. 23:12; Exod. 26:1; Eccl. 2:4; Matt. 21:28
- The work man does in obeying specific commands of God – Gen. 6:13-22; John 9:4; 1 Cor. 15:58
- Work of iniquity (evil) – Ps. 6:8; Ps. 14:1; Jer. 1:16; Ezek. 33:26; Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27; John 3:19; Rom. 1:27; Eph. 4:19; Rom. 13:12 (“works of darkness”); Gal. 5:19-21 (“works of the flesh”)
- Work of righteousness (good) – Ps. 15:2; Acts 10:35; Matt. 5:16; Rom. 3:27; 1 Cor. 3:13-14; 2 Cor. 9:8; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14; James 1:4; James 3:13
- Works that are worthy of repentance – Acts 26:20
- The mighty works (signs, miracles) of Jesus – Matt. 11:23-24; John 10:32; Acts 2:22
- Works of the Law of Moses – Rom. 3:20; Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:2
- Greater works done by Jesus’ disciples – John 5:20; John 14:12
- Good and bad works by which all men shall be judged – Rom. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 20:12-13; Rev. 22:12
- Human works apart from works of God – Rom. 9:11; Rom. 11:6

- Converts to Jesus – 1 Cor. 3:14
- Apostolic signs, and wonders, and mighty works – 2 Cor. 12:12
- Work of sinless perfection – Eph. 2:9; Col. 2:21-23
- The power that works in the saved – Eph. 3:20; Eph. 4:12
- The word of God that works in the believer – 1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:10; 1 Tim. 5:12; 2 Tim. 2:21
- Works that justify – James 2:24; James 3:13
- Works of the devil – 1 John 3:8
- The ungodly works of ungodliness – Jude 1:15

This gives a sample of various “works” mentioned in the Bible. It is a mistake to suppose that the word work(s) always refers to condition of acceptance with God. It does not!

Even a casual glance at this list will convince the thoughtful Bible student this is a complicated subject, having many interrelated parts. It is difficult to deal with because of the need to take different relationships or points of view into consideration.

The mighty acts of Jehovah are works. Creation (Ps. 8:3-6; Ps. 19:1; Ps. 33:4; Ps. 92:5; Ps. 102:25; Ps. 104:24), redemptive acts in history like the Exodus (Judges 2:7-10).

Jesus is our perfect example in all things (1 Pet. 2:21). The Savior went about doing good (Acts 10:38-39; John 4:34; John 5:36; John 10:25-38; John 15:24; John 17:4). His words and his works confirmed his authority and mission.

Humans are sinless at birth, seeing that Jehovah is the Father and Giver of the human spirit (Heb. 12:9; Eccl. 12:7). As the child matures it comes to understand that some things are right and other things are wrong, but chooses to do wrong things and ignore right things. This is called sin – sin of omission and sin of commission. This is the something a person knowingly does to himself. Iniquity separates a soul from its

God (Isa. 59:2). Those who die in sin cannot go where Jesus is; they "shall not inherit the kingdom of God (John 8:21; Gal. 5:19-21).

In his infinite compassion Jehovah sent Jesus to offer himself sacrifice for sins (John 3:16; John 10:18; Matt. 26:28).

We access the grace of God and the blood of the Lamb of God through belief (John 8:24).

"They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29).

Saving belief is a work that includes other works. Faith is shown by works (James 2:18). "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). Abraham was justified by works produced by faith (James 2:21-22). Works make faith perfect (James 2:22). Sinners are justified by works and not by faith only (James 2:24). Faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

Jesus said, "He that believeth (a work) and is baptized (a work) shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2:22). In baptism the sinner, "is buried with Christ" and is "raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). In baptism we are buried "with" Christ and we are raised "with" him believing that God will keep his promise to save "he that believeth and is baptized." Peter tells us that baptism saves (1 Pet. 3:21). In baptism our sins are washed away (Acts 22:16).

The spirit that is born again in the water of baptism (John 3:5) enters the kingdom of God, where faith continues to work, bringing glory to God (Matt. 5:16). The saved "work the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 16:10), abound "in every good work" (1 Cor. 9:8). Servants of righteousness "end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:5). The child of God is "created in

Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10); the saint is "fruitful unto every good work" (Col. 1:10). The Christian "works out his own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). Paul prayed that God the Father may "comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word" (2 Thess. 2:17). Women professing godliness are to adorn themselves "with good works" (1 Tim. 2:10). If a man desires the office of bishop, he desires "a good work" (1 Tim. 3:1). Widows to be enrolled are to be "well reported of for good works" (1 Tim. 5:10). The new covenant lauds the good works of some that are "evident, and cannot be hid" (1 Tim. 5:25). Those described as "a vessel unto honor" are "prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). "The man of God" is "furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:17). Preachers are to be "an ensample of good works" (Titus 2:7), "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Followers of Jesus are to "be ready unto every good work" (Titus 3:1). Paul desired "that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which ye showed toward his name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister" (Heb. 6:10). "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). Our Lord Jesus "make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:21).

The "wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13). Behave seemly among the pagans, "that, wherein they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12). "My Little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18). Jesus knows and commends the works of his disciples on earth (Rev. 2:2, Rev. 2:9, Rev. 2:19; Rev. 3:8). Those who die in the Lord are blessed because "their works follow with them" (Rev.

14:13).

On the last great judgment day, God will render unto every man “according to their works, whether they be good or evil” (Eccl. 12:14; Rev. 20:12-13; Rev. 22:12).

It is because of a present and future judgment that we must avoid the works of the flesh ... the works of darkness ... the works of the devil. Abstaining from all evil works is critical to the believer.

In the light of what the new covenant has to say about the importance of good works – works of faith – works that justify (James 2:24) – it seems strange that anyone would say that works have nothing to do with salvation ... unless, of course, he is blinded by denominational dogma.

The Bible does warn us that we cannot live to maturity and be sinless (Rom. 3:27; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4:2-6). “All sin and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). It also tells us the works of the Law of Moses cannot save us (Rom. 9:32; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:10). If eternal salvation could come by the Mosaic Law, then the death of Jesus was needless, because the people had that law for 1,500 years before Jesus was born of a woman (Gal. 2:21). We are also told that we cannot save ourselves by austerities (Col. 2:18).

Some honest person may be misled into wrongly supposing that when the Bible tells us we cannot be saved by our own works because it is not possible for us to live without sin – sooner or later all will sin and fall short of God’s glory, that it is saying that even works of faith and righteousness – works of God – do not save. Also some will read Bible passages which say that the works of the Law of Moses cannot save, and mistakenly conclude that works have nothing to do with salvation. This study should clear that up because it gives indisputable proof that there is no justification without works.



It is indisputably true that works are necessary to justification (James 2:24), but it is also true that some works cannot save – the work of living a perfectly sinless life – the work of devising our own scheme of redemption – the works of the Law of Moses – the works of darkness, which are the works of Satan.

So, it is true that works both save us and have nothing to do with our salvation, depending on what kind of works you are talking about.

It is not possible for a reasonable adult to be sinless and therefore, in this sense, one cannot save himself by his own works. We cannot be saved by the works of Satan, nor by the works of the Law of Moses, nor by any human invention. Such works have no power to save and many of them are an offense to God.

Still, it is true that the work of faith (the works produced by faith, see Rom. 1:5; Rom. 16:26), bring the sinner into a right relationship with his Creator, help to maintain that relationship, and will one day be the reason for his promotion to glory (Matt. 25:31-46). To say that works have nothing to do with salvation is to fly in the face of Bible teaching.

*P.O. Box 690192  
Houston, TX 77269-0192*

---

## **It's Up to Me and to You**

*By Hugo McCord*  
Vol. 116, No. 11

Many gifts from God, as our lives, as the air we breathe, are absolutely free. But whether or not we are (1) thankful to God

and (2) live for him and for others is wholly in our hands. It's up to me and to you.

## Thankfulness

Some "believe that he [God] is" but are not "thankful" to him (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 1:21). To be thankful (says Webster) is to be "impressed with a sense of kindness received," to be "ready to acknowledge it," to be "grateful."

To be thankless (says Webster) is "not feeling or expressing thanks, not acknowledging favors," and Webster quotes Shakespeare, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

After Jesus had healed ten men of leprosy, only one of them, a Samaritan, "when he saw that he was healed turned back and praised God with a loud voice, and fell on his face at the feet of Jesus, giving him thanks" (Luke 17:16). Jesus was shocked that the nine Jews were thankless, and he asked, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was none found to return to give God the glory except this foreigner?" (Luke 17:17-18).

A psalm written 3,000 years ago is timeless:

*Shout joyfully to Yahweh, all the earth. Serve Yahweh with gladness. Come before him with singing. Know that Yahweh, he is God. He made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be thankful to him, and bless his name, for Yahweh is good, his kindness is everlasting, and his faithfulness is from generation to generation (Psa. 100).*

Paul was grateful "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst" (1 Tim. 1:15), "who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20), exclaiming

about Jesus, “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable [indescribable, inexpressible, unutterable] gift” (2 Cor. 9:15).

All Christians are exhorted, “Always give thanks to God, even the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20); “Give thanks for everything, which is God’s will in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:18).

## **Living for Others**

Jesus not only died for others (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:14-15), but he is a prime example of living for others. “He went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).

To believing, penitent hearts (Acts 16:31; 2:38), as their bodies are raised from the water of baptism (Acts 10:47; Col. 2:12), Christ is their everything (Col. 3:11).

Redeemed sinners (“all have sinned,” Rom. 3:23) realize that if “one died for all, then all had died” (2 Cor. 5:14), “and since he died for all, the living should no longer live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised” (2 Cor. 5:15).

Living for the Lord includes daily Bible reading (Col. 1:10; 1 Pet. 2:2), daily praying (Rom. 12:12; 1 Thess. 5:17), a weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7), a weekly contribution (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and living for others as “living sacrifices” (Rom. 12:1), being “ready for every good work” (Titus 3:1, 8, 14).

No matter how selfish and self-centered a sinner was before his baptism, no longer does a Christian live “to himself” (Rom. 14:7). Every morning, as Jesus “went about doing good,” on the mind of every Christian is, “what can I do today to help somebody?”

Those who live for Jesus not only live to serve other

Christians, but they look for opportunities to serve non-Christians, as Paul taught: "Therefore, as we have an opportunity, let us do good to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10), "contributing to the needs of the saints, showing love to strangers" (Rom. 12:13).

The first ones at Corinth in A.D. 51, "hearing, believing," and being "baptized," were "the household of Stephanas" (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor. 16:15); apparently Stephanas himself and his wife had children old enough to believe.

Their conversion was more than "joining a church." Theirs was a life-long commitment to live for Jesus and to live for others. Six years later (A.D. 57) Paul wrote of them: "They have set themselves to serve the saints" (1 Cor. 16:15). The KJV says that "they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." The word addict means to give oneself over to a thing, and generally, says Webster, in a bad sense. The word is used in reference to alcoholics or those given over to drugs. But the KJV used the word in a good sense, that the Stephanas family addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

Sadly, some Christians allow selfishness to take over, and live only for themselves. Phygelus and Hermogenes "deserted" Paul (2 Tim. 1:15).

Demas, who had been one of Paul's "fellow workers" (Phil. 24) "deserted me," said Paul, "having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10).

On the other hand, most Christians crucify selfishness, living for their Lord and for others: "Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24).

During Paul's three years at Ephesus (A.D. 54-57) a Christian by the name of Onesiphorus "served" Paul in such a way that he could say to Timothy that "you know better than I the ways he

served me in Ephesus" (2 Tim. 1:18).

Then later, during Paul's last day in "chains" in the Mamertine Prison in Rome (A.D. 67-68), for some reason Onesiphorus was in Rome (2 Tim. 1:16-17), over 600 miles away from his home in Ephesus, and somehow he knew that Paul was there. The Mamertine Prison is a three-quarter cellar with a tiny window opening toward a cemetery.

In A.D. 67 Paul wrote, "When he [Onesiphorus] was in Rome, he searched diligently and found me. ...He often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains" (2 Tim. 1:16-17).

Paul appreciated his good friend, and, apparently after Onesiphorus died, Paul penned two prayers about him in a letter to Timothy: "May the Lord grant mercy to the family of Onesiphorus," and "May the Lord grant that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day" (2 Tim. 4:16, 18), and Paul asked Timothy to greet "the family of Onesiphorus" (2 Tim. 4:19).

An unselfish Christian lady in Bartlesville, Okla., a member of the Sixth and Dewey congregation, showed no self-pity when paralysis made her bedfast. She had never missed a Bible class or a church service until she became bedfast. Then she asked that the names of the Sunday morning auditorium Bible class absentees be sent to her every Monday morning. With her telephone in bed she called each absentee. I preached for the Sixth and Dewey congregation six years (1951-57), and I am sorry I have forgotten the name of the bedfast Christian of whom it could be said, "She has done what she could" (Mark 14:8). She was a good example for every church member.

I am thankful that the Lord, though he does not need it, has "a book of remembrance ... written before him, for them who revered Yahweh, and who thought about his name" (Mal. 3:16), "whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3).

In conclusion, "None of us lives to himself, and none dies to himself. If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we

die for the Lord. Whether, therefore, we live or die, we belong to the Lord" (Rom. 14:7-8).

*5535 E. Evergreen, #7505  
Vancouver, WA 98661*