

# The Amish Voice



PO Box 128, 575 State Route 250 N, Savannah OH 44874

Office: (419) 962-1515

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## PART 15—What Is The Church

### The Enemies of the Church (Part 2 of 2)

Once again, we are going to look at the enemies of the church. If you remember from the last issue of the Amish Voice, we looked at 4 of the 10 enemies that the church has faced since its beginning in the Book of Acts. Every once in awhile, well meaning Christians will make the following statement:

*Oh to live back in the old days, when there was less turmoil and division in the church body!*

Dear friend, that statement is far from the truth! Since the very beginning of the church age (Acts 2:1-4), there has always been turmoil, gossiping, anger, pride, selfishness, fighting, divisions, backbiting, deceptions, disagreements over Scripture, and persecution. False teachers and preachers have always lived among us. There is no such thing as "the good old days" or "better days of the past".

2,000 years ago, the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth:

*I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. (1 Cor 11:17-19)*

And let me say again, "very little has changed since this day in which Paul wrote about!"

It is ever so true, where the Lord is at work in His body (the church), there is the devil also doing his very best to confuse and stop the work. If it were not for the Lord's strong hand of protection, the devil would utterly and completely destroy the church. I am reminded once again of the powerful promise Jesus made to Peter and to all of us. He said...

*And I (Jesus) say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will **build MY CHURCH; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** (Mat 16:18)*

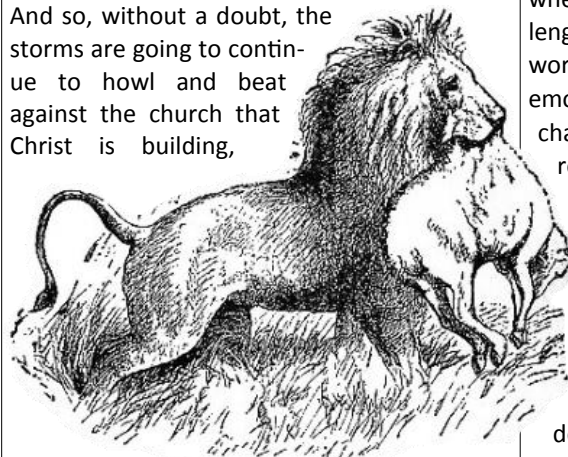
Note the exact words spoken by Christ.

**Fact 1:** "My church." The church is Christ's not man's.

**Fact 2:** "I will build." Christ builds the church.

**Fact 3:** "The gates of hell shall not prevail." Christ Himself protects the church.

And so, without a doubt, the storms are going to continue to howl and beat against the church that Christ is building,



but no one, not even hell will bring it down. To that I say amen and amen!

Well, having said all that to get us started for our next lesson on who are the enemies of the church, let's get started. Here are the other six enemies of the church that the Bible talks about.

#### **ENEMY NUMBER FIVE** **(EMOTIONALISM)**

Martin Luther once said this: "**For feelings come and feelings go, and feelings are deceiving. My warrant is the Word of God, naught else is worth believing.**" God's unchanging Word must lead us and guide us. How I feel is not important. The important thing is this: WHAT HAS GOD SAID?

You may not have ever heard about it, but there are some churches that you can attend where the leadership has gone to great lengths in preparing the types of music for worship that does little more than stir up the emotions of the crowd; an emotionally charged worship leader spurs them on with repetitive chants; hands and bodies sway to and fro; the atmosphere has been established. As the crowd is further worked into a frenzy, often times, folks will end up rolling about in the aisles of the church house, bursting out in uncontrollable laughter, shaking, jumping, and shouting out words that can not be understood. Is this worship that gives glory to

God, or merely a display of unbridled emotions?

Without a doubt, this type of emotional appeal is used to capture the audience, to prepare them for healings, for the supernatural experience about to take place. One can easily get caught up in the moment; get a high from the emotion – but understand this is not godly worship.

Without doubt, emotions do have a place in worship. They are God-given, and *when they are handled properly, worshippers are edified and God is glorified.* However, when they are misused, they lead to a type of worship that is highly disrespectful toward God.

We need go no further than the book of Psalms to understand that worshipping God is an emotional experience. David wrote...

**(Psalms 51:17)** *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

**(Psalms 42:1-4)** *As the hart panteth after*

*the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.*

**(Psalms 100:1-5)** *Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His*

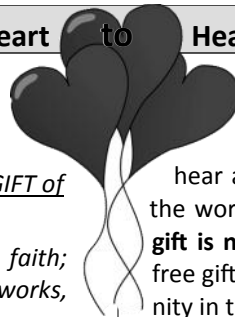
*mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations.*

Worshipping God should bring a variety of emotions in us: contrition and sorrow for sin, a fervent longing to be in the presence of God, a trembling awe of the glory of His presence and greatness of His power, thanksgiving for the blessings of God, rejoicing and hope for the salvation which God supplies.

Emotion is necessary, but it is not to be the basis of our faith and worship, nor is it an end to itself. Welling up emotions for the sake of being emotional is not sincere worship. It is emotionalism.

Let us be diligent students of God's Word, and enter into worship with a readiness to give glory to God and encouragement to our brethren. If we will do so, our emotions will most certainly be stirred, as will the emotions of all others who have prepared themselves for worship - not stirred by human manufac-

### Heart to Heart with Joe Keim



God's Word is clear in many places throughout the Bible; eternal life is free! It is a gift from God! You cannot buy it, and you cannot earn it through your own good works.

**Romans 6:23** says, *For the wages of sin is death; but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**Ephesians 2:8-9** says, *for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the GIFT of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

**Romans 3:24** says, *Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

If a person wants to be saved, these verses tell him how to be saved. Salvation is ALL the work of God, of God's grace and of God's grace alone. It is not of man, not to any degree whatsoever.

**Titus 3:5** says, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us...*

Salvation is a free gift of God. It is by grace alone that a person is saved. Man can do nothing whatsoever to save himself. He cannot earn, win, or merit salvation. All a person can do is accept the fact that God says He will save him and accept the free offer of salvation (Romans 11:6).

But before we go further, let's stop and talk about what a gift is. A gift, no matter how valuable, must be received from the giver, be-

fore it becomes theirs. **Thousands of people die every year, having known all about the gift of eternal life but have never personally reached out and received it.** Some hear about the gift so many times that they could travel around the world and tell others all about it, **but just knowing about the gift is not going to make it theirs.** Each person must receive the free gift of eternal life personally, or they will die and spent an eternity in the lake of fire.

**John 1:12** says, *But as many as received Him [Jesus], to them gave He power [or the right] to become the sons [children] of God...*

In other words, as many as reached out and took Jesus, received Him into their life, to those God gave the right to belong to His family.

**1 John 5:12** says, *He that hath the Son hath [eternal] life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not [eternal] life.*

To have Jesus in your heart is to have eternal life; to have eternal life is to have Jesus. You cannot have one without the other. So, the question we must ask ourselves is, have I accepted, received, or taken Jesus and His eternal Life?

When you understand these things more clearly, then the rest of the New Testament makes more sense too. For instance, look at the following portions of God's Word: —continued on page 9—

**W H O** This publishing work is registered as a charitable organization in the USA and is supported through freewill offerings. We welcome your articles, testimonies and questions. We reserve the right to edit or decline any material and are not responsible for the return of any articles.

**W E A R E** Since our beginning in 2000, many people have written to us, asking to be added to our mailing list, while others have sent us names of their friends and family members. We think it is important for us to tell you that the cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.45 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country, who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come along side of us, by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit as well as highly appreciated. In order to continue receiving the Amish Voice, please keep us informed of any changes to your address.

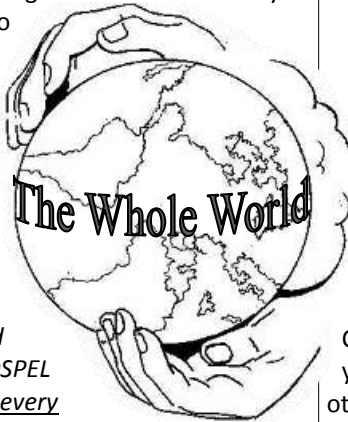
ture, but by our desire to uplift the name of God, in accordance with His will. —next page—

## **ENEMY NUMBER SIX** **(DIVERSION)**

Suppose your neighbor lady gives you \$5.00 and tells you to buy some groceries for her at the store. On the way to the store you see an ice cream store, so you turn in there and buy ice cream for yourself and for your friends. This is DIVERSION! You were diverted (turned aside) from doing \_\_\_\_\_ what you were told to do and you failed to accomplish your mission.

In Mark 16:15 Jesus Christ gave the Church an assignment:

*Go ye into all the WORLD and PREACH the GOSPEL (good news) to every creature.*



Many churches have turned aside from doing this and they have done other things instead. Instead of preaching the good news about Christ and His salvation they have concentrated on other things such as feeding the hungry, giving clothes to the poor, providing for those who are sick, helping those who are in need, etc. These are good things to do, but this is not the MAIN THING that Christ told the Church to do. Food, clothes and good health are fine, but will these things get a person to heaven? \_\_\_\_\_

Other churches have become isolated and so inward focused that they have turned their back to a world that needs Christ. They have come up with all kinds of excuses and reasons why they do not have to go to all the world and preach the gospel.

Consider two examples:

**1. The Salvation Army**--When the Salvation Army first started they preached the gospel and also tried to help those who were poor and needy. As the years went by they helped the poor and needy more and more and they preached the gospel less and less. Today the Salvation Army does **very little** preaching of the gospel. The main thing they are known for is not the preaching of the gospel, but rather the collection of money for the benefit of

those in need (to provide clothing, food, Christmas gifts, etc.). They allowed themselves to become diverted from the MAIN THING that Christ told them to do.

**2. The YMCA**--The YMCA started out as a Christian organization (The Young Men's Christian Association). *But as time went on the people in this organization gave more importance to other things and less importance to preaching the gospel. Today, if you want to swim or play basketball or get some good exercise and healthy activity, the YMCA is a great place to go. However, if you want to learn how to be born again and how to go to heaven, do not go to the YMCA. They have been diverted.*

**Danger:** Do not fail to do the MAIN THING that Christ has commanded His Church to do. The Church must not forget **why** she is in the world. We must clearly point to Christ and His wonderful salvation. We must not get involved with things that Christ never told us to get involved with. Are you involved in sharing the good news with others?

## **ENEMY NUMBER SEVEN** **(COLDNESS)**

In Revelation chapter 2 we learn about a church which was about to have its light snuffed out (Revelation 2:5). What was the problem? What did these believers do wrong?

[Jesus said] *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast LOST thy FIRST LOVE (Revelation 2:4)*

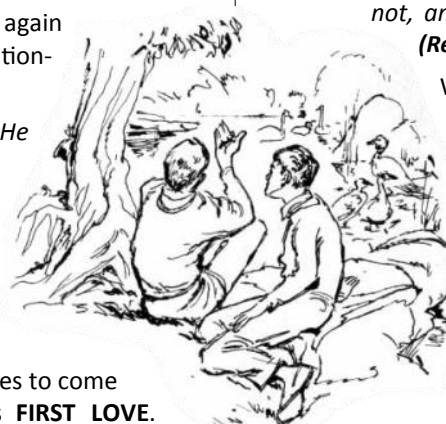
Something terrible happened to these people. Something happened that cooled their love for the Savior. They no longer loved Him as they once did. Their love for the Savior had grown cold. Their relationship with Christ had slowly and gradually lost its warmth and beauty and freshness.

When a person is born again he enters into a love relationship with Christ Jesus:

*We LOVE Him because He first LOVED us.*  
(1 John 4:19)

Once we are born again we need to keep our love for the Savior burning bright and hot.

It is possible for other loves to come in and crowd out one's **FIRST LOVE**.



Some people are "lovers of PLEASURE more than lovers of GOD" (2 Tim. 3:4). They would rather make money than sit in Church. They would rather play than pray. They would rather read a hunting and fishing magazine than read the book of Corinthians.

Think of a husband and wife. If they never talked to each other and never did anything for each other and never spent time with each other, would they have a very good love relationship? \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ wants to have FIRST PLACE in our lives (Col. 1:18).

**Danger:** Is your love for the Savior growing cold? Can you remember a time in your Christian life when you were walking **closer** to the Lord than you are now? In some church gatherings you will find song books, prayer books, people on benches, a preacher, but THE LORD IS MISSING. The Lord does not COMMEND but He CONDEMNS a Church where He is UNLOVED and where the hearts of the people have grown COLD towards Him.

## **ENEMY NUMBER EIGHT** **(TOLERATION)**

There are some things that we must not tolerate (or permitted). Suppose a rattlesnake were to be found in a yard where small children often play. Should this snake be tolerated and allowed to remain in this yard? Suppose you were to learn that there was cancer in your body. Would you tolerate this cancer and let it stay there and grow there?

There are some things that the Church must not tolerate. In Revelation 2, we learn that there were people who claimed to be Apostles. Let's read it to see what Jesus had to say about it.

*Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus...I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: (Rev 2:1-2)*

Were they really apostles? \_\_\_\_\_ They were FALSE APOSTLES. Did these Christians tolerate these liars and allow them to continue to fool people and mislead people? \_\_\_\_\_

Today there are churches that tolerate many

things. There are churches that tolerate SIN. If someone has a serious problem with sin, should not believers seek to help the person deal with the problem God's way? Instead, they try to ignore the problem and pretend that everything is alright. This is like ignoring the rattlesnake and pretending that everything is alright. [See 1 Corinthians chapter 5 where Paul told the Corinthians that they needed to deal with a man who had fallen into deep sin.]

Some churches allow unsaved people to be MEMBERS. Some allow unsaved people to preach from God's Word. This is a very DANGEROUS thing to do. This would be like a shepherd telling the wolf to watch the sheep for him while he takes a long walk. This is a fast way to destroy the flock!

In 2nd Thessalonians chapter three, Paul wrote—rumor has it that some of you in the church are living idle lives, refusing to work, and are meddling in other people's business. To this, he gave a very stern command.

He writes: "...note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. (2 Thess 3:14-15)

**Danger:** The Church must never tolerate that which is wrong. The Church that fails to deal with sin in the right way will be the Church that is destroyed by sin. The cancer that is not removed from the body is the cancer that destroys the body.

## ENEMY NUMBER NINE (DIVISION)

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:10-11... Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speaking the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

Was the Corinthian Church a DIVIDED Church? \_\_\_\_\_

These Christians were getting together and forming different groups within the Church



and each group thought they were better than the other group!

Division within the church is one of the most serious problems a church can face, if not the most serious. It can devastate the church's fellowship, worship, mission, and witness to the world unless it is solved quickly. Paul knew this; therefore, he sought to solve the problem immediately.

Note how Paul approaches the severe problem of division in verse 10: he does not have fire in his eyes nor a spirit of rebuke and fight in his heart. There is not even a trace of anger in him. On the contrary, his heart is tender and full of love. He graciously appeals to the Corinthians.

- He says, "I beseech you." The word "beseech" means to call to one's side. Paul says, "I call you to my side; come, let's share together, talk the matter over. I ask, plead, beg—hear what I have to say."
- He calls them *brothers* twice in just two verses (1 Cor. 1:10-11).
- He begs them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to heed what he is saying. He pleads with them to consider their love for Christ. They must do away with their divisions and be unified once again—for the sake of Christ. For Him and His cause they must obey Him and be united in one spirit and one mind.

It is a terrible thing to see **family warfare** within the Church. It is a terrible thing to see Christians fighting Christians by such things as gossip, jealousy, pride, failure to love the brethren, etc. Christians sometimes are so busy fighting each other that they have little time or energy left to battle the real enemies: THE WORLD, THE FLESH and THE DEVIL! How are Christians supposed to live with each other (see Ephesians 4:2-3; 31-32)?

*With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

(Ephesians 4:2-3)

*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be*

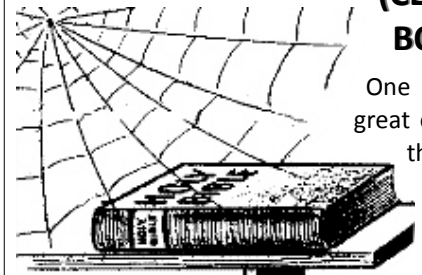
*ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

(Ephesians 4:31-32)

**Danger:** If a person is a fellow Christian then he is supposed to be on the same team that you are on! BE ALERT! Love the brethren (1 John 3:14). Don't be one who sows discord and division among brethren. God HATES this kind of thing (see Proverbs 6:16,19).

## ENEMY NUMBER TEN

(CLOSED BOOK)



One of the great enemies that the Church faces today is the

CLOSED BIBLE. There are many churches where the Bible is used **very little**. There are many Preachers who never encourage their people to open their Bibles and use them. Matter of fact, in many instances, you could pull the Bible out from under the church and the church would go right on surviving. You ask, how can that be? Because the church is not build on God's Word, it is build on rules, regulations, and traditions from the forefathers.

According to 2 Timothy 4:2, what should be preached to the church?

*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

(2 Tim 4:2)

The next verse (v-3) tells us that there will come a time when people in the church will not want to hear sound doctrine preached anymore.

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

(2 Tim 4:3)

They will not want healthy teaching! They will turn away their ears from God's truth.

*And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (2 Tim 4:4)*

—Continued on next page—

Will their teachers give them what they need to hear or what they want to hear? Go back and see 2 Timothy 4:3 for the answer? Sometimes the truth hurts! The truth is like medicine. It does not always taste good, but we sure need it.

**Danger:** Is the Bible a closed Book in your Church? Is the Bible a closed Book in your home? Is **your Bible** a closed Book or is it opened frequently? When do you use your Bible? When do you open your Bible? May God help us to have an **OPEN BIBLE** and an **OPEN HEART!**

This Bible study was taken from the Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary. Other parts of it was published by the MIDDLETOWN BIBLE CHURCH of Middletown, Connecticut.

### Can You Find Sixteen Books Of The Bible? How many can you find?

*One preacher found 15 in 20 minutes, but it took him 3 weeks to find the 16th one.*

I once made a remark about the hidden books of the bible. It was a fluke. It kept people looking so hard for facts and others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since they were not capitalized. But the truth finally struck home for numbers of readers. To others it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require judges to help them. I will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one of them and there will be a lamentations when it is found. A little lady says she brews a cup of tea so she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now for there really are sixteen names of the books of the bible in this story.

Answers found on Page 6, but don't cheat!

#### A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

1. I will, like Paul, forget those things which are behind and press forward.
2. I will like David, lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence comes my help.
3. I will, like Abraham, trust implicitly in my God;
4. I will, like Enoch, walk in daily fellowship with my Heavenly Father.
5. I will, like Jehoshaphat, prepare my heart to seek God.
6. I will, like Moses, choose rather to suffer than to enjoy the pleasures for sin for a season.
7. I will, like Daniel, commune with my God at all times.
8. I will, like Job, be patient under all circumstances.
9. I will, like Caleb and Joshua, refuse to be discouraged because of superior numbers.
10. I will, like Joseph, turn my back to all seductive advances.
11. I will, like Gideon, advance even though my friends be few.



12. I will, like Aaron and Hur, uphold the hands of my spiritual leaders.
13. I will, like Isaiah, consecrate myself to do God's work.
14. I will, like Andrew, strive to lead my brother into a closer walk with Christ.
15. I will, like John, lean upon the bosom of the Master and imbibe of His spirit.
16. I will, like Stephen, manifest a forgiving spirit toward all who seek my hurt.
17. I will, like Timothy, study the Word of God.
18. I will, like the heavenly host, proclaim the message of peace on earth.
19. And I will, like my Lord Himself, overcome all earthly allurements by refusing to succumb to its enticements.
20. Realizing that I cannot hope to achieve these objectives by my own strength, I will rely upon Christ, for "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

#### Getting Rid of Depression and Past Hurts

Have you wondered how heavy a glass of water is? Well then it will depend on how long you have to carry it. If you carry it for a minute, it would be a piece of cake and definitely pose no problem whatsoever. If you carry it for an hour, your arm might ache and begin to affect your body too. But if you lift it for 24 hours, there's no doubt you will probably be in bad shape. Now when you look at it, it's the same glass of water but the longer you carried it, the heavier it felt. So also it is with bearing a grudge or hateful feeling against someone. This can become a real burden. A burden that becomes so heavy to bear that it practically stops us from moving in life and tears us down. The reality of life you have to accept is that people are different and because of this difference, people will hurt you. Sometimes they do it intentionally, other times they have no idea. So what do you do? How do you overcome this hurtful feeling or this grudge?

##### There are 3 steps to over coming

**Step 1 Confrontation:** Confront your feelings and not those who have hurt you. When the hurt is deep it becomes even harder to forgive.

**Step 2 Pray:** Pray for yourself and for those who have hurt you. If you do not know what to pray, just repeat these words. "Lord change my heart and heal me."

**Step 3 Change your thinking:** Begin to fill your mind with love, this maybe hard at first, but keep at it. Your mental state will begin to change, as you continue to pray for them and for yourself. Something extraordinary will happen, your heart will begin to soften, you will overcome your raw emotions, dispose of your burden, feel lighter and you will begin to see them through God's eyes. Above all, you will overcome your depressed state.

## What is Heaven like?



Heaven is a real place described in the Bible. The word “heaven” is found 255 times in the New Testament alone. Scripture refers to three heavens. The apostle Paul was “caught up to the third heav-

en,” but he wouldn’t go into any details as to what he experienced there (2 Corinthians 12:1-9).

If a third heaven exists, there must also be two other heavens. The first is most frequently referred to in the Old Testament as the “sky” or the “firmament.” This is the heaven that contains clouds, the area that birds fly through. The second heaven is interstellar/outer space, which is the abode of the stars, planets, and other celestial objects (Genesis 1:14-18).

The third heaven, the location of which is not revealed, is the dwelling place of God. Jesus promised to prepare a place for true Christians in heaven (John 14:2). Heaven is also the destination of Old Testament saints who died trusting God’s promise of the Redeemer (Ephesians 4:8). Whoever believes in Christ shall never perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

The apostle John was privileged to see and report on the heavenly city (Revelation 21:10-27). John witnessed that heaven (the new earth) possesses the “glory of God” (Revelation 21:11), the very presence of God. Because heaven has no night and the Lord Himself is the light, the sun and moon are no longer needed (Revelation 22:5).

The city is filled with the brilliance of costly stones and crystal clear jasper. Heaven has twelve gates (Revelation 21:12) and twelve foundations (Revelation 21:14). The paradise of the Garden of Eden is restored: the river of the water of life flows freely and the tree of life is available once again, yielding fruit monthly with leaves that “heal the nations” (Revelation 22:1-2). However eloquent John was in his description of heaven, the reality of heaven is beyond the ability of mankind to describe (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Heaven is a place of “no mores.” There will be no more tears, no more pain, and no more sorrow (Revelation 21:4). There will be no more separation, because death will be conquered (Revelation 20:6). The best thing about heaven is the presence of our Lord and Savior (1 John 3:2). We will be face to face with the Lamb of God who loved us and sacrificed Himself so that we can enjoy His presence in heaven for eternity. Wow! Can you for just a moment imagine what that is going to be like—face to face with Jesus!

If you would like to obtain a New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs in Pennsylvania Deitsh, they are available for \$13.95 post-paid from the **Committee for Translation, 3864 Township Road 162, Sugarcreek, OH 44681. Phone 330-852-4663.** You do not need to send money ahead of time; we will bill you with your order. Your local Christian bookstore may also have them available.

## Little Fruit for Your Souls

The following article was sent in by one of our readers

Eve was a normal woman with the spirit of God as her guide. She was created to be a help mate for Adam. The weaker vessel of the two, male and female. Satan knew she was the weaker vessel so she was tempted by him. He told her, she would know whatever God knew if she would eat of the fruit of good and evil. She was drawn away of her own lust and trapped herself to death, of which Satan at the time had power over death.

*When her lust had conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man (James 1:15).*

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17).*

Let us all be more eager to hear, less apt to speak, weigh each word before it is spoken, so sin has no power to bring it to wrath. For the wrath of man does not perform the righteousness of God. Humble yourselves to God with meekness, when you receive His engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls.

His Word will dig into our souls and mind, even into the bone marrow and clean ourselves so Jesus can live in our hearts. Then He will guide you to be doers of the Word and not only hearers of the Word. But if we look into the perfect law of liberty and continue therein, we being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, we will be dearly blessed by our Father who loves us for our good work done by brother Jesus living with us each day. Eve’s lust for want has brought death to our back door, but God’s Word spoken by Jesus brought eternal brightness to our front door.

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

—The Voice Crying From the Roof Top

## Answers to “Can You Find Sixteen Books Of The Bible?” on page 5

I once made a re-MARK about the hidden books of the bible. It was a FLIKE. It kept people looking so hard for FACTS and others it was a REV-ELATION. Some were in a JAM, ESpecially since they were not capital-ized. But the t-RUTH finally struck home for NUMBERS of readers. To others it was a real JOB. We want it to be A MOS t fascinating few mo-ments for you. YES THERE will be some really easy ones to spot. Others may require JUDGES to help them. I will quickly admIT IT USually takes a minister to find one of them and there will be a LAMENTATIONS when it is found. A little lady says s HE BREWS a cup of tea so she can concen-trate better. See how well you can comPETE. Relax now for there really are sixteen names of the books of the bible in this story.



# Father's Love Letter

AN INTIMATE MESSAGE FROM GOD TO YOU.



## My Dear Child

1. You may not know me, but I know everything about you. (Psalm 139:1)
2. I know when you sit down and when you rise up. (Psalm 139:2)
3. I am familiar with all your ways. (Psalm 139:3)
4. Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. (Matthew 10:29-31)
5. For you were made in my image. (Genesis 1:27)
6. In me you live and move and have your being. (Acts 17:28)
7. For you are my offspring. (Acts 17:28)
8. I knew you even before you were conceived. (Jeremiah 1:4-5)
9. I chose you when I planned creation. (Ephesians 1:11-12)
10. You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. (Psalm 139:15-16)
11. I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. (Acts 17:26)
12. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14)
13. I knit you together in your mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13)
14. And brought you forth on the day you were born. (Psalm 71:6)
15. I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. (John 8:41-44)
16. I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. (1 John 4:16)
17. And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. (1 John 3:1)
18. Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. (1 John 3:1)
19. I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. (Matthew 7:11)
20. For I am the perfect father. (Matthew 5:48)
21. Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. (James 1:17)
22. For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. (Matthew 6:31-33)
23. My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. (Jer 29:11)
24. Because I love you with an everlasting love. (Jeremiah 31:3)
25. My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. (Psalms 139:17-18)
26. And I rejoice over you with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)
27. I will never stop doing good to you. (Jeremiah 32:40)
28. For you are my treasured possession. (Exodus 19:5)

29. I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. (Jer 32:41)
30. And I want to show you great and marvelous things. (Jeremiah 33:3)
31. If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. (Deuteronomy 4:29)
32. Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)
33. For it is I who gave you those desires. (Philippians 2:13)
34. I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. (Eph 3:20)
35. For I am your greatest encourager. (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)
36. I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. (2 Cor 1:3-4)
37. When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. (Psalm 34:18)
38. As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. (Isaiah 40:11)
39. One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. (Revelation 21:3-4)
40. And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. (Revelation 21:3-4)
41. I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. (John 17:23)
42. For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. (John 17:26)
43. He is the exact representation of my being. (Hebrews 1:3)
44. He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. (Rom 8:31)
45. And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
46. Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
47. His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. (1 John 4:10)
48. I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. (Rom 8:31-32)
49. If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. (1 John 2:23)
50. And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. (Romans 8:38-39)
51. Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. (Luke 15:7)
52. I have always been Father, and will always be Father. (Eph 3:14-15)
53. My question is... Will you be my child? (John 1:12-13)
54. I am waiting for you. (Luke 15:11-32)

**Love, Your Heavenly Father  
(Almighty God)**

One dictionary says temptation is “Pressure applied to your thinking designed to create wrong emotions which will eventually lead to wrong actions.”

Back in the late sixties I thought it would be cool to smoke. I was old enough to know that many smokers got hooked and could not free themselves. Nevertheless, I would light up after work and puff away while I headed for home. This went on for a week or so until my second pack of cigarettes ran out. I thought maybe I will buy some next time I go to a store. Or maybe I wasn’t thinking. However, I had a craving that demanded attention. I was surprised to discover how quickly nicotine could become a crutch. One thing I was certain of; I didn’t want to be a slave to tobacco. No sir, no way I said to myself. I am not a smoker and never intend to be. There are a few areas of my life I am not proud of, and this is only one. But I learned from it.

After God had created the heavens and earth, he gave the man only one commandment and that was soon broken. It would seem so easy to avoid the tree in the center of the garden, but temptation was there long before the transgression. The serpent had Eve consider all the good reasons to eat of the fruit.

*Genesis 3:6 says, And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat*

I am certain of this; God was not taken by surprise when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. It seems obvious if man could be tempted he would eventually fail. As a result, all mankind would need to be re-



deemed. The rest of the story is familiar; Eve ate and gave some to Adam who also ate. The fruit indeed did what it was said to do, it opened their eyes to recognize right from wrong. To this very day we often hear people say, “That is just wrong”. How do you know right from wrong? Even if someone does something new and different that offends us, we still sense wrong. The knowledge of good and evil dwells inside all of us to this very day. But the instinct is not totally dependable.

There is also the story of Joseph in the house of Potiphar recorded in Genesis 39:6-8. Here is a part of the three verses; *And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured. And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused...*

It seems obvious no sin was committed by being tempted. However, all of us have failed and also have succeeded at one time or another. If we resist temptation and win, it brings glory to God and blessing to us. How shall we then fight temptation and win? Joseph seems to have been aware of his destiny if he served his God. He probably didn’t realize how important a task lay ahead. He just sensed who he was. His great-grandfather Abraham had a promise yet unfulfilled and he was in the line of descendants.

Likewise when we are called to resist temptation, we need to know who we are. There are also extremely important callings in this generation. Whether we are victorious may well depend on our knowledge of who we are in Christ. Notice that God only allows temptations that we can stand against. As well, He makes a way of escape. See 1 Corinthians 10:13 *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* God wants us to win! Losing does not serve his purposes.

What is the purpose of God allowing temptation? It seems that if we were never tempted, then we would live a life free from struggle against sin. Temptation, by itself, is not sin. Jesus was tempted; however, He was without sin. Temptation only becomes sin when we give into the temptation.

Even in the perfect world Adam and Eve inherited before the fall, temptation was present. “Consider what this fruit will do for you”, the serpent said. At this time no sin had been committed.

I suppose we would ask, “Why have a tree that you cannot touch?” Just remove it and I won’t be tempted. However, it seems there was real purpose in having this tree in the newly-created garden. If the man Adam could not make wrong choices, then he could not make any choices. Freedom includes the ability to make choices, good or bad. I knew I was not a smoker and I said so.

My prayer for you is that you may be victorious in facing temptation. Find out how high your calling is. It’s all there in the Bible.

Eli Stutzman — Ontario Canada  
Phone: (519) 866-3737

When Revival Comes!

— Joe Keim

"When Revival Comes" was the title of a famous book, written by Leonard Ravenhill, a man greatly anointed of God.

We are in need of revival! I heard the statement recently, “why are there so many dead churches?” Now, you can agree or disagree with that statement, but the truth is, there are many more churches dead and cold, then moving and lively.

The Word of God says, *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter 1:23)*

How can you be dead and yet full of something that is alive? Is it possible that we have churches full of people who have never had a

true experience with the Living Seed of the true Word of God?

When revival comes, things will happen! 1 Peter 1:23 is clear about three things:

1. It is pure Seed...Incorruptible Seed!
2. It is powerful Seed...It Liveth!
3. It is continuous, unending, eternal Seed...It Abideth Forever!

When revival comes, there will be evidence in our personal lives. We will be unashamed in getting together for Bible studies and prayer meetings. Owning properties and stashing our money away, will seem unimportant. May God rend open the heavens and pour out His anointing power upon us in 2010.





Romans 8:9-11 says, *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

The Spirit dwells within the believer, putting the Spirit of Christ within him. The word "dwell" is the picture of a home. The Holy Spirit dwells within the believer: He makes His home, takes up residence, and lives within the believer just as we live in our homes.

**1 Cor. 3:16 asks the question**, Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

And again **1 Cor. 6:19 asks the question**, What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

**Jesus, right before he went away, told His disciples in John 14:16-17**, *And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

The world *cannot* receive the Holy Spirit. Note the word "cannot." It is impossible for the world to receive the Holy Spirit. The world lives only for what it can see and know, only for what it can touch, feel, and taste, only for what it can follow and belong to. And, don't be fooled into thinking that only non-Amish are of the world. Any person who is putting their trust in man-made religion and traditions of the forefathers for salvation is considered an unbeliever by Scripture and of the world. Eternal Life does not come through a certain church denomination, nor does it come through baptism. It comes through Jesus Christ and Him alone! That is why we can say with assurance and confidence, that if the Holy Spirit dwells inside you and He dwells inside me, we are brethren in Christ; we belong to the same family. Being from different cultures, or belonging to different church denominations, or wearing different color skin, makes no difference (Rom 10:12).

**Romans 6:23 says ... the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Anyone who has at some point in the past received Jesus Christ and made Him Lord of their life also possesses eternal life today. However, maybe you are reading this today and in all honesty, you cannot remember of a time when you reached out and received eternal life through Jesus Christ. If that is the case, please read the next few verses very carefully and consider its powerful and everlasting truth. Jesus spoke these words:

**John 5:24-26 says**, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth*

*my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath [right now] everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the [spiritually] dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath [eternal] life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have [eternal] life in Himself;*

**1 John 5:12 says**, *He that hath the Son hath [eternal] life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not [eternal] life.*

The consequences of not having Jesus Christ dwelling in you will be devastating at Jesus' return. In the next portion of scripture, the Apostle Paul outlines very clearly what will happen to those who don't know God and have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**2 Thessalonians 1:8-10 says**, *In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*

**Will you receive the GIFT of eternal life today?**

**Romans 10:8-13 says**, *But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

**To those who already possess the GIFT of eternal life!**

**1 John 3:1-2 says**, *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [children] of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see Him as He is.*

Oliver Greene makes an excellent statement on this verse. He says: What we shall be hereafter is not fully revealed, but we know that we are sons of God NOW and that we are predestined to be conformed to the image of His dear Son (Romans 8:29). 'We shall be like HIM.' What is involved in this tremendous declaration we do not fully know now, and even if God had seen fit to explain it to us, we would not be able to understand it with our poor, limited, finite minds! Why do I say that? The Scriptures tell us that after His resurrection, Jesus ascended to the Father and then returned to earth again—perhaps in a matter of seconds. He entered a room where all doors were closed and the windows were locked, and appeared in the midst of His disciples (John 20:19-28). He invited them, '*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have...and they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them*' (Luke 24:36-43).  
—By Joe Keim

New Year Greetings! 😊

I hope you all had a blessed Christmas, surrounded with your loved ones, celebrating the birthday of Jesus! In pondering on Jesus' birth, His Life on earth, His death, and then His glorious Resurrection, I have to wonder, how much do we understand about love? Yes, I know we claim to know it's meaning, but do we really?

About a year ago I was made aware of how little I knew about love when I heard a man teaching on it. I believe that our marriages and churches would be totally different, if we could all grasp the real meaning of love.

In the Greek culture they had more than one word to describe love. That might be kinda confusing, but think of all the different kinds of horses; for instance, there's Draft horses, halflingers, ponies, etc. They're different, yet in the same family, right? Well, it's the same way with love.

The two words I'm going to be talking about is Eros and Agape. Agape could be simply described as "God's love" and Eros as "love with a hook". Agape is a pure, unconditional love and Eros is self-pleasing. Agape is placing others above ourselves, loving them simply because that's how Jesus taught us to love, without any thought

of "what's in it for me?". It's what Jesus' whole ministry on earth was about. Eros is all about me, it's an insatiable need for people to love me. Proverbs 29:25 says, *'The fear of man (people-pleasing) bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.*

Honestly, how do we feel about people that go around doing things for us just to earn our friendship? Usually, instead of loving them, we feel kinda like their slave and their gifts and good deeds are a lot like a ball and chain.

So we wives need to search ourselves and see what our core motive is. When I do something for my husband, is it truly pure, "just to make you happy" (Agape) love or is it, "I'll do this for him

so he does so & so for me" (Eros)? When we operate in the Eros mind-set, we do nothing unless it holds potential of me getting something in return. My husband says when I do things for him just to get something back, he can sense it right away and it takes his desire away to do what I want him to do. It gives him the feeling that he'd better do what I want or he's in the doghouse! 😊

The last part of 1 John 4:16 could be translated like this, *"God is Agape; and he that dwelleth in Agape dwelleth in God, and God*

*in him.*" Agape is what Salvation is all about, it's about laying our life down for the good of another.

It's hard to grasp that an act of love could actually be selfish and wrong, but take into consideration what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, especially verse 3. *"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (Agape) it profiteth me nothing."* It's hard to grasp that we can do so many wonderful things and still be wrong. Right?

Another trait of Agape is that we don't have to earn it, as we can see in Romans 5:8, *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* As a matter of fact, there's absolutely NO WAY we can earn God's love because He already loved us before we loved Him.

When we go to Wal-Mart and my husband steps up and pays the bill I would be a rather strange person to go try to pay it again. Right? So, we need to consider God's love for us a done deal and live our life BECAUSE of that love and not FOR it!

I want to challenge each one of you ladies, if you haven't been doing this, start Agape loving your dear husbands. It might bring some dynamite results if they're not used to it!! —Talk to you next time! Love, Joy



Joy Knepp, Loogootee, IN  
Phone: (812) 259-2634



About the Amish Voice Publication

I have for awhile now, had a desire to share some things about the Amish Voice that may be of interest to you.

The first thing that I would like to share, we, here at the ministry, put a lot of thought, time, and prayer into writing this publication. We want it's content to be far more than just interesting; we pray passionately that every written word is anointed by the Holy Spirit of God. We want it's teaching to move the reader to a higher spiritual level, as well as a stronger relationship with God.

Secondly, I would like to share with you that since the start of this publication, the address list has steadily grown to about 6,500 Amish households. Our goal is to some day reach every single Amish household in the US and Canada. I realize that not every person who gets the Amish Voice is going to be satisfied with it's teaching, and that is fine. We will honor anyone's personal request to be removed from the active list.

Thirdly, we get numerous calls and letters from people asking to be placed on the list to receive the Amish Voice. This has been both

exciting and challenging. Exciting, because it feels great knowing that someone has been blessed and hopefully drawn closer to the Lord; challenging, because it adds up financially and sometimes we don't have enough to get the mailing out.

Right now it is costing us about \$2,500 per mailing. This dollar amount covers the printing and postage to mail out 6,500 mailings. If we figure that at six times a year, it totals out to be \$15,000 a year.

For this reason, I would like to ask you, if you have been blessed by the Amish Voice, would you prayerfully consider making a donation to the Amish Voice ministry. The apostle Paul once wrote to the church at Philippi, *Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. (Philippians 4:15-17)*

That perfectly describes my desire as well. Please know that 100% of every donation that comes in will go into the Amish Voice fund.

You will receive a tax deductible receipt for every donation you make to The Amish Voice, PO Box 128, Savannah OH 44874.

Let's grow together in 2010, Joe Keim

—This article is a continuation from the back cover—

**How Do I Teach My Kids to Handle Peer Pressure?**

—By Dennis and Barbara Rainey

The family must be that safe haven that always welcomes your teen back. No matter what the world says to them, they know they can find love there. We often tell our children, "Nothing you can do will make me love you any more and nothing you can do will make me love you less."

Children *need to be needed* at home. They long for approval, sense of belonging, significance, order, and security. If they do not receive these things at home, they will seek them elsewhere and from other people.

Third, ***don't relinquish your right to influence and even control your child's relationships***. You are the parent. Realize that maintaining control of those who influence your children is within the bounds of your authority and responsibility before God. As friendships take shape, steer your children in the direction of positive peer pressure and away from negative influences. We have made it difficult for our children to spend time with friends who do not provide the kind of influence we desire. In certain cases, we have even declared certain friends off limits.

Here are some pointers:

Encourage your children to invite their friends over. Make your home the place to be. We particularly encourage our children to invite those friends that we know are good influences. If all the apples are at your house, you can check the quality of the fruit.

If you can, get to know the friend's parents and get some idea of their values, beliefs, and convictions. You can get to know another family by picking up their child when he or she is invited to your house or offering to take him or her home.

Be careful about where you allow your child to spend the night. That is one setting where peer pressure can be intense—to participate in ungodly conversation and activities that do not meet your standards.

Be observant. If you see subtle changes in dress or appearance, find out what is behind the new look.

As your teen grows older you will need to explain your decisions more frequently. On one occasion we explained to our son Benjamin (then fifteen) that we did not feel a certain friend was a good influence on him—the boy's life reflected a home that was very unstable. It was clear that his influence on Benjamin was greater than Benjamin's influence on him. He felt we were being unfair, but we carefully explained our concerns. Then we prayed with him for protection and wisdom in handling this friendship.

You must handle this carefully, because if you are overly controlling, you can drive your child away from you and directly to the relationships that concern you. When we eliminated a relationship our child enjoyed, we stepped in and aggressively spent time with our child and met his needs. Ultimately, of course, as your child grows older he will increasingly choose his friends on his own. These earlier times of teaching can influence those choices.

Fourth, ***use positive peer pressure to your advantage***. You may want to challenge one or two of your child's friends to be a good influence on your child at the same time challenging your child to be a positive influence on them.

Fifth, ***help your child anticipate the pressures he'll face at different ages***. Talk to your preadolescent about the challenges he will face from peers in the next couple of years. Peers will pressure him to look at pornography, to swear, to drink or take drugs, to rebel against "dumb" parents, and more. Often, because of what friends are pressuring him to do, your child will face difficult choices on a daily basis.

One technique we've used to help our children anticipate the pressures they will face is the "Decide in Advance" game. Only two are needed to play—one child and one parent. The parent comes up with a list of peer-pressure situations. For example: "You are at a friend's home. No one else is in the house. Your friend produces a pack of cigarettes and asks you to join him for a smoke. What would you do?"

Sixth, ***applaud your child's good choices***. When your child does make the right choice, put on your cheerleader outfit, grab the megaphone, and go crazy: "Way to go! Give me a high five!" We often get too excited about the wrong things. We should give a standing ovation for those choices our children make that reveal their convictions and character. Trophies tarnish; character does not. Character glitters. Character is what lasts and is passed to the next generation.

Seventh, ***when failure occurs, make sure you talk through the situation and gently help the child articulate in his own words what went wrong***. Your child will make some mistakes and succumb to peer pressure. With a force this pervasive and powerful, this is to be expected. As you deal with these failures, remember that some good testing of convictions is exactly what you want to occur when your child is still at home—where you can guide, correct, and instruct.

Role-play the situation to help the child understand how a better choice could have been made. Although discipline may be required, balance it with forgiveness and encouragement. Being a young person is very challenging. He needs to know you are on his side.

Finally, ***do not always try to rescue your child from loneliness***. Nothing has saddened us more than watching our children make right choices, and then have to stand alone. Every one of our children has experienced different levels of loneliness in junior high and high school. With the wide range of standards in the Christian community today, sometimes they will not have the support of other Christian teens.

You will be tempted to think you are being too harsh by encouraging your child to stand alone against the herd. The pain of loneliness may be what God uses in your child's life to embed convictions, courage, and a stand-alone faith. God may use pain to turn him into an adult who makes an impact on our culture. The very pain that we want to rescue our child from may end up being what He uses to grow our child into a strong warrior for Christ.

**Four things  
you  
can't recover:**

1. ***The stone.....after the throw.***
2. ***The word.....after it's said.***

3. ***The occasion.....after it's missed.***
4. ***The time.....after it's gone.***

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Current Resident

## How Do I Teach My Kids to Handle Peer Pressure?

—By Dennis and Barbara Rainey

Outside the guidance we continue to have at home, nothing will influence our children as much as the choice of their friends. The Bible speaks pointedly about the power of the people we spend time. Paul wrote: "*Do not be deceived: Evil Communication corrupt good manners*" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

The opposite is also true: Good company guards against the development of bad habits. Many parents are so afraid of peer pressure they seldom use "good" peer pressure to their advantage.

For years I taught a sixth-grade Sunday school class, and one of the highlights was the "bad apples" demonstration. Surprisingly, most youth today have not heard the old saying, "One bad apple can spoil the whole barrel."

On a Sunday morning early in the nine-month class, I would bring some apples. I called them my "buddies." I usually had one beautiful, shiny red apple and a couple others that looked nice but had at least one bruise.

"These two apples with the bruises repre-

sent a couple of buddies you should not spend time with in junior high," I would say. "They have a dark side to them, a compromised area of their lives. This good apple represents you, a good Christian teenager. The good apple sees no problem with the bruised apples. He says to himself, these are my buddies. They wouldn't do anything to hurt me. They're not that bad."

Then I'd put the apples together in a plastic bag and say, "These three apples are going to become close buddies for a few months. I'll put them in a closet, and we'll check on them in a few months at the end of the class and see what happens to the good apple."

In the last class of the year, I would read 1 Corinthians 15:33 and then invite a member of the class to come up and pull the plastic bag out of a paper sack.

It never failed—the two bad buddies had really made an impact on the good apple. The identity of all three apples had been lost; the bag now contained discolored, mushy apple soup. This lesson demonstrated how bad company can corrupt and even consume the best young Christian.

Do not expect your child to have the discernment to choose good friends and withstand peer pressure without your help. Training is needed.

### **Eight Strategies for Helping Your Child Deal With Peer Pressure**

First, **encourage your children to trust in God**. Our most important responsibility as parents is to teach our children to believe God, trust Him, base their convictions upon His Word, and obey Him with their entire heart. For many children, peer pressure is an important test of faith; when they are encouraged by friends to do something contrary to God's Word, they need to remember the words of 1 Corinthians 10:31, which tells us to "*do all to the glory of God*."

It is God's Spirit who gives them the strength to say no to friends and yes to God. As Proverbs 29:25 tells us, "*The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe*."

Second, **make sure your home is a harbor in the storm**. The world is often a hostile environment for children. [continued on page 11](#)