



# The Amish Voice

MAP ♦ 575 US Highway 250 ♦ Greenwich, OH 44837 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ July 2019

## Beliefs of Our Fathers: The Church

## Chapter 5

This continues a study on the beliefs of our forefathers, based largely on the 1632 Dordrecht Confession of Faith. This section tells about Ecclesiology, or the study of the Church.

### The Church

#### Ecclesiology

*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.* (Ephesians 5:23)

#### Introduction

The Old Testament accounts relating to the worship of God make it clear that by the time Jesus walked this earth, the worship and service of the Jews no longer resembled what God had originally given them hundreds of years earlier. We, too, could be in danger of forgetting what God's purpose for the Church is. Has the church service become just a tradition without real meaning—something that makes us feel religious, but leaves us empty afterward?

Compared to what we see in the Scriptures, it appears that churches overall are lukewarm or asleep. It is time

to wake up and do the work of the Church. Christ is coming back soon.

#### What Many Anabaptists Believe

What most Anabaptists generally believe is stated for us in the 1632 Dordrecht Confession of Faith. Of the eighteen articles listed in this Confession of Faith, eleven pertain to the church. Of these eleven, nine concern specific practices and ordinances that include baptism, the Holy Supper, foot washing, marriage, relation to secular authority, revenge, oaths, the ban, and shunning. The remaining two are devoted to the "Church of Christ," and the "Election, and Offices of Teachers, Deacons, and Deaconesses, in the Church." The reality is that the articles aren't fully held to today. One case in point is that they speak of the ordination of deaconesses. Most conservative Mennonites and Amish do not practice that today.

The following is a short list of Amish church-related terms:

**Ausbund:** This historic Anabaptist song book, used in most Amish churches, also provides descriptions of Amish teachings.

**The Church:** That Amish group that has

the correct form and practice. Other denominations or groups are viewed as apostate and are not the ideal church.

**Church Membership:** There is hardly hope of salvation without it. Church membership includes a vow of submission to church rules and leadership. This is marked by submitting to water baptism.

**Righteousness:** A person who models the church rules and the good things of Scripture, such as being peaceable, not soon angry, etc. is considered righteous. Jesus may finish making a person fully righteous if, after death, that person gets a white robe.

**Baptism:** The doorway to the church; the point at which all previous sins are washed away.

**Ordinances:** *Ordnung* is a German word for order, discipline, rule, arrangement, organization, or system. This is a behavioral code, a list of guidelines for daily living, a discipline, and a standard. These include practices derived from Scripture, such as baptism and the Holy Supper, but also includes an established letter that spells out practical details including things such as beards, pleats, brims, electricity, silo roofs, etc.

## What the Scriptures Teach

What is the church? It refers to all those who have been born again by God's Spirit, baptized into the body of believers through belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Has the Church replaced Israel as God's witness on earth? According to Romans 11:11, no, but rather, through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke the Jews to jealousy.

In the New Testament, we see the word *church* used most often to describe each individual group of like-minded believers in a certain locale (a local church).

### The Beginning of the Church

While the nation of Israel had its beginning in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Church began on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2.

With the Holy Spirit's presence in their lives, the New Testament saints understood that their purpose on earth was to make God known to the uttermost parts of the world, beginning in Jerusalem. *Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem* (Luke 24:47). The New Testament Church is made up of both Jews and Gentiles. The Church's message is that the Messiah came, died, was buried, rose from the dead, and is coming again to gather up the saints to live with Him forever in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:1–19).

Even though the gospel of Jesus Christ was made known to Abraham long ago (Galatians 3:8–9), God's will for the Church was only revealed in the New

Testament. The apostle Paul wrote it this way: *By revelation he made known unto me the mystery . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel* (Ephesians 3:3–6).

### The Head

A body cannot live without a head. The body needs a head to tell it when to move, when it's hungry, when it's hurting, when it's cold, etc. In any one local church, you will have many members working different jobs, but they need a head to keep everything running smoothly (1 Corinthians 12:12–31). If the foot decided to make the decisions for everyone, all would be stomping and kicking each other. Mankind was not made to function without a head. Christ has been appointed as our authority (our head). He alone has the right to tell us what to do and how to do it. *[God] hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church* (Ephesians 1:22).

Because of what my dad taught me, I remember growing up thinking that my grandparents watched my every move from heaven, as if they were my judges. Upon studying the Bible, I realized that was not true. I'm sure that my dad taught me that innocently, but I learned that all our instructions concerning the church and Christian living should come from our Head, Jesus Christ.

Do you remember how close God the Son was with His Father? Jesus wanted that

same closeness with all those who followed Him in faith. He prayed in John 17:21 that all His followers would be one, even as God and Jesus were one: *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

Ephesians 5:22–33 uses this close, loving relationship of Christ and His church as an example for marriage. The church's goal should be to be so close in relationship to Christ that we forget about our own selfish desires and live to bring glory to our Head. We bring glory to Him by spending time with Him, by obeying His every command under the Holy Spirit's control, and by making Him known to the world, as John the Baptist did (John 1:7).

### The Body

Under the Old Testament, Israel had a temple in Jerusalem in which they were commanded to worship, and they will again have a temple in Jerusalem during the one thousand-year reign of Christ when He returns. Within the New Testament church, though, each member is a temple because each person has been baptized by the Holy Spirit. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* (1 Corinthians 3:16). Therefore, New Testament believers can meet together for worship and prayer anywhere (Matthew 18:20). The actual building has nothing to do with it. Because the Church is built upon the rock, Christ, it will last forever (Matthew 16:18).

Members of the Church are considered *members one of another* (Romans 12:5).

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No one believer is to be independent of another. Can you imagine one of your ears taking off to live on its own without the rest of the body? That would be silly. It couldn't survive without the body. The work of the Church is a group effort. The Church is not just your local denomination, but includes each and every genuine Christian.

God's Spirit has given each member a spiritual gift for service to God. This does not refer to our human talents we receive at birth, but spiritual talents for the work of the Church that we receive at our second birth. These gifts are *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ* (Eph. 4:12). Every member of a local church body who serves God using their spiritual gift brings glory to their head, Jesus Christ. Yet without the Spirit's control in our lives, our works would never be considered good, because they would be done in the flesh, in our own strength (Romans 8:1-11).

We need each other as much as our physical body needs each part in order to function as a whole. *Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching* (Hebrews 10:24-25).

In Acts 7, Stephen delivers a wonderful sermon on the history of God's dealing with the Jewish nation in the wilderness, made up not only of the offspring of

Jacob who were delivered out of Egypt, but also of a mixed multitude (Exodus 12:37-38). This assembly was made up of both those who had a heart after God and those who were along

just because they were born Jews. God's covenant was with the whole nation of Israel. Twelve spies went into the Promised Land, but only two of them believed God. This ratio of two out of twelve may well represent the nation as a whole.

The Church, however, is made up of only God's children, whom He adopts because of their faith in the Son. They come from every nation on earth. There might be both believers and nonbelievers in any local church gathering and some of the nonbelievers may even be "members" of that local church, but God does not recognize unbelievers as members of His Church. The Spirit births us into the Church by faith (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). We should not even think about becoming a member of a local church if we are not yet a member of Christ's Church. The local church is a place where each individual Christian can practice their faith with worship, group prayer, fellowship, and meeting the needs of each other. God never taught us in His Word that we can receive His grace through church membership. The church cannot save our souls.

### Church Ordinances

Some denominations identify church members based upon water baptism. However, Christians are commanded to be baptized as a testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism does not cleanse us from our sin. It is a statement to those who observe that

we have already been cleansed by the blood of Christ as a result of faith in the gospel. The Ethiopian in Acts 8:36-39 is a good example of a believer who immediately obeyed the command of baptism after believing the gospel. Sadly, the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages (the state church) taught that baptism, not Christ, was the cleansing agent. They also taught that to become a member of the church, one must make a vow of loyalty to that church, and that if they ever left that church, they lost their hope of salvation. This was the teaching of our forefathers before they left the state church to become Anabaptists, and this false teaching seems to have been overlooked and carried over.

As we see in the Bible, though, this was never taught by Christ or the apostles. Our loyalty must be toward Jesus Christ and Him alone. To pledge your loyalty to the church is to pledge loyalty to man, not to Jesus. God asks us to submit to Him, but does not force us. He calls us to Himself for our own good, but He never gave the church authority to force us to live in a certain way. Yes, He commands us to submit to our church elders, but for our own good, not for the purpose of forcing us to live under a set of manmade rules. The local church is God's tool for our spiritual growth and for getting the gospel out to the world.

Another ordinance of the Church is the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11). We don't usually like to think about how our loved ones died, but we are commanded to remember how Christ died. His death was an act of the highest love, and He did it willingly (1 Peter 2:21-25). God knew how forgetful we are (just like the Israelites). We need constant reminders of Christ's shed blood and broken body, which are symbolized by bread (Christ was called the Bread of Life) and the juice of crushed grapes (the pouring out of His blood). Some of us need reminded more often

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than others. That is why Jesus said to remember Him *as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup* (1 Corinthians 11:26). There is no limit as to how often a local church can celebrate Christ's death and resurrection, but it should be done regularly. It is a time for repeated examination of our lives to see whether our focus is still on doing the will of God—to examine what sins we've been harboring and whom we have not yet forgiven. The Lord's Supper keeps us serious about sin and eternally grateful to our Savior. It renews our love and commitment to Him and keeps us excited for His return.

### Church Order

I have seen churches of every shape and size. Some church services are loud, some are quiet, some treat church as a country club, while others put great importance on ritual. Culture has a lot to do with our methods for worshiping God. God knew we would criticize and judge each other within the Church body, so He gave us some guidelines and some liberties. We have to be very careful that our motives for ruling a church are to bring honor to Christ. As head of the Church body, Christ instituted order by instructing us to ordain elders in each local church gathering (1 Timothy and Titus). The goal of church leadership is to unify the body by sound Bible teaching guided by the Holy Spirit, so that all believe the same thing about Christ as taught in the Bible, and so that all grow up into mature sons and daughters of God living for Him in truth and love. These elders/bishops have the authority from Christ to discipline false teachers and unruly members who seek to glorify themselves.

In the local church, one member, under the Spirit's guidance, may have liberty to do what another thinks is sin, yet we should seek the glory of God and holiness in all things. Carefully consider these

passages on Christian liberties: Romans 14:1–15:13; 1 Corinthians 8; Colossians 2:16–23.

### Missionary Work

One of the great commands to the Church is to go and *teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you* (Matthew 28:19–20). Acts 14:21–23 teaches us how the apostle Paul went about “planting” local churches in areas where Christ was unknown. *And when they [Paul and company] had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many . . . they had a local church—a group of believers in the gospel of Christ from one locality. Paul periodically returned to these areas where he had preached to confirm the believers, making sure they understood God's message correctly. He exhorted them to continue in the faith, because they would be persecuted for following Christ. Then he would ordain elders in every church.*

Paul was like a shepherd to the converts, training them in the ways of God and helping them to grow in the ways of Jesus. The results of Paul's concern for the local church are his Spirit-inspired epistles. Paul was an example of one who preached the word, as seen in Acts 20:27 where he said, *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.* Paul was a good example of a loving overseer who cared for the spiritual welfare of his flock and the reputation of Jesus Christ.

### Faith Is the Root of the Church

First Peter 1 talks to Christians in general, that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Their faith must be tried in order to be strengthened and bring honor and glory to Christ at His appearing. Their suffering was only for a season. Even though they could not see their Savior, they could still rejoice with joy unspeakable because they love Him

(1 Peter 1:5–8).

Let's now look at three great strengths of the Church: faith, hope, and charity (love): *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity* (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Each member of the Church has been given *all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue* (2 Peter 1:3). Faith in Christ is just the beginning, the root, of a Christian's life. God expects us to grow and produce fruit—the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23). The Church is to reflect the image of Christ and bear spiritual fruit.

Christians are told to *add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ* (2 Peter 1:5–8).

God desires His Church to be pure and to be a valuable tool through which He can carry out His will on earth. That means we must cultivate our faith in order to grow. This includes Bible study and prayer. The more you do so, the nearer you will grow to God, and in turn, the Spirit will produce His fruit through you.

### Hope Is the Purifier of the Church

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the believers eagerly went to work for their Lord. They pressed on in hope of His promised return (Acts 1:11; John 14:2–3). Peter, in his first letter to the local churches, calls it a lively hope. It is alive because Jesus is alive. *When [Jesus] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is [in His glorified body]. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure* (1 John 3:2–3).

Biblical hope does not mean that we wish for something to happen. It is a sure guarantee—a trusted expectation that Jesus will keep His promises. You can't have hope without faith. *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised* (Hebrews 11:11). The same chapter also says that *he that cometh to God must believe that He is [faith], and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him [hope]* (Hebrews 11:6).

The Church cannot be useful to Christ, its head, without knowing and believing Him. The more we get to know Him, the more we will trust Him and find that He does indeed keep His promises.

Hope motivates the Church to keep their hearts clean because they want to please their Savior and be ready when He comes for them. The Church is built on the foundation of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9–15), but we are to take heed how we build it, whether we do it in the Spirit or in the flesh. All believers will have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Every [saved] person's work will be made clear on that day and will be judged. Notice, that the believers' works will be judged, not the believers, for their names are already written in the Lamb's Book of Life (1 Corinthians 3:11–15). They will either receive a reward or suffer the loss of a reward for their works, depending on its quality. As the poem by C. T. Studd states, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last."

Jesus promised to come back to this earth to lead His body into heaven for the wedding feast. As the groom, Jesus will present the Church to His Father as His perfect bride, made perfect by His blood (Revelation 19:7–8). Christ's return is the hope of the church, and that hope encourages us to be found holy in our thoughts and lifestyle (John 14:1–3; Philippians 3:20–21; Colossians 3:1–4).

## Love Is the Brand of the Church

Many of our characteristics show who we are. Our accent tells what part of the country we're from. The way we dress gives clues as to whether we're a doctor, a biker, or Amish. Even cattle are branded in order to identify to whom they belong. Can people tell that you belong to Christ? They won't be able to tell by our outward appearance, but they can tell by what comes out of our hearts.

Each child of God should show Christ's brand on his life. Jesus said that the outstanding mannerism of a believer should be the love of God. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another* (John 13:35). This is not just a warm feeling, but it's a supernatural love that only the Spirit of God can produce in a person of faith, as seen in 1 Corinthians 13.

Being a child of God is a great honor and is something the Church should advertise by its thoughts, words, and actions. Jesus dearly wants the Church to reflect His love. God uses His love to unify the brethren and draw others to Jesus. Love for our Savior, not duty, should be the our motivation to obey His commands. Do you love the return of Christ, or does the thought of it put fear into your heart? If you have fear, you have no hope.

## Conclusion

These three simple phrases can characterize the job of each local church:

**Exalt the Savior:** worship Him (putting Jesus Christ first) in song, in teaching, and in fellowship (Eph. 3:21; 5:19–21).

**Edify the Saints:** teach no other doctrine but that which is stated in the Bible, edifying and loving others out of a pure heart and of a good conscience with truth and faith (1 Tim. 1:3–5; 2 Tim. 4:2–3).

**Evangelize the Lost:** *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to*

*observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you* (Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 1:8).

*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers . . . praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved* (Acts 2:42, 47).

## Prayer

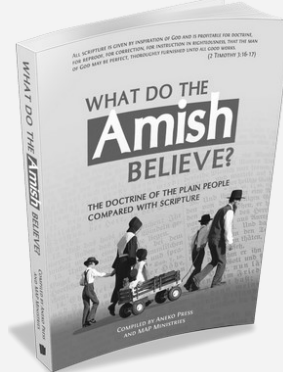
Open our eyes, dear Father, to see our utter emptiness and the beauty of Your holiness. Help us see the vanity of trusting in our plans and in our own righteousness. Thank You for Jesus, who is our righteousness. Make us complete in Christ. We look forward to the completion of Your perfect work when Jesus returns. While we are still here, help us to see more and more of Your wisdom, work, and love.

In the name of Jesus,  
Amen.

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## Amish Beliefs

Do your beliefs line up with those of our Anabaptist forefathers? In this 160-page book, *What Do the Amish Believe?*, nine authors took



the time to go back and study the original beliefs of our forefathers and compare what they believed to what many of us believe today. A \$5 donation covers the cost of printing and postage.

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# Feedback and Response Section

1

Hello. I have a question about "receiving Jesus into my heart." I have heard people say to do this, but is that biblical?

I believe the Bible does not say to "accept Jesus into your heart and you become a Christian." It says:

*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* (Hebrews 11:6)

*Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.* (Acts 16:31)

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.* (Ephesians 2:8)

*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name* (John 1:12)

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. . . .*

*The just shall live by faith.* (Romans 1:16–17)

This good news tells us how God makes us right in his sight.

Would you have time to write and tell me where it says in the Bible that we become Christians through accepting Jesus into our heart?

I would really be interested to find out where it says that.

Thanks!

Love in Christ, S. J.

Hello, S. J. ,

Thank you for your question. You sound very wise. It is great that you believe what the Bible says and do not want to answer in a way that is contrary to what God says.

You are right. The Bible does not tell us to accept Jesus into our heart. It is not we who accept Him, but He accepts us if we trust in Him by faith in what Jesus did for us. Sometimes we Christians come up with nice phrases that sound good and we use a lot, but they might not be as biblical as we think.

There are Bible verses that talk about Jesus being in us as Christians, like these:

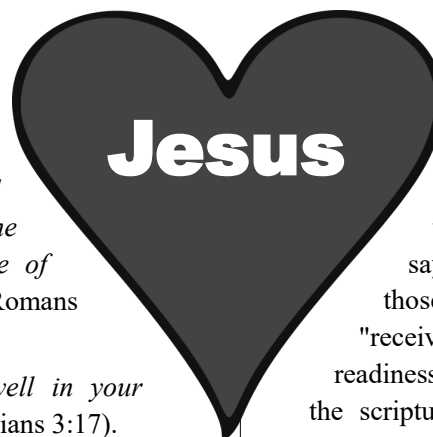
*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I*

*live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me* (Galatians 2:20).

*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness* (Romans 8:10).

*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith* (Ephesians 3:17).

So we see that Jesus can live in our hearts by faith, but to "accept Jesus into our heart" might not be the best way to word it, as you wisely pointed out. Many people, too, simply say a prayer and think they are Christians, when they have never really believed in Jesus. We should



be careful to say what we mean and explain what we say.

I hope you always make sure that what you are taught is what the Bible says. You sound like one of those in the Bible who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

On the next page is another article I saw that also talks about accepting Jesus into our hearts. Thank you for writing to us. I hope you always keep learning, loving, and living the Word of God.

—Paul Miller

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## What does it mean to “Ask Jesus into your heart”?

Many have taught that a person must “ask Jesus into your heart” to be saved. Is this true?

Actually, the Bible does not use the wording of asking Jesus into your heart. The closest passage is found in Revelation 3:20 where we read, *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.* The problem with using this passage to teach that a person must ask Jesus into his or her heart to be saved is that the original context of this verse discusses a group of people who are already Christians. These Christians at the church of Laodicea were told to leave their lukewarm approach to Jesus and to walk closely with Him.

Certainly those who teach you are to ask Jesus into your heart mean well. What is generally meant by this phrase is that a person needs to experience salvation in

Jesus Christ. How does this take place?

The Bible teaches that salvation involves believing that Jesus is Lord who rose from the dead (Romans 10:9). We are to believe in Jesus as God’s only Son to receive eternal life (John 3:16).

This salvation is by grace through faith, not of works so no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8–9). As John 1:12 teaches, *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* We become His children by faith.

Believing in Jesus is a simple message, yet is difficult due to our human sinfulness. The Bible teaches all have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). We deserve death, yet salvation in Christ gives us eternal life (Romans 6:23). This great gift is one all need to hear, need to receive, and need to share (Matthew 28:18–20).

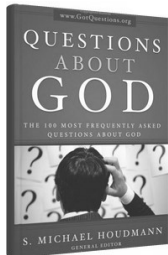
While asking Jesus into your heart is not

directly taught in the Bible, it refers to the most important decision a person can ever make—the belief in Jesus as Lord. Our desire should be to both accept this great gift of eternal life as well as to accurately communicate it to others. When we share our faith with others, we can refer to the clear teachings of Scripture regarding how to be saved to better communicate rather than a phrase like “asking Jesus into your heart” that can miscommunicate the message we seek to present.

Salvation is not about asking Jesus into our heart, but giving our heart to Him. He is our Lord and the one whom we are called to serve. He has already come to earth, lived, died, resurrected, and ascended to heaven to show His love for us. He simply asks for us to believe in Him to receive eternal life (John 3:16; Acts 4:12).

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## Questions Answered

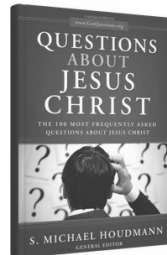


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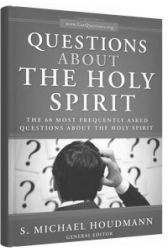


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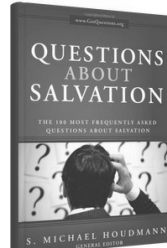


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### July

#### **Our Eternal Home, Part 1**

Charles Stanley explains that according to the Bible, there is only one of two places where a person will spend eternity. One of them is called heaven and the other is called the lake of fire. Which will be your eternal home?

#### **Exploring Your Love Styles**

In a discussion based on their book *How We Love*, counselors Milan and Kay Yerkovich join Focus on the Family to outline five primary love styles and explain how each shapes behaviors, beliefs, and expectations in marriage.

#### **Is a Changed Life Really Possible? Parts 1 and 2**

Can you imagine a life so changed, so transformed, that you are a little mirror of Christ on this planet?

That transformed life can be yours, but you can't do it alone. Using the Bible and practical examples, Chip Ingram will show you how you can think, feel, and act differently because God's Spirit has taken up residence inside you. How life-change really happens, even in the midst of frustrating, painful, or mundane circumstances.

### August

#### **Our Eternal Home, Part 2**

Charles Stanley explains that a wise person always prepares for what he knows is inevitable. The Bible says that all of us will die and will go to spend eternity in one of two places. Are you making any preparation for where you're going to spend eternity?

#### **Finding an Escape from Sexual Addiction, Parts 1 and 2**

Author and speaker Jonathan Daugherty joins Focus on the Family to discuss his former sex addiction and his path to recovery, offering encouragement and hope to men struggling with similar issues.

#### **Real Love in Real Life: Four Barriers to Love, Parts 1 and 2**

Chip Ingram discusses how to find real love, how to grow it, and how to keep it forever.

### September

#### **When Our Burdens Seem Unbearable, Part 1**

Charles Stanley explains that we all experience times when we are overwhelmed with our burdens. Our patience and hope wear thin as our energy is drained under the weight of our responsibilities. We feel helpless and discouraged, wondering if there is a way to escape our troubles. When your heart feels heavy and your body is weary, where do you turn?

#### **The Testing of Your Faith**

Do you feel you're being tested right now? And how do you know if it is God testing you or Satan tempting you? Find out how to face the test and pass it in this message by Pastor Adrian Rogers.

#### **Four Kinds of Love, Parts 1 and 2**

Chip Ingram continues his discussion about how to find real love, how to grow it, and how to keep it forever.

### Martin Luther on Galatians

We plan to also add a section of the reading of Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians each month!

## Contact The Amish Voice

**1. Comments and Questions:** If you have any comments, prayer requests, suggestions, ideas, or questions, or if you want to send us an article or your testimony to be printed in the *Amish Voice*.

**2. Printing and Postage:** If you enjoy the *Amish Voice* and would like to help us with the cost of printing and postage.

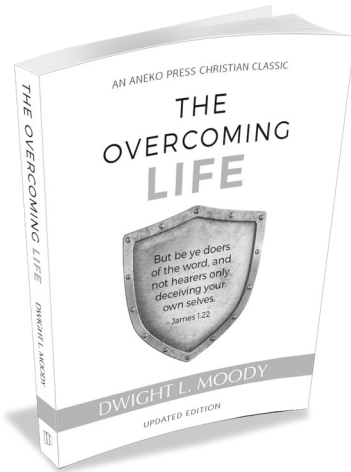
**3. Friends and Family:** If you know of others who might benefit from the *Amish Voice*.

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Continued from the last issue.

## Seven I Wills of Christ

When a person says, “I will,” it might not mean much. We often say, “I will” when we do not intend to do what we say; but when Jesus says, “I will,” He intends to keep His word. Everything He has promised to do, He is able and willing to accomplish, and He is going to do it. I can’t find any passage in Scripture where He says, “I will” do this or “I will” do that, where He does not do what He says.

### Salvation

The first *I will* to which I want to direct your attention is found in John’s gospel: *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out* (John 6:37).

I imagine someone will say, “Well, if I was what I ought to be, I would come, but when I think about my past, it’s too dark. I am not fit to come.”

You must bear in mind that Jesus Christ did not come to save good people. He did not come to save the upright and the just, but He came to save sinners like you and me, who have gone astray and have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Listen to this *I will*. It goes right to the heart. *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*. Surely that is broad enough, is it not? I don’t care who the

man or woman is. I don’t care what their trials, troubles, sorrows, or sins are. If they will only come straight to the Master, He will not cast them out. Come then, poor sinner. Come just as you are and take Him at His word.

He is so anxious to save sinners that He will take everyone who comes. He will take those who are so full of sin that they are despised by all who know them. He will take those who have been rejected by their fathers and mothers and who have been rejected by their wives. He will take those who have sunk so low that no eye of pity is cast upon them. His has come to hear and save. That is what He left heaven and came into the world for. That is what He left the throne of God for—to save sinners. *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost* (Luke 19:10). *God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved* (John 3:17).

A wild and wasteful young man who was running headlong into ruin came into one of our meetings in Chicago. The Spirit of God got hold of him. While I was talking with him and attempting to bring him to Christ, I quoted John 6:37 to him.

I asked him, “Do you believe Christ said that?”

“I suppose He did.”

“Suppose He did! Do you believe it?”

“I hope so.”

“Hope so! Do you believe it? You do your work, and the Lord will do His. Just come as you are and throw yourself into His arms, and He will not cast you out.”

The young man thought it was too simple and easy. At last light seemed to break in upon him, and he seemed to find comfort from it. It was past midnight when he got down on his knees, but down he went, and he was converted.

I said, “Now, don’t think you’re going to get out of the devil’s territory without trouble. The devil will come to you tomorrow morning and say it was all emotion, that you only imagined you were accepted by God. When he does, don’t fight him with your own opinions, but fight him with John 6:37: *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*. Let that be the *sword of the Spirit*.”

I don’t believe that anyone ever starts to go to Christ without the devil attempting to somehow oppose him and trip him up. Even after he has come to Christ, the devil tries to attack him with doubts and make him believe that there is something wrong in it.

The struggle came sooner than I thought in this man’s case. When he was on his way home, the devil attacked him. He used this text, but the devil put this thought into his mind: *How do you know Christ ever really said that? Perhaps the translators made a mistake*.

Into darkness he went again. He was in trouble until about two in the morning. At last he came to this conclusion: “I will believe it anyway, and when I get to heaven, if it isn’t true, I will just tell the Lord that *I didn’t make the mistake, but the translators did*.”

When the kings and princes of this world issue invitations, they invite the rich, the mighty, the powerful, the honorable, and the wise; but when the Lord was on earth, He called the vilest of the vile. That was the main fault the people found with Him. Those self-righteous Pharisees weren’t going to associate with prostitutes and tax collectors. The main charge against Jesus was that *This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them* (Luke 15:2).

Who would have wanted to invite a man like John Bunyan in his time?

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Bunyan, a tinker from Bedford, could have never gotten inside one of the princely castles. I was very much amused when I was across the ocean. They had erected a monument to John Bunyan, and it was unveiled by lords, dukes, and other great men. While he was on earth, they wouldn't have allowed him inside the walls of their castles, yet he was made one of the mightiest instruments in the spread of the gospel. No book ever written comes as close to the Bible as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and he was a poor Bedford tinker. That is how it is with God. He picks up some poor, lost outcast and makes him an instrument to turn hundreds and thousands to Christ.

George Whitefield, standing in his tabernacle in London with a multitude gathered around him, cried out, "The Lord Jesus will save the devil's castaways!"

Two poor, abandoned women who were outside in the street heard him as his silvery voice rang out into the air. Looking into each other's faces, they said, "That must mean you and me." They wept and rejoiced. They went up to the building and looked inside. The earnest messenger had tears streaming from his eyes as he pleaded with the people to give their hearts to God. One of the women wrote him a little note and sent it to him.

Later that day, as he sat at the table of Lady Huntingdon, someone present said, "Mr. Whitefield, did you not go a little too far today when you said that the Lord would save the devil's castaways?"

Taking the note from his pocket and handing it to Lady Huntington, Whitefield said, "Will you read that note aloud?"

She read, "Mr. Whitefield, two poor, lost women stood outside your tabernacle

today and heard you say that the Lord would save the devil's castaways. We seized upon that as our last hope, and we write you this to tell you that we rejoice now in believing in Him. From this good hour we shall endeavor to serve Him who has done so much for us."

### Cleansing

The next *I will* is found in Luke. We read of a leper who came to Christ and said, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*. The Lord touched him and said, *I will: be thou clean*. The leprosy was immediately gone. (Luke 5:12-13).

If anyone full of the leprosy of sin is reading this, go to the Master and tell Him all about your situation. He will speak to you as He did to that poor leper and say, *I will: be thou clean*. The leprosy of your sins will flee away from you. It is the Lord, and the Lord alone, who can forgive sins. You can say to Him, "Lord, I am full of sin. You can make me clean." "I have a terrible temper. You can make me clean, Lord." "I have a deceitful heart. Cleanse me, O Lord. Give me a new heart. Give me the power to overcome the flesh and the snares of the devil. Lord, I'm full of unclean habits."

If you come to Him with a sincere spirit, you will hear His voice: *I will: be thou clean*. It will be done. Do you think that if the God who created the world out of nothing and who by a breath put life into the world says, "You shall be clean," you will not be clean?

You can make a wonderful exchange today. You can have health in the place of sickness; you can get rid of everything that is vile and hateful in the sight of God. The Son of God comes down and says, "I will take away your leprosy and give you health instead. I will take away that terrible disease that is ruining your body and soul, and I will give you my righteousness instead. I will clothe you

with the garments of salvation."

Isn't that wonderful? That's what He means when He says, *I will*. Oh, lay hold of this *I will!*

### Confession

*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven* (Matthew 10:32). There is the *I will* of confession.

That's the next thing that takes place after a person is saved. After we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, the next thing is to get our mouths opened. We have to confess Christ here in this dark world and tell His love to others. We are not to be ashamed of the Son of God.

A person thinks it is a great honor when he has achieved something that causes his name to be mentioned in Parliament or in the presence of the Queen. How excited we used to be during the war when some general did something extraordinary, and someone got up in Congress to proclaim his exploits. I read that in China the highest ambition of a successful soldier is to have his name written in the palace or temple of Confucius. However, just think of having your name mentioned in the kingdom of heaven by the Prince of Glory—the Son of God—because you confess Him here on earth! If you confess Him here, He will confess you there.

If you want to be brought into the clear light of liberty, you must take your stand on Christ's side. I have known many Christians who grope around in the darkness and never get into the clear light of the kingdom because they were ashamed to confess the Son of God. We are living in a day when people want a religion without the cross. They want the crown, but not the cross. If we are to be disciples of Jesus Christ, we must take up our crosses daily, not once a year or on the Lord's Day, but every day. If we take up our crosses and follow Him, we will be blessed in the very act.

I remember a man in New York who used to come and pray with me. He had his cross. He was afraid to confess Christ. He kept his Bible hidden in the bottom of a drawer. He wanted to get it out and read it to his roommate, but was ashamed to do so. For a whole week that was his cross. After he carried the burden that long and after a terrible struggle, he made up his mind. "I will take my Bible out tonight and read it." He took it out, and he soon heard the footsteps of his roommate coming upstairs.

His first impulse was to put the Bible away again, but he decided not to. He would face his companion with it. His friend came in, saw him with his Bible, and said, "John, are you interested in these things?"

"Yes," he replied.

"For how long?"

"Exactly a week," he answered. "For a whole week I've tried to get my Bible out to read to you, but I've never done so until now."

"Well," said his friend, "that is a strange thing. I was converted on the same night, and I, too, was ashamed to take my Bible out."

Are you ashamed to take your Bible out and say, "I have lived a godless life for all these years, but from now on I will live a life of righteousness"? Are you ashamed to open your Bible and read that blessed psalm: *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want* (Psalm 23:1)? Are you ashamed to be seen on your knees in prayer? No one can be a disciple of Jesus Christ without bearing His cross. Many people want to know why Jesus Christ has so few disciples, while Muhammad has so many. The reason is that Muhammad requires no cross to bear. There are so few Christians who will come out to take their stand.

I was struck during the American Civil War with the fact that there were so many

men who could go to the cannon's mouth without trembling, but who did not have the courage to pick up their Bibles to read them at night. They were ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation. *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven* (Matthew 10:32-33).

### Service

The next *I will* is of service.

Many Christians get excited and say, "I want to do some service for Christ."

Well, Christ says, *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men* (Matthew 4:19).

There is no Christian who cannot help bring someone to the Savior. Jesus said, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me* (John 12:32). Our business is to lift up Christ.

Our Lord said, "Follow me, Peter, and I will make you a fisher of men," and Peter simply obeyed Him. Then, on the day of Pentecost, we see the result. Peter had a good haul that day. I doubt he ever caught as many fish in one day as he did men on that day. It would have broken every net they had on board if they had to drag up three thousand fish.

I read some time ago about a man who took passage in a stagecoach. There were first-, second-, and third-class passengers, but when he looked into the coach, he saw all the passengers sitting together without distinction. He didn't understand it until they came to a hill. The coach stopped and the driver called out, "First-class passengers keep their seats. Second-class passengers get out and walk. Third-class passengers get behind and push."

In the church, we have no room for first-class passengers—people who think that salvation means an easy ride all the way

to heaven. We have no room for second-class passengers—people who are carried most of the time, and when they must work out their own salvation, they trudge along and never give a thought to helping their brothers and sisters. All church members ought to be third-class passengers—ready to dismount and push all together, and push with a will. That was John Wesley's definition of a church: "All at it, and always at it."

Every Christian ought to be a worker. He doesn't need to be a preacher or an evangelist to be useful. He can be useful in business. An employer can be used by God as he labors with his employees and within his realm of business relations. A person can often be far more useful in a business sphere than he could in another.

There is one big reason why so many don't succeed. I have been asked by many good men, "Why is it that we don't have any results? We work hard, pray hard, and preach hard, yet success does not come." I'll tell you why. It is because they spend all their time mending their nets. No wonder they never catch anything.

It's critical to hold inquiry meetings. Have times where those who want to know more about God and find peace for their souls can come and meet and ask questions. Pull the net in to see if you've caught anything. If you are always mending and setting the net, you won't catch many fish. Who ever heard of a man going out to fish, setting his net, letting it stop there, and never pulling it in? Everybody would laugh at the man's foolishness.

A minister in England came to me one day and said, "I wish you'd tell me why we ministers don't succeed better than we do."

I explained the idea of pulling in the net and said, "You ought to pull in your nets. There are many ministers in

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Manchester who can preach much better than I can, but I pull in the net.”

Many people have objections to inquiry meetings, but I impressed their importance upon him. The minister said, “I’ve never pulled in my net, but I’ll try next Sunday.”

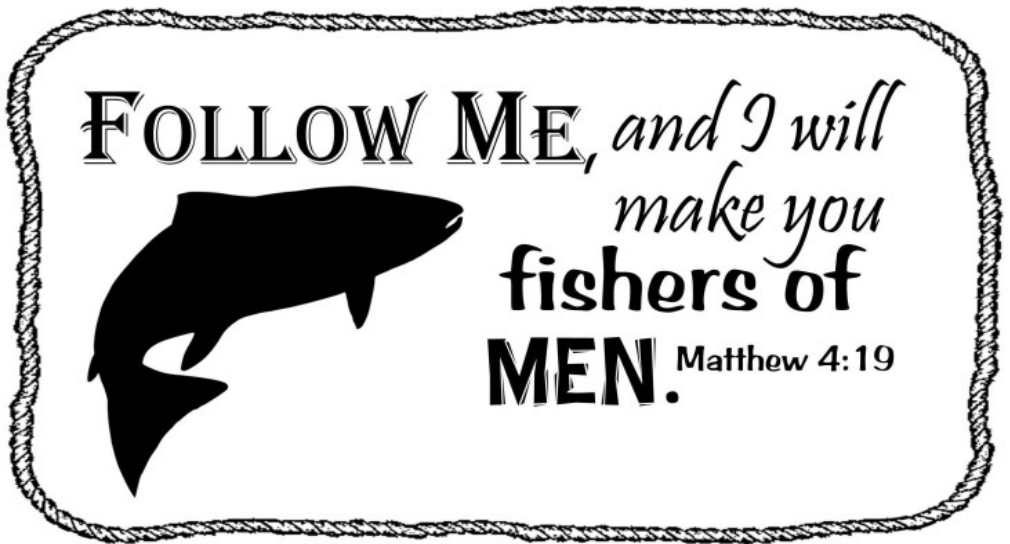
He did so, and eight persons, anxious inquirers, joined him in his study to find peace for their souls and to be shown more clearly how to seek God. The next Sunday the minister came to see me and said he had never had such a Sunday in his life. He had met with marvelous blessing. The next time he drew the net, there were forty people. When he came to see me later, he said to me, “Moody, I have had eight hundred conversions this last year! It was a great mistake that I did not begin earlier to pull in the net.”

So, my friends, if you want to catch men, just pull in the net. If you only catch one, it will be something. It may be a little child, but I have known a little child to convert a whole family. You don’t know what is in that little boy sitting in the inquiry room. He may become a Martin Luther, a reformer who will make the world tremble. You can never tell. God uses the weak things of this world to confound the mighty. God’s promise is as good as a bank note, and here is one of Christ’s promissory notes: *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.* Will you not lay hold of the promise, trust it, and follow Him now?

If a man preaches the gospel and preaches it faithfully, he ought to expect results then and there. I believe it is the privilege of God’s children to reap the fruit of their labor 365 days a year.

Some ask, “Is not there a time for sowing as well as harvesting?”

Yes, it is true that there is, but you can sow with one hand and reap with the other. What would you think of a farmer



who went on planting all year long and never thought of harvesting? I repeat, we want to sow with one hand and reap with the other. If we look for the fruit of our labors, we will see it. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* We must lift Christ up and then seek people out and bring them to Him.

You must use the right kind of bait. Many don’t do this and then wonder why they are not successful. You see them try different types of entertainment to try and catch people. This is the wrong way to work. This perishing world wants Christ, and Him crucified. There is a void inside every person that needs filled up, and if we approach people with the right kind of bait, we will catch them. This dying world needs a Savior, and if we are going to be successful in catching people, we must preach Christ crucified—not only His life, but also His death. If we are faithful in doing this, we will succeed. Why? Because of His promise: *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.* That promise is just as good for you and me as it was for His disciples, and it is as true now as it was in their time.

Think of Paul up in heaven. People are going home to be with the Lord every day and every hour, men and women who have been brought to Christ through his writings. He set streams in motion that have flowed on for almost two thousand

years. I can imagine people going up there and saying, “Paul, thank you for writing that letter to the Ephesians. I found Christ in that.” “Paul, I thank you for writing that epistle to the Corinthians.” “Paul, I found Christ in that epistle to the Philippians.” “I thank you, Paul, for that epistle to the Galatians. I found Christ in that.”

I suppose they go up to Paul all the time and thank him for what he did. When Paul was put in prison, he did not fold his hands and sit in idleness. No, he began to write, and his epistles have come down through the long ages of time. They have brought thousands upon thousands to a knowledge of Christ crucified. Yes, Christ said to Paul, “I will make you a fisher of men if you will follow Me,” and he has been fishing for souls ever since. The devil thought he had done a very smart thing when he got Paul into prison, but he was very much mistaken. He overdid it. I have no doubt that Paul has thanked God ever since for that Philippian jail and his beating and imprisonment there. We will not know until we get to heaven what an impact Paul has had on the world.

#### Comfort

The next *I will* is found in John’s gospel: *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you* (John 14:18).

To me it is a sweet thought that Christ has not left us alone in this dark wilderness here below. Although He has gone up on high and has taken His seat by the Father's throne, He has not left us comfortless. He has not left us orphans. He did not leave Joseph when they cast him into prison. *God was with him*. When Daniel was cast into the den of lions, they had to put the Almighty in with him. They were so closely bound together that they could not be separated, and so God went down into the den of lions with Daniel.

If we have Christ with us, we can do all things. Do not be focused on how weak we are. Let us lift our eyes up to Him and think of Him as our Elder Brother, who has all power given to Him in heaven and on earth. He says, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world* (Matthew 28:20). Some of our children and friends leave us, and it is a very sad hour; but, thank God, the believer and Christ shall never be separated. He is with us here, and we shall in time be with Him in person—and we will see Him in His beauty.

Not only is He with us, but He has sent us the Holy Spirit. Let us honor the Holy Spirit by acknowledging that He is here in our midst. He has power to give sight to the blind, liberty to the captive, and to open the ears of the deaf that they may

hear the glorious words of the gospel.

### Resurrection

Then there is another *I will*. It is found in the sixth chapter of John and it occurs four times in that chapter alone. *I will raise him up at the last day* (John 6:40).

I rejoice to think that I have a Savior who has power over death. My blessed Master holds the keys of hades and of death. I got more comfort out of that promise than anything else in the Bible. It brought me joy and lit up my path.

Some time ago, a dear brother died, and as I went into the room and looked upon his lovely face, that passage ran through my soul. I knew that my brother would rise again. I said, "Thank God for that promise." It was worth more than the world to me.

When we laid him in the grave, it seemed as if I could hear the voice of Jesus Christ saying, "Your brother shall rise again." Blessed promise of the resurrection! Blessed *I will! I will raise him up at the last day*.

### Glory

The next *I will* is found in John 17:24: *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am*.

This verse is found in the last prayer of our Lord, on the last night before He was

crucified and died that terrible death on Calvary. Many believers light up at the thought that they will one day see the King in His beauty in heaven. Yes, there is a glorious day before us in the future. Some think that on the first day we're converted, we have everything. Certainly we get salvation for the past and peace for the present, but then there is the glory for the future in store. That's what kept Paul rejoicing. He considered his afflictions, his beatings, and his stonings as nothing compared to the glory that was to come. He considered those things nothing, so that he could win Christ.

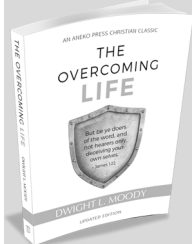
So when things go against us, let us cheer up. Let us remember that the night will soon pass away, and the morning will dawn upon us. Death never comes there. It is banished from that heavenly land. Sickness, pain, and sorrow do not enter there to mar that grand and glorious home where we shall live forever with the Master. God's family will be all together there. It is a glorious future, my friends!

Yes, it is a glorious, day, and it may be a great deal nearer than many of us think. During these few days we have here on earth, let us stand steadfast and firm, and we shall one day soon be in the unbroken circle in that world of light, and we will have the King in our midst!

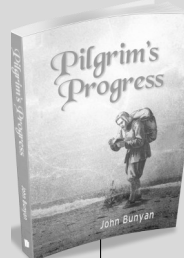
—D. L. Moody

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## Books for the Heart



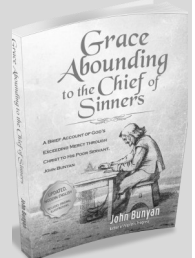
Did you like that D. L. Moody article? If you want to read the entire *Overcoming Life* book or even share it with others, you can order it right from the publisher, ANEKO Press. (\$7.00, includes shipping).



The article also mentioned one of the most-loved Christian classics of all time—*Pilgrim's Progress*. If you have never read it, you should! You can order a copy of *Pilgrim's Progress*, updated in modern English, from ANEKO Press, too. (\$12.00, includes shipping.)

Finally, if you want to read the story of how the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan, left his life of sin,

struggled to overcome self, and found victory in Jesus, you can order John Bunyan's own autobiographical account of how he was changed by God! The book is called *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. (\$12.00, includes shipping.)



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words contained in scripture are so simple in their meaning when I finally understand them, that when I finally do understand them, I can't believe I was missing the truth all along. Truly we are blinded, unless the Lord opens our eyes. Often I realize that I was looking past the words themselves and trying to fit the words into my understanding, rather than allowing the words to simply say what they say.

*Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known* (Matthew 10:26).

- Do you lack a basic desire to read the Bible? Pray and ask the Lord to give you a desire to read the Bible.
- Do you feel like you don't understand the Bible? Pray and ask the Lord help you and ask Him to reveal truth to you through the Holy Spirit.
- Are you confused by how all the different things in the Bible fit together? Don't worry about it. Simply read all of scripture and determine that if scripture says

something, then it must be true. As you read more and more scripture, things will start to fall into place in amazing ways; and you will discover that there are no errors in the Bible, but instead everything is indeed true and good and given to us for a specific reason.

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God* (2 Timothy 3:16).

### When to Read the Bible

*O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee* (Psalm 63:1).

Are you distracted by many earthly things while attempting to spend time with the Lord in prayer and Bible reading? Get up early before the hustle and bustle of the day, and determine that nothing that comes to your mind while reading or praying is as important right then and there as the things that the Lord wants to show you. You may be bombarded with thoughts about work and about other people. Either jot those things down on paper to get them out of the way, or then simply ignore all other thoughts, as important as they may seem. These distractions are often from the enemy, or perhaps just of ourselves, sent

for the purpose of keeping us away from God.

If your schedule doesn't allow you to get up early, or if you simply aren't a morning person, set aside time in the evening, or even during the day. The most important thing is to set aside specific time just for this purpose; and that you enter into that time with a God-given desire to read and understand, believing that the Holy Spirit is ready and willing to reveal His words to your heart and mind.

There are many other things that could be said regarding reading and understanding the Bible, but space won't allow. I do trust that in one way or the other your desire to read the Bible has been sharpened and that as you earnestly pray and seek the Lord, I am certain He through the Holy Spirit will answer that prayer. I've discovered that reading the Bible is truly exciting and enjoyable, and the more I read, the more I see just how vast and wonderful our God really is. The depth of this book is unending, and never dull. May the Lord bless you as you read!

Jeremiah Zeiset

Abbotsford, Wisconsin

End

## The Church and Her Mission

—By John Weaver

- If a commission by a earthly king is considered an honor, how can a commission by a heavenly king be considered a sacrifice?  
—David Livingstone
- The Bible is not the basis for missions. Missions is the basis of the Bible.  
—Ralph Winter
- No one has the right to hear the gospel twice while there are people who have not heard the gospel once.  
—Oswald J. Smith
- The mission of the church is missions.  
—Oswald J. Smith

- We talk of the second coming; half the world has not heard of the first.  
—Oswald J. Smith
- He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.  
—Jim Elliot
- You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.  
—Amy Carmichael

The above things are on my mind about God's will and plan to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to every creature on earth.

As I spend my last day here in Honduras

before returning to the land of plenty—where



people spend more on pet food than they give to missions, and where many who name the name of Christ are doing nothing to promote Jesus Christ to the lost, I think my burden is changing from those who have never heard—to those who hear all the time.

- Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say? —Jesus

## The Golden Cord

—By Ann Keiffer

We always assumed  
the golden cord of family ties,  
just assumed  
that golden cord  
was always there,  
binding us together,  
connecting us as a family,  
like the web of strings  
wrapped 'round the fingers  
in the children's game  
called Cat's Cradle.

In truth, the family assumed  
the tie that binds,  
that golden cord,  
so well,  
we largely ignored it.  
tending to face outward  
from the family circle,  
focused on our individual,  
busy, separate lives . . .

until  
one day,  
so impossibly,  
so suddenly,  
so catastrophically,



our son/brother/husband/father  
F——  
died.

Wrapped in the golden cord  
we had only assumed,  
F—— fell away from the world,  
away from the family...  
through our grief,  
cinching the cord around us  
as he went,  
by his absence  
drawing us together,  
pulling us tight.

And now, this week,  
after 94 years

of a well-lived and blessed life,  
it was our loving mother's  
time to fall away.

The woman who knit the golden  
cord,  
and wrapped it around us,  
the woman who kept it tended  
and made it golden,  
has fallen away from us  
and by her falling  
is drawing us together,  
pulling us tight,  
calling us to  
remember  
the golden cord  
of family ties.

Life is short,  
but love is long,  
she would want her death to remind  
us.

Life is short  
but love is long.

**\*Written at the death of a brother, and  
read at the funeral of our mother.**

**In memory of both.**

## Fear of the Unknown

—By Joe Keim

Fear is not fun to live with. It steals our sleep, our peace, our joy, and our courage from us. Fear is the opposite of faith and trust. It is a tormentor! People fear losing their jobs, dying early, the dark, illness, disease, not being able to pay their bills, and on and on. Sometimes fear is short lived; other times fear goes on for days, sometimes years.

Recently a friend of mine asked: Joe, have you ever feared something so much for so long that suddenly you realized the very thing you feared actually happened?

I wanted to say yes. As strange as it may sound, I believe I've fallen victim to my own fears.

As believers, we all know the story of Job in the Old Testament. He had everything; but then, just like that, he lost everything—all his fortune, all his earthly possessions, and all his servants and children. I've thought that if I weren't a believer in the One True and Living God and His Word, I would read Job's testimony and think it was a fairy tale – it is that bizarre of a story.

As we consider our subject of fear and the story of Job, I find it very interesting that Job said in chapter 3, verse 25, “for the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.” From this one

statement, it appears that (1) Job lived with a lot of fear, and (2) his fears eventually came true.

What does that say about us? Do our fears sometimes turn into reality?

The Bible says: *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love* (1 John 4:18).

In summary, fear can be cast out only by the perfect love of God. The more we know of God's love and care and the more we love other people, the more fear is conquered in our lives.

We can trust God rather than be afraid.

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## Reading and Understanding the Bible

—Jeremiah Zeiset

*Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures*  
(Luke 24:45)

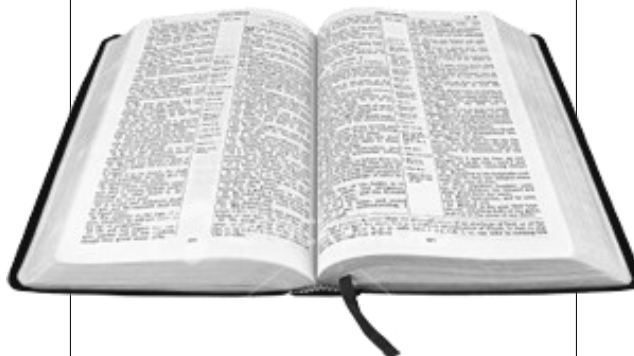
### The Importance of Reading and Understanding the Bible

I'm certain you'll agree with me that there is no other book anywhere near as important as the Bible. For thousands of years this book instructed, comforted, and helped mankind. People in countries where Christians are persecuted risk their lives to get a copy of this Book, or even just a fragment of it; and most Christian households in America have at least one copy and read it more than any other book.

No other book contains so much of our world's history – about 4,000 years total. No other book addresses all of life's issues, both practical and spiritual. In it, we learn how to work, how to take care of our physical bodies, how to love our neighbors and members of our own household, and much more. Spiritually, we learn about introduction of sin through the first created man, about how God took care of His people even after they sinned against Him, and most important, about our Lord and Savior, sent to restore humanity to God through His death and resurrection. We even learn about future events, such as what happens

to us after we die, and the return of Christ for His Church.

If all this is contained in this one, important book, why then do we sometimes neglect to read, and when we do read, why is it sometimes so hard to understand?



### Can Every Person Read the Bible and Understand It?

This question deserves a whole-hearted "yes"! Our Anabaptist ancestors left the Catholic church because that church had sadly decided that only certain people (priests) could own and read the Bible, and that the "common man" had better not read it, instead letting the priests tell them what the Bible said and meant. Our Anabaptist forefathers realized that reading and studying the Bible themselves was of such importance that they were willing to risk their lives to do so, and met in homes to read the Bible and pray together.

*But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him* (1 John 2:27).

When we are born again and when we receive the Holy Spirit, we absolutely can understand the Bible. Is the verse quoted above saying we don't need any teachers and preachers? No, not necessarily. But it is saying that where things were previously hard to understand, the Holy Spirit is able and willing to open our spiritual eyes and heart in order to reveal all scriptural truth to us personally.

### How to Get the Most Out of Bible Study

Before I read the Bible, it is very helpful if I pray and ask the Lord to show me the truth of the words I'm about to read. It's amazing how little I understand when I try to read with my own understanding or even when I try to fit what I read into what other people say it means; and how things open up and fit together when I rely on the Holy Spirit to show me the truth of the words I'm reading. Often the

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