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The Fivefold Appeal to Be Justified By Faith Alone

Study 8: Galatians 4:21-31

—Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

<p>1. Hearing the law is absolutely essential for the legalist or religionist</p> <p>2. Legalism emphasizes the difference between Abraham's two sons</p> <p>a. One was born a slave</p> <p>b. One was born free</p> <p>c. The first was born naturally—by man's efforts</p> <p>d. The second was born by the promise of God</p> <p>3. Legalism emphasizes the difference between two covenants, two mothers</p> <p>a. Hagar: A type of the law</p> <p>1) It enslaves</p> <p>2) It represents the very</p>	<p>C. Appeal Three: Listen to what the Law Really Says, 4:21-31</p> <p>21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?</p> <p>22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a <i>bondmaid</i>, the other by a <i>freewoman</i>.</p> <p>23 But he who was of the <i>bondwoman</i> was born after the flesh; but he of the <i>freewoman</i> was by promise.</p> <p>24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.</p> <p>25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.</p>	<p>26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.</p> <p>27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.</p> <p>28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.</p> <p>29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.</p> <p>30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the <i>bondwoman</i> and her son: for the son of the <i>bondwoman</i> shall not be heir with the son of the <i>freewoman</i>.</p> <p>31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the <i>bondwoman</i>, but of the <i>free</i>.</p>	<p>center of legal religion—Mount Sinai & Jerusalem</p> <p>b. Sarah: A type of grace</p> <p>1) It represents heavenly, spiritual Jerusalem</p> <p>2) It sets men free, v.26</p> <p>3) It results in joy & far more children</p> <p>c. The point: True believers are the children of Promise</p> <p>4. Legalism persecutes & enslaves believers</p> <p>5. Legalism is to be cast out receive no inheritance</p> <p>6. Legalism has no claim upon the children of grace</p>
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Section IV

THE FIVEFOLD APPEAL TO BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE

Galatians 4:8–5:12

Study 3: APPEAL THREE: LISTEN TO WHAT THE LAW REALLY SAYS

Text: Galatians 4:21-31

Aim: To fine-tune our spiritual hearing and understanding.

Memory Verse: "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise" (Ga.4:28).

INTRODUCTION:

Noted radio announcer Paul Harvey is known for this famous phrase: "And now, for the rest of the story." This was the Apostle Paul's exact point to the churches of Galatia. There were some church members who did not fully understand all that the law was saying.

What they needed was an adjustment to their spiritual hearing. Once that adjustment was made, then they too would come to know the rest of the story.

The way to heaven is not by works nor by the law. A person cannot do enough works nor keep enough laws to become *perfectly good*. And for a person to live in God's presence, he has to be perfect. What, then, is the way to heaven? If a person cannot be good enough nor do enough works to make it to heaven, how can he get there? By faith in the promise of God. God has promised heaven to those who believe in His Son—to those who genuinely trust Jesus Christ to save them.

However, most people in the world do not believe the promise of God. They still think they have to earn and work their way into the favor of God—that they have to build up a long list of *good works* that will force God to accept them. They think that they have to make themselves righteous by being good and doing religious things in order to enter heaven. Therefore, they place themselves under the rules and regulations of the law and of religion, and they do the best they can to make it to heaven. This is the appeal of this passage; the person who approaches God through the works of religion and law must listen to *what the law really says*.

OUTLINE:

1. Hearing the law is absolutely essential for the legalist or religionist (v.21).
2. Legalism emphasizes the difference between Abraham's two sons (vv.22-23).
3. Legalism emphasizes the difference between two covenants, two mothers (vv.24-28).
4. Legalism persecutes and enslaves believers (v.29).
5. Legalism is to be cast out—receive no inheritance (v.30).
6. Legalism has no claim upon the children of grace (v.31).

1. HEARING THE LAW IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR THE LEGALIST OR RELIGIONIST (v.21).

The legalist and religionist are the persons who approach God by the law or by the works of goodness or religion. The legalist and religionist need to hear and really understand what they are doing, just how they are approaching God. They need to understand the implication of what they are doing.

QUESTIONS:

1. What reasons would a legalist give for his approach to God?
2. Why is it important for the legalist and religionist to understand the implication of what they are doing?
3. In what ways are you tempted to be a legalist or religionist?

2. LEGALISM EMPHASIZES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ABRAHAM'S TWO SONS (vv.22-23).

Remember that the way to become acceptable to God and to enter heaven is not by law nor by the works of goodness but by the promise of God. Paul uses the illustration of Abraham to prove the point (see Genesis Chapters 16, 17, and 21). Briefly and simply, Abraham had two sons. One son had been promised by God to Abraham through his wife, Sarah; however, many years passed without Sarah's having a child. She seemed incapable. She became discouraged; so she sent a slave girl, Hagar, in to Abraham. Hagar bore a son, Ishmael. Sometime later, however, God kept His promise and the impossible happened: Sarah, well beyond childbearing years, bore a son and his name was Isaac (Ro.4:10).

1. Note the facts about Ishmael. He was...

- born through a natural process
- born into slavery, being born of a slave girl
- born because of the work, effort, and will of Sarah
- born because of the fleshly impulses, urges, and attraction of Abraham

2. Note the facts about Isaac. He was...

- born as a free man, born of a free woman, Sarah.
- born by the promise of God alone. God had promised Abraham that Sarah would bear a son, and when Isaac was born, Abraham and Sarah were both well beyond the years of childbearing—one hundred years old. Isaac was a miracle-child, born miraculously by the working of God—all because God had promised Abraham a son. Isaac was, therefore, a promised child.

The point is this, and it must be remembered: Ishmael, the child born by human ingenuity, energy, and effort, was born into slavery. But Isaac, the child promised by God, was born miraculously by the promise of God—by His love and power alone—all because He had made the promise. Isaac was born by the grace of God and by the grace of God alone.

ILLUSTRATION:

We must remember that even our best efforts fall short of gaining a place in heaven. It has to be grace and grace alone. Listen to this humorous story that illustrates the point well.

In his mission field, a certain missionary had to do many things for himself and his family. When the baby grew too big for the carriage he started to build a bed for the child. After he prepared the wood, he glued the mortised pieces and was ready to complete the bed. His wife thought it too cold to work in the shed so he brought the materials into the kitchen and started to work.

When the bed was finished, the baby was brought to the kitchen and placed in it while his parents gazed admiringly. Suddenly the father had a disquieting thought. Suppose the bed would not go through the door! Quickly he measured bed and door and found the bed one inch too wide to pass through.

There are many people who spend their time building their lives according to the plan of this world. They take great pride in their work...the day will come when they suddenly realize the measurements will not allow [them] to pass Heaven's door."

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you believe God is going to accept you because of your own ingenuity? Your own energy and effort? Your own goodness. Because you keep the commandments of God and do the best you can? Why or why not?
2. Was there a time when you made a choice between being like Ishmael (man's way) or being like Isaac (God's way)? Which one did you choose and why?

3. LEGALISM EMPHASIZES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO COVENANTS, TWO MOTHERS (vv.24-28).

Note: Paul says that these things are an allegory, that is, an illustration of truth can be seen and drawn from the event. When looking closely at the story, we can see how the mothers, Hagar and Sarah, represent the two covenants—the covenant of law and the covenant of God's grace or promise.

1. Hagar was a type of the old covenant between God and man—the law. Two things are said about the law.

- a. Hagar, that is, the law, bears children to slavery. The law says do this and do not do that. It demands and insists on obedience. It enslaves a person to do exactly what it says. Therefore, if a person hopes to approach God in his own goodness, merit, virtue, morality, and righteousness, he is in bondage to the law. He must keep it in order to be good and moral and righteous and to earn the favor of God. The law, the rules and regulations of goodness and righteousness, enslaves him. (Keep in mind, Paul is not saying the law is not good. We are to live righteously and morally, but we are not acceptable to God because of our goodness and self-efforts. We do not save ourselves; we are not to be praised because of our works and goodness. Praise belongs to God. God is the One who saves us. This is what is being discussed.)
- b. Hagar, the law, represents the very center of a religion of law and works which was Jerusalem of that day (v.25). Note that Paul makes two connections to stress the point:

⇒ Hagar stands for Mt. Sinai, the Mount in Arabia where the law was given.

⇒ Hagar and Mt. Sinai both picture the very center of a religion of law and works, the Jerusalem of that day. Of course, Hagar also pictures any religion, church, people, or person who seeks to be righteous and acceptable to God and heaven through works and law.

2. Sarah was a type of the new covenant between God and man, the covenant of grace or of promise. Two things are said about the grace and promise of God to man.

- a. Sarah, that is, grace, is seen in the Jerusalem which is above, the heavenly Jerusalem. Heavenly Jerusalem is the spiritual and eternal city which God has promised to those who approach Him through faith.
- b. Sarah and grace and the promise of a heavenly city are all free. Any person who accepts God's promise of a heavenly city which is eternal—who accepts His promise enough to believe it with all his heart, basing all he is and has upon that promise—is acceptable to God. God takes the man's sheer faith—the faith that has cast itself totally upon the promise of God—and counts it as the man's righteousness. Therefore, the man becomes acceptable to God: he is given the promise of God freely—without price—without having to work for it by keeping rules and laws.
- c. Note a second result as well: the covenant of grace ends up with more children than the Jewish legalist. This is a prophecy which simply predicted that more Gentiles would believe the grace of God than Jews (Is.55:1).

3. The point is forcefully stated: "Now we, brothers, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." Believers—all those who have believed in Jesus Christ—have been given birth by God—a spiritual birth. We receive the promise of God. God freely takes our faith and counts it as righteousness.

⇒ Our faith is credited, imputed, counted as the righteousness which we lack within ourselves.

This is the glorious promise of God's grace, the covenant of grace which God has now made with man. Man can now inherit the promised land (Canaan, the heavenly Jerusalem or city of God) and live eternally with God.

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" (Ro.4:13-14).

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the two covenants that Paul is referring to in these Scriptures?
2. Give some examples of how some people seek God through the law. What are some of the natural results of this choice?
3. Who are the children of promise? How does this affect your day-to-day life?

4. LEGALISM PERSECUTES AND ENSLAVES BELIEVERS (v.29).

Ishmael ridiculed, mocked, and persecuted Isaac. Paul draws upon this fact to show why believers are persecuted. It is because men try to approach God in the flesh, that is, by their own energy and effort in trying to be good and righteous.

1. The person in the flesh consciously or subconsciously is trying to secure credit, recognition, esteem, approval, acceptance, and praise from God—all by his own energy and effort. Therefore, he mocks, ridicules, and persecutes the believer who says that self-effort and self-righteousness are not enough and will not make a person acceptable to God.

2. The person in the flesh has to confess human weakness and inadequacy—that he cannot make himself acceptable to God because he is...

- too sinful
- too polluted
- too short of God's glory
- too hopeless
- too unrighteous
- too helpless
- too unholy
- too undeserving

The person in the flesh refuses to accept this fact. He wants to think highly of himself and place himself on a level close to God. Therefore, when a believer comes along and says that a person has to be born again by the Spirit of God, the natural man reacts. He refuses to accept the fact that his flesh, his own energy and effort, is unable to earn, win, and merit God's approval.

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt.5:11).

ILLUSTRATION:

There are few things sadder in life than that of a Christian believer who has been bound up by legalism. Charles Simpson, in *Pastoral Renewal*, writes:

I met a young man not long ago who dives for exotic fish for aquariums. He said one of the most popular aquarium fish is the shark. He explained that if you catch a small shark and confine it, it will stay a size proportionate to the aquarium. Sharks can be six inches long yet fully matured. But if you turn them loose in the ocean, they grow to their normal length of eight feet.

That also happens to some Christians. I've seen the cutest little six-inch Christians who swim around in a little puddle. But if you put them into a larger arena—into the whole of creation—only then can they become great.”

Where are you swimming...in the tank of legalism or in the joyful sea of freedom?

QUESTIONS:

1. Why are believers persecuted?
2. Why does a person who lives by the flesh persecute believers?
3. What motivates a person who lives by the flesh?
4. What barriers does a person who lives by the flesh have to overcome?
5. What can you do to earn God's approval?

5. LEGALISM IS TO BE CAST OUT—RECEIVE NO INHERITANCE (v.30).

The law cannot co-exist with the grace of God. The son of Hagar, the law, shall not be heir with the son of Sarah, that is, grace. The fact of coming judgment could not be illustrated any clearer: Ishmael was cast out so that he would not share in the inheritance with Isaac (Ge.21:10f).

God never will accept anyone who approaches Him by law or by works. Why? Because the person has to stand before God saying, “God, here are *my* works, *my* goodness, *my* righteousness, a list of laws *I* have kept, a list of *my* contributions.” Such a claim is merely deceptive boasting. Such a profession presents to God only human effort and energy, works and deeds. God is perfect; therefore, only perfection can exist with Him. No matter how much good and how many good works a person presents to God, they are not enough, for they do not make him perfect. Therefore, he must be cast from God's presence. But not the person of promise. The person of promise approaches God saying:

Father, you are my Savior and Lord. You have loved me so much that you sent your Son to die for me. I believe with all my heart that Christ died for me, and I surrender all I am and have into His keeping. I cast myself totally upon His righteousness and His death for my sins.

God has promised that the person who sincerely believes in His Son shall never perish but shall have everlasting life. He shall inherit the promise of God. God will accept his belief, counting it as righteousness, and the man shall inherit the promise.

“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Ro.4:13).

QUESTIONS:

1. Why can grace and law not co-exist together? Have you ever tried to mix them together? If so, what happened?
2. Did God have a right to cast out Ishmael? Why?
3. Exactly what is it that qualifies you to inherit the promise of God?

6. LEGALISM HAS NO CLAIM UPON THE CHILDREN OF GRACE (v.31).

Believers are the children of grace, not of law. The fact is clearly seen in all that has been stated above. Believers— all men if they would only accept the fact—have so much for which to thank God. God has loved the world and demonstrated His love beyond anything any person could ever ask.

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

ILLUSTRATION:

God gives each one of His children an eternal assurance of His care for them. Legalism cannot have us anymore—we are now children of

grace. This reality gives the Christian believer peace of mind. This story illustrates the truth:

Two brethren who differed on the question of the believer's safety in Christ were discussing the question, and one said to the other:

"I tell you a child of God is safe only so long as he stays in the lifeboat. He may jump out, and if he jumps out he is lost."

To this the other person replied, saying: "You remind me of an incident in my own life. I took my little son out with me in a boat. I realized, as he did not, the danger of his falling or even jumping, into the water. So I sat with him all the time, and all the time I held him fast, so he could neither fall out, nor jump out, of the boat."

"But," said the first speaker, "he could have wriggled out of his coat and got away in spite of you."

"Oh," said the other, "you misunderstood me if you supposed I was holding his coat; I was holding him."

Do you understand that your heavenly Father is holding you tightly? That He has a grip on your life, not just your hand? You can rest assured that once you have genuinely placed your faith in Christ, you have eternal life. But you must take that step of faith!

QUESTIONS:

1. Who has the better grip on your life: you or God?
2. What would life be like if you lived every day like a child of grace? What things keep you from doing this?
3. Why is it important for you to know the difference between the law and grace?

SUMMARY:

And now, you *do* know the rest of the story. If you slip from a life of grace back to the bondage of legalism, remember your need for some understanding:

1. Hearing the law is absolutely essential for the legalist or religionist.
2. Legalism emphasizes the difference between Abraham's two sons.
3. Legalism emphasizes the difference between two covenants, two mothers.
4. Legalism persecutes and enslaves believers.
5. Legalism is to be cast out—receive no inheritance.
6. Legalism has no claim upon the children of grace.

PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES

(Reflection & Response)

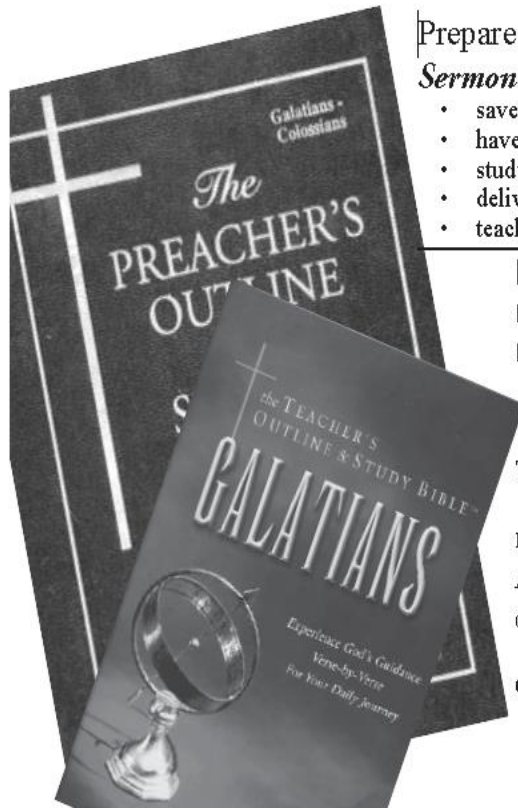
1. The most important thing that I learned from this lesson was:
2. The area that I need to work on the most is:
3. I can apply this lesson to my life by:
4. Closing Statement of Commitment.

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Life is like a journey where we learn a lot of lessons to prepare us for the life to come. These lessons come as experiences and tests along the way. God says that if we are faithful over a few things, He will make us ruler over many things.

God gives us many tests throughout our lives. As we pass little tests, God gives us others. If we fail tests, we get to redo them before we move on. God is carefully watching, because He loves His own children. He wants to promote us, give us good things, and see us prosper.

For most of my life, when these tests came along, I would fight them with everything I had. I hate pain and suffering. I thought God was mean to allow such horrible, unthinkable things to happen to people—things like cancer, which causes people to suffer slow, painful deaths and takes them from their families. Things like broken hearts because one's love is not returned. Things like the killing of innocent children before they have a chance to live their lives, or even before they are born. I mean, He WAS GOD, right? He could have "trumped" this, right? He could have prevented it somehow. The hurtful things people say and do to each other, or simply the things we are required to give up, or the longings that are never satisfied in this life—why did He allow these things to happen? So I fought. I begged God to stop the tests. I tried to change my circumstances, tried to do everything I could to escape the pain of the situation I was in.

Then God began to change me through these things. He began to show me that He could heal me of every hurt, every sickness, every wound, and every disease, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. He began to show me that He was using these things to change me and make me more and more like Himself. Slowly, I began to almost look forward to the next test. I certainly don't enjoy them, but now I look for what He is trying to show me about Himself and about myself. Now I am trying to embrace the journey and embrace what He wants to do in and through me.

He is beginning to show me something else more fully. It is something I have always known in my head, but my heart did not

comprehend it. We've always been taught that God is love, but somehow this message is not taught in a way that we can experience. God created families so that children grow up knowing they are loved and accepted. But often, it seems, parents forget how much children need reassurance and unwavering, unconditional acceptance so they can feel their love. We tend to have goals and dreams and desires for our children, and when our children develop problems (especially if we see our own issues in our children), we try to get them to perform rather than show our love for them in spite of their problems.



Don't we all, even as adults, wish people could see us for who we are, rather than for what we do? We all need someone to love us through our hard times. Why wouldn't children need that even more?

Since we are human and since we had human parents, we are well aware of how impossible it is for us to get it right as parents all the time. We are also aware that very few people really have the experience of being continually surrounded with unconditional love. As a result, most of us have a hard time believing God has a perfect, unconditional love for us. We cannot even begin to comprehend that kind of love because our brains and hearts know only earthly, human love. We automatically draw limits for God in our minds, and because we are told that God is all-knowing and all-powerful, we think He should be able to control all of this.

Another thing we can't comprehend: God has no need to control. His Word says that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance. His heart breaks over our hurts. But God created people with a will of their own. He wants us to choose Him of our own accord. He knows that forced worship is not worship at all. He wants our true worship and devotion. If it is from our hearts, it will be spontaneous. He will not force anyone to choose the right way. As long as there is life and as long as there are humans, and as long as there is a devil, bad things will happen. Satan is out to steal, kill, and destroy.

Imagine this: God creates a new human being and declares, "This one is anointed to carry the Father's love to others." So Satan says, "How can I stop this one from doing what the Father wants? Oh yes! If he doesn't have a father, he won't experience his father's love, so he won't want to receive the Father's love either!" Or this: God creates a new human being and declares, "This one is anointed to carry My glory." So Satan says, "Ha! If she is conceived out of wedlock and doesn't have her true father in her life, she won't grow up being affirmed by her daddy. He won't tell her she is beautiful, and she will always feel shame. She won't bloom under her daddy's love, and she will not be able to carry God's glory!"

Why does God allow this? Because He wants us to fight, to pursue, to choose Him! When we do, He begins the healing process. When we begin to experience that healing in our deepest wounds, we begin to share His love and His glory with others! If I hadn't gone through hell on earth, I could not share with you like this. You see, the journey becomes sweeter, more beautiful BECAUSE of the pain. With every battle through fire, another layer is burned off, and we see things more clearly, and the future looks brighter. We have so MUCH to look forward to with Him. He is such a loving God. He loves us enough to NOT stop every pain and trial we go through. He knows that when we come through it, we will be better because of it. He is not causing everything to happen. In fact, if He can't use it for good, He won't allow it.

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Journey of Life

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Aren't you glad we can't see all the things He doesn't allow?! You see, our enemy wants to do everything he can to keep us from God's

plan. His ultimate goal is to hurt God. Satan doesn't care about us. He wants to get back at God!

So, I bless you in your journey to God, to freedom, healing, and wholeness. Surrender to His divine process, and fight through the

tests, not against them. They will change you from glory to glory, ever more and more like His own image, until that blessed day, when we see Him face to face. Then we will be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!

—Lynn Miller

Multitudes, Multitudes in the Valley of Decision

—Ben Girod

I believe we have entered a crucial time of decisions. The decisions being made today are setting the stage for our eternal rewards—or the lack of them. The final harvest is upon us. We see this depicted in the church of Laodicea as this article will show.

cannot escape being a part of it. From this point of view, we see an altogether different landscape. The decayed condition of this church causes one to take an honest inventory of his life, prompting many to come to the valley of decision.

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. Joel 3:14-15

In these end times, God is drawing all men to make a distinct decision in their personal lives—choosing to surrender all for Him over living a mediocre life. When we choose total commitment, we enter into a covenant relationship with Him, and the brightness of His Kingdom will be revealed in our hearts. Otherwise we unknowingly sink in subtle deception; we may continue to worship God, but we lose our spiritual vision.



There is a way out.

Amazingly, God does not give up on this church He advises buying from Him gold refined by fire (Rev. 3:18). How do we pay for this gold? There is only one way: with our lives. There is no other way to pay for this precious, refined metal which is a sanctified life. Included in this package will be the white raiment that will shield our personal and historical shame and disgrace, and an eye salve that gives a vision for the final harvest.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

God will call out of this church a remnant that has been proved, tried, tested, and sanctified. They will overcome insurmountable obstacles and reap the final harvest. They are seasoned soldiers who will take down enemy strongholds. Many of these ancient strongholds have kept the church in a state of paralysis for generations. Because of their perseverance in their darkest hours, the remnant will see the redemption of many by the power of the Blood.

They will receive power to take back from the enemy what had belonged to Christ. Many movements have come and gone, having neither the stability nor the authority for such deliverance. God is waiting on the last, which will become first.

God says to the Laodicean Church:

This army carries no banner. It is unheralded, unnamed, and largely unknown.

Out of the church of Laodicea come those who will storm the heavens on behalf of the nations. Redemption is their desperate cry. Nothing will stop them achieving this goal. In the end, their reward will be tremendous:

“To him that overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.” v. 21.

—Ben Girod, Libba MT (208) 267-0631

Stormy Sea

written by Cindy Miller

**When the way is dark and stormy
And the way I cannot see
Lord guide my ship to safer waters
Help the swells, calm to be.**

Stormy Sea, Stormy Shore

**Tossed on the ocean sore
Like a beacon shining bright
Jesus be my guiding light
When the way looks so feeble
My steps ever fade and falter
With hands held high, start to tremble
Still my heart and fill my altar**

Stormy Sea, Stormy Shore

**Tossed on the ocean sore
Like a beacon shining bright
Jesus be my guiding light
And when the valley here below
It's great burden, cannot bear
You alone can come and rescue
You bore the cross and I know you care.**

With a startled exclamation Mattie bolted upright in bed. It was still the early morning hours but her disturbing dream had awakened her. Her jolting outcry had disturbed Milo from a sound sleep.

“Vas ist letz?” (What’s wrong?) He wanted to know.

“Oh, it’s so strange,” Mattie began. “Last night I had a disturbing dream but I didn’t tell you about it, and now I’ve dreamed it again.”

“Well, what did you dream?”

“I hate to admit it, but remember how you have been telling me that we can only be saved by the grace and love of God toward us?”

“I wanted to hold onto the tradition and the rules made by the church as a way for God to accept me into heaven. I knew if I believed the things you’re telling me about simply receiving salvation through Christ’s death on the cross, I am sure it would lead to some misunderstandings.”

“Well it could, but what about your dream?”

“In my dream I saw myself walking on the sandy shores of the Sea of Galilee. Suddenly I came across a couple of deserted boats with nets so full of fish I thought they’d break. Why would a fisherman forsake such a large drought of fish when they could provide him with a month’s wages?”

“As I contemplated taking some for our supper I looked to my right and plainly saw Jesus with His disciples. He was talking

directly to one I recognized as Peter.

“I couldn’t help but hear Jesus ask him, “Lovest thou me more than these?” He was motioning toward the boat and fish where I stood.

“Peter strongly affirmed that He loved Jesus more than his earthly career and possessions. As I watched, Jesus asked him again if he loved Him, and Peter said, “Lord, you know that I love You.”

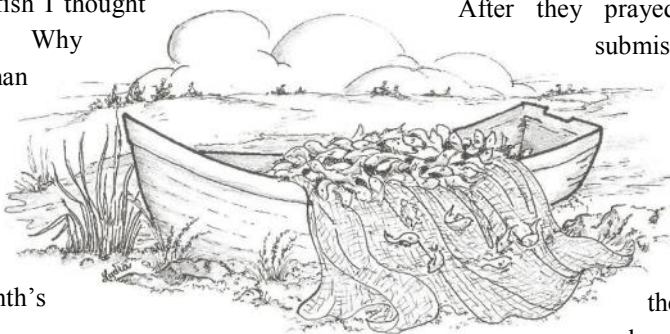
“Then Jesus spoke the third time and this time He looked directly into my eyes with a look of compassion and asked me, “Do you love me more than these?”

“Milo, what do you think? How could I dream the same vivid colored dream two nights in a row? Do you think it is God’s way of talking to me?”

“I don’t believe that the devil would give you a dream with references to Scriptures in it. I do believe the Scriptural account is recorded in one of the Gospels.”

“Oh my, vas sell ich du?” (what shall I do?)

“Let’s pray together and ask God to show us what He wants us to do,” Milo consoled Mattie.



After they prayed a prayer of submission to the will of God, Mattie felt at peace and the two got a few more hours of sleep before the rooster awakened them.

Regardless of the fact that all sorts of questions crowded into her mind, Mattie hummed some of the Hymns the young people

used to sing in the singings. There was a peace that descended on her as she worked in her folk’s Amish Country Store that morning.

“Well, you seem unusually cheerful this morning. Did something special happen to you?” Mattie’s mother wanted to know.

“Yes, it did.” Her reply was short and without disclosing much detail. Mattie wanted to drop the subject until she better understood how their prayer of acceptance of God’s saving grace, and their submission to His plan could make such a difference in the way she felt.

With new energy and focus she served the customers that came to their country store and by evening she was ready to connect with Milo to see how he was doing. After the supper dishes were washed Milo reached for his Bible to find the account that would correspond with His wife’s dream. He quickly scanned the Gospels till he came to St. John. There in the twenty-first chapter he read the account.

Mattie listened intently and broke into tears as Milo read the words of Jesus, “*Lovest thou me more than these?*”

“Do I really love Jesus more than this comfortable house my parents furnished for us? Do I love Jesus more than being well thought of, by other people? Do I love Jesus more than the provision we receive from working in the store?”

Mattie’s soul-searching questions needed an answer and she knew that she and her husband were embarking on an unfamiliar journey.

Before the newly-weds went to bed that night, they knelt and asked God to help them love Him more than anything else, regardless of what that might look like.

—Lydia Chorpening, Shell Lake, WI
(715) 731-0035



Faith Alone

I have myself taught for twenty years the doctrine of faith alone by which, embracing the merits of Christ, we stand accepted before God; and yet the old and determined mire clings to me so that I find myself wanting to come to God bringing something in my hand, for which He should bestow His grace upon me. I cannot attain to casting myself on pure and simple grace only, and yet this is highly necessary. Romans 11:6 —Martin Luther

Steve Stutzman and his wife Dorcas work with the Door of Hope counseling ministry in North Carolina. Much of their outreach is aimed at helping inner city youth and people who survived wrecked homes and are trying to regain purpose and direction in life.

Steve writes: She walked into my office like she owned the world – not cocky, just very confident and self-assured. She was young; too young, I thought, to be selling ads for the top TV station in the state. Usually advertisers had to work their way up from Yellow Pages thru Newspaper to Radio, but not her. She was already at the top of her game.

We bought some ads from the station. In the process, we had several encounters with the sales lady. One such encounter happened when my wife was running the sales desk.

They talked together and connected. After some time, the conversation turned personal. It got interrupted occasionally, by customers or by one of my little dippers toddling around the premises. But eventually the questions came blurring out.

Who are you? What do you believe anyway? Why are you so happy? What is that thing on your head? My wife laughed, and you have to understand: her laugh is pure music. She explained salvation and God and Christ. She spoke of our relationship, of God's order, of the security she found in it, and how God's ways work.

After a moment's distraction, my wife turned and saw that the lady was gone. Looking through the window toward the parking lot, she saw the car still sitting there. The lady did not return, so my wife went on a concerned hunt for her.

She found the girl crumpled down against the office wall, around the back of the building. The confidence had fled; the self-assurance was running out of her eyes and streaking the

carefully applied make-up. My wife, horrified, tried in vain to remember what she had said that wounded this lady so deeply.

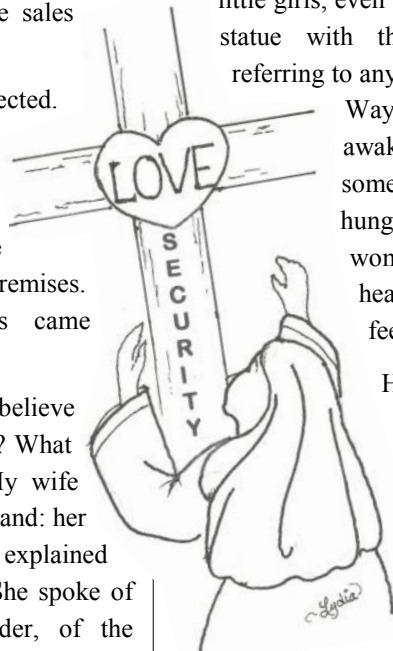
It took just a little time for her to compose herself enough to reply, "They told me, I am in charge of my own life. They said never depend on anyone else, but look out for #1," she sniffled. "I did. I did it all. I got A's in school, and graduated college at the top of my class. I got who and what I thought I wanted. I landed a top sales position right out of school. I have money to blow, a new car, my own house, and a live-in boyfriend. I have it all—but you . . .," and she burst into tears again. When she composed herself, she went on. "But you have EVERYTHING I WANT." More tears. I knew right away when I heard the story she wasn't talking about me. She wasn't even talking about my little girls, even though they could melt a statue with their eyes. She wasn't referring to anything that could be seen.

Way down inside something awakened in her that day, something that cried out, a hunger and a desire that all women feel deep in their hearts. She was dying to feel secure.

Her heart was longing to be truly loved, to be cared for and protected. To be given not only what it wanted, but what it needed, even if it could not understand what that was. To cast

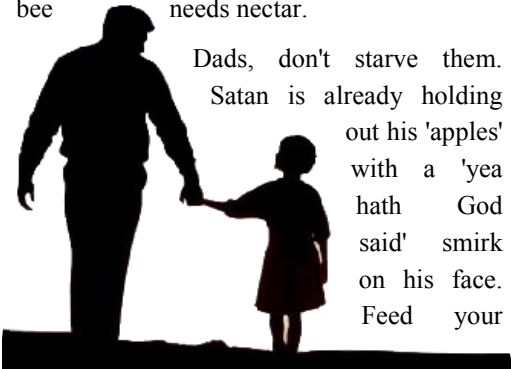
off the heavy yoke of day-to-day cares in the battle of the work scene, and be a little carefree girl again, full of joy, with laughter that sounded like music. And to feel the security of someone who cared enough to say NO.

I don't know what became of her. I have sometimes wondered. What could she do, after she realized the system had lied to her and trapped her in a scenario of having everything, yet being completely devoid inside?



Young bride, what you are willing to give your life for, is that feeling of security. Cheated wife, this is what makes the situation so painful: the security has been stolen from your grasp.

Fathers, this is what drives the girls in your care, from the one-month old, to the 80-year-old girl on the rocker. They want to feel secure. Those little girls on the floor with their big eyes need to be held and talked to gently. Those school-age girls need to have attention that lets them feel like someone cares. Those teens need to have their dad's approval and affection, and feel his big arms giving them a hug once in a while. They NEED it, like a flower needs sun and like a bee needs nectar.



Dads, don't starve them. Satan is already holding out his 'apples' with a 'yea hath God said' smirk on his face. Feed your

little girl's need to feel secure, and his evil plans will lose their allure.

Wounded, starving girl-hearts—Jesus is the answer. He alone can truly fill the desire for security that was left cold and bare by an absent daddy. He has oil for your wounds, payment for your sins, healing for your pain, help for your hopelessness, and value for your shame.

I know not everyone reading this is in the same place in life. I realize that for some, the pain is too deep, and for others the whole thing clangs like a gong, and you feel nothing. For some it's buried too deep. But somewhere down there beats the heart of a little girl that just wants to feel safe.

It is for that girl that I fight?!

PS: If the images of a girl being loved by her daddy bring up any kind of ugly thoughts or feelings, please get help. It is not natural, and you can be set free. —Steve Stutzman

When Things Look Impossible

Did you ever face something that felt just too big to handle? Did it seem like the odds were stacked against you and there was no way out? Take a chapter from the life of Old Testament king Jehoshaphat, who was doing the best he could when, without warning, the bottom dropped out of his life (see 2 Chronicles 20).

Jehoshaphat was one of the few good kings to reign over the southern kingdom of Judah. Despite a few slipups, he tried to follow the Lord and bring his nation back to the worship of God by destroying the idols that had been built in his land.

Then one day he received word that a "vast army" of Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites—much larger than the army he commanded—was marching against Judah. The odds were definitely against him.

The Bible tells us that Jehoshaphat was "alarmed." I should think so. But the first thing he did was turn to the Lord for guidance. Instead of worrying, he did just as the apostle Paul, centuries later, would instruct the church at Philippi:

Philippians 4:6 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

Jehoshaphat took his "alarm" to God and sought His guidance.

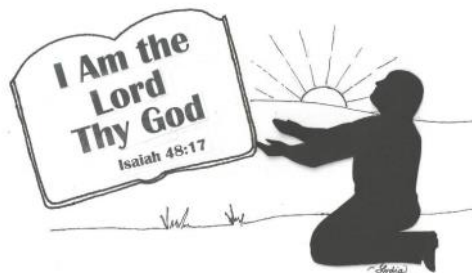
Read the king's prayer in 2 Chronicles 20:5-12. In so many words he said, "Okay, God, You gave this land to us as a promise to Abraham. Then when our ancestors came here, You told us not to destroy the Moabites and Ammonites and the people of Mount Seir. In fact, if You remember, You told us not to even travel through their lands but to go the long way around! So we did as You said and left those people alone, and *now they are the ones coming to attack us!*"

Of course, God already knew all this, but Jehoshaphat laid out the situation before Him.

Listen to Jehoshaphat's request:

2 Chronicles 20:12: *O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.*

And God did indeed help. God responded powerfully, answering the prayer of the king and his people. Just read what happened in verses 13-30.



When you have an "impossible" need, remember that "nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). Talk to Him about it. He may not answer all your questions. He may not answer as quickly as he answered Jehoshaphat. Then again, He might! But you will have taken your need to the only One who can truly help, the almighty Creator of the universe.

Hebrews 4:15-16 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. What more could you need?*

When You Have a Desire?

Did you ever desire something very much? Sometimes the things we desire are not good for us, and God knows it, so He says **no** to a request. Sometimes the things we desire are good but not good at that particular time, so He tells us to **wait**. At other times He sees our

pure hearts and motivations and answers with a resounding **yes**, as He did with Hannah (see 1 Samuel 1).

Hannah was an Israelite who was unable to have children. Not being able to become pregnant is difficult and painful enough for women today, but in Hannah's day, it was considered a curse. To make matters worse, Hannah's husband had another wife who *was* able to have children, and she made fun of Hannah. Hannah's husband loved her very much, but she still wanted to have a child.

Hannah took her request to God. You can read her prayer in 1 Samuel 1:11:

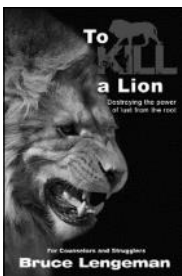
And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

God answered Hannah's prayer, and her child, Samuel, grew up to be a prophet who helped to heal the nation of Israel after the messy years under the judges.

Jesus promises that when our requests are in line with God's will, He will hear and answer.

John 14:13-14: *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

Now this does not necessarily mean you can ask for whatever you want and God will give it to you. The key is to discover the will of God and pray accordingly. Your requests will more likely be in line with His will when you are in tune with Him—learning about Him and what He wants you to do, obeying Him, and following Him. Then you can bring any and every request to God, trusting Him to do His will.



Bruce Lengeman joined us in October for the Amish Voice Conference Call. Order his book, and as the title says, learn "To Kill a Lion: Destroying the Power of Lust From the Root."

Do you struggle with lust or other sins and addictions?

Learn from pastor, counselor, and writer Bruce Lengeman on how not just to cover up or hide the problem (like keeping the lion locked up in a cage), but how to find victory over the problem and be set free through Jesus Christ. If you would like to order the book, send \$15.00 (that includes postage) to:

The Amish Voice, P.O. Box 128, Savannah, OH 44874



Join Us For the Amish Voice Conference Line



First Sunday of Every Month! 8 p.m. EST

1

PREVIOUS!

Amish Conference Line Discussion

Phone: (641) 715-3800, Pin 89752 #

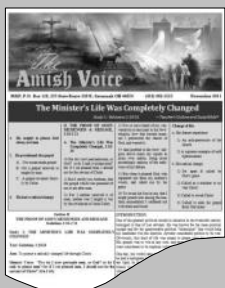
When you dial in, you will have a choice of listening to any of these previously recorded discussions:

1. Hell is Real Prison Ministry and Jonas Yoder
2. To Kill a Lion—Destroying the Power of Lust From the Root with Bruce Lengeman
3. Biblical Family, Amish Voice article
4. Fruit of the Spirit, Amish Voice article
5. Sexual Abuse with John Regier
6. Moral Addiction with John Regier

Anytime during the message, you can...

- ⇒ Press the # key and it will take you back to the opening announcement at the beginning of your call-in.
- ⇒ Press 2 to reverse 30 seconds
- ⇒ Press 3 to skip forward 30 seconds
- ⇒ Press 8 to pause; press 8 again to resume
- ⇒ At the end of each recorded message, you will hear a tone. At that point, you can leave a personal message for us. When you are done, press the # key and then 1 to save the message. Don't forget to leave a phone number if you want a return call.

Feel free to write to the Amish Voice if you have questions, comments, or even suggestions for possible topics or guests. Let us hear from you! Our number is (419) 962-1515



If the Amish Voice has been a blessing to you — drawn you closer to the heart of God — challenged you to live and serve the Lord with a greater passion...

Would you join others by sending a donation to help us with the printing and postage expenses?

Secondly, would you pray for us as we thrive to encourage and challenge you with more truth packed issues in 2014? We welcome articles from you as well.

You may send your donation to: The Amish Voice, PO Box 128, Savannah OH 44874

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UPCOMING!

Amish Conference Line Discussion

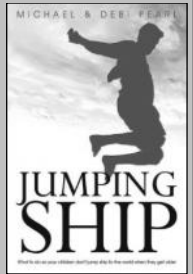
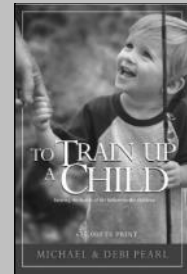
Phone: (267) 507-0240, Pin 409703 #

You are invited to join our *conference line* every first Sunday of each month at 8pm EST as we discuss topics that pertain to the Amish Voice, family, marriage and other struggles we face in life.

December 1, 2013

Join guest Michael Pearl as he discusses the great need for parents to have a strong relationship with their children. He is the author of the books:

- * **To Train Up a Child**—Turning the hearts of the Fathers to their children.
- * **Jumping Ship**—What to do so your children don't jump ship when they get older.



January 5, 2014

Discuss articles that appeared in this November issue of the Amish Voice. Don't forget to bring your publication to the phone with you and follow along as we read and discuss.

Important Note: Because of the background noise we have experienced when people call in, all callers will be muted except for a panel of people who have been invited to come on as guests. This means you can listen in, but not add to the conversation unless you click 5*. When you click 5*, our host, Paul Miller, will get a pop-up on his screen saying you have a question or comment.

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Amish Voice Conference Call Schedule is listed inside back cover!

Damaged Emotions

I thought some people might be interest in this. I've learned that I'm in fact dealing (or was) with quite a few of these things. And I believe there are more people out there that might be going through similar emotions.

What are some of these damaged emotions? One of the most common is a deep sense of unworthiness, a continuous feeling of anxiety, inadequacy, and inferiority, an inner nagging that says, "I'm no good. I'll never amount to anything. No one could ever possibly love me. Everything I do is wrong."

Then there's another kind, that for want of a better term, I call the perfectionist complex. This is the inner feeling that says, "I can never quite achieve. I never do anything well enough. I can't please myself, others, or God." This kind of person is always groping, striving, and feeling guilty, driven by inner oughts' and shoulds. "I ought to be able to do this. I should be able to do that. I must be a little bit better."

Then there is this kind of damaged emotion that we can call super sensitive. The super sensitive person has usually been hurt deeply. He reached out for love, approval, and affection, but instead he got the opposite, and

he has scars deep inside of him. Sometimes he sees things other people don't see, and tends to feel things other people don't feel.

Then there are the people who are filled with fears. Perhaps the greatest of them all is the fear of failure. These damaged persons are so afraid of losing the game of life that they have a simple way out; never get into the game; just sit on the sidelines. They say, "I don't like the rules," or, "I don't care for the referee." "The ball isn't quite round." "The goals are not right."

WHY SOME OF US ARE WHO WE ARE

In most of the parks the naturalists can show you a cross section of a great tree they have cut, and point out that the rings of the tree reveal the developmental history, year by year. Here's a ring that represents a year when there was a terrible drought. Here are a couple of rings from years when there was too much rain. Here's where the tree was struck by lightning. Here are some normal years of growth. This ring shows a forest fire that almost destroyed the tree. Here's another of savage blight and disease. All of this lies embedded in the heart of the tree, representing the autobiography of its growth.

And that's the way it is with us. Just a few minutes beneath the protective bark, the concealing, protective mask, are the recorded rings of our lives.

There are scars of ancient, painful hurts in the rings of our thoughts and emotions, the record is there; the memories are recorded, and all are alive. And they directly and deeply affect our concepts, our feelings, and our relationships. They affect the way we look at life and God, at others and ourselves.

It is necessary that we understand this, first of all, so that we can compassionately live with ourselves and allow the Holy Spirit to work with special healing in our own hurts and confusions. We also need to understand this in order to not judge other people too harshly, but to have patience with their confusing and contradictory behavior. In so doing, we will be kept from unfairly criticizing and judging fellow Christians. They're not fakes, phonies, or hypocrites. They are people, like you and me, with hurts and scars and wrong programming that interfere with their present behavior. —End