



MAP ♦ 575 US Highway 250 ♦ Greenwich, OH 44837 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ September 2022

## The General Epistle of James

Teacher's Outline and Study Bible™

<p>1. <b>A strong summons— weep &amp; wail if you are hoarding wealth</b></p> <p>2. <b>Summons 1: Weep &amp; wail, for wealth is not lasting</b></p> <p>3. <b>Summons 2: Weep &amp; wail, for hoarding wealth condemns you</b></p> <p>a. Will be a witness against you</p> <p>b. Will eat you as fire</p> <p>c. Will be stored up</p>	<p><b>CHAPTER 5</b></p> <p><b>C. Temptation 3: The Rich Man— Hoarding Wealth, 5:1-6</b></p> <p>Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.</p> <p>2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.</p> <p>3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for</p>	<p>the last days.</p> <p>4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered in the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.</p> <p>5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.</p> <p>6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.</p>	<p>for judgment against you</p> <p>4. <b>Summons 3: Weep &amp; wail for the way you are living</b></p> <p>a. Have cheated, stolen, defrauded</p> <p>b. Have lived selfishly— in pleasure &amp; luxury</p> <p>c. Have indulged, fattened yourself for judgment</p> <p>d. Have condemned &amp; killed the righteous</p>
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### Section V TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS: COMMON TO ALL BUT ESPECIALLY TO THE GIFTED James 4:11–5:6

#### STUDY 3: TEMPTATION 3: THE RICH MAN— HOARDING WEALTH

TEXT: James 5:1-6

**AIM:**

To reevaluate your living and your giving before the Lord.

**MEMORY VERSE:**

*“Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you” (James 5:1).*

**INTRODUCTION:**

The rich person faces a fierce temptation, a temptation so powerful that it will consume him unless he lives ever so close to the Lord. What is the temptation that so forcefully attacks the rich? The temptation to bank and hoard money instead of using it to meet the needs of the destitute and dying of the world. The Bible never condemns all rich persons. It only condemns the rich who store up their wealth instead of using it to reach the lost, feed the hungry, cloth the naked, shelter the cold and homeless, nurse the sick, and sound the glorious news of salvation around the world. Within this World that reels under the weight of desperate needs, how can anyone keep more than he needs? How can anyone keep from committing all he is and has to help and minister to people? How can anyone not live and give sacrificially in order

to meet the needs of those who are disadvantaged and deprived? God knows that we are without excuse. This is the reason for this passage: to warn all the rich of this world, all who keep more than what they need.

#### OUTLINE:

1. A strong summons—weep and howl if you are hoarding wealth (v.1).
2. Summons 1: weep and wail, for wealth is not lasting (vv.2-3).
3. Summons 2: weep and wail, for hoarding wealth condemns you (v.3).
4. Summons 3: weep and wail for the way you are living (vv.4-6).

### 1. A STRONG SUMMONS TO RICH PEOPLE (v.1).

***“You rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you” (Js.5:1).***

“Weep and howl” here means to burst into weeping and to howl with grief if you are hoarding money.<sup>38</sup> Why? Because miseries (plural) are coming upon you—such terrible miseries that you need to begin weeping and wailing now. There will be...

- miseries of afflictions
- miseries of emptiness
- miseries of loneliness
- miseries of insecurity
- miseries of passion
- miseries in judgment
- miseries in hell

Riches that are hoarded will fail a person; they will not satisfy and they will doom a person. They will bring all kinds of miseries upon a person. Therefore, weigh the summons of God.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of misery have you seen the love of money cause?
2. How is God summoning you to handle your resources? How does your obedience demonstrate your trust in God rather than in money?

### 2. GOD’S FIRST SUMMONS—WEEP AND WAIL, FOR WEALTH IS NOT LASTING (vv.2-3).

Note the three things mentioned.

⇒ There are riches that are “corrupted,” which means rotted. This would refer to such things as farm produce like

wheat or building products like wood. Many a person gains wealth or a lavish living through farming or construction or some other industry whose products eventually rot away.

- ⇒ There are garments that become moth-eaten. This would include the textile and clothing industries. Many gain their riches or their extravagant lifestyles through these industries.
- ⇒ There is gold and silver that is cankered or rusted. This refers to mineral, chemical, metal, and mining interests of the economy. James notes that if the minerals lie unused they will no longer shine.

The point is striking, for it is a fact seldom considered. If wealth—money or anything else—is hoarded, it is useless. It does nothing but sit there, and eventually it will be gone. It will never be used for the good that it could do. The rich person who has it will contribute nothing to his generation but...

- produce and buildings that rot
- clothing that is eaten away
- gold and silver that waste away

What a terrible tragedy! To have done nothing for the world but leave the material things that age, rot, decay, and pass away forever and ever. Wealth—riches and material and physical things—does not last.

***“As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool” (Je.17:11).***

#### ILLUSTRATION:

*A minister was visiting his childhood town and wanted to see the little church where he was saved many years before. Arriving at the location, he found that the church had been converted into a home. The owners were very helpful, however, and gave the minister directions to the new building. When he finally arrived at his boyhood church, the minister was shocked to find an enormous beautiful building. But he was saddened to discover from his conversation with the current pastor that the poor were not helped anymore, nor did they feel welcome.*

*“Well, the church cannot say, ‘Silver and gold have I none,’” the new pastor proudly announced to the older minister.*

*“No,” the minister replied, “neither can she say, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!’”<sup>39</sup>*

<sup>38</sup> A.T. Robertson. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.6, p.57.

<sup>39</sup> Richard A. Steele, Jr. and Evelyn Stone, Editors. Heartwarming Bible Illustration. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1998), #211.

Jesus told his disciples, “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Mt.10:8). God does not give to us so that we can hoard for our own comfort. We must generously help others, especially the needy. The most terrible, tragic reality is that the selfish and rich of this world do not even realize their miserable status, nor the horrible judgment that awaits them because of their neglect of the needy.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it so foolish to hoard wealth? How can you better focus your thought on eternity to avoid this trap?
2. What is wealth good for? How does a scriptural understanding of wealth affect your outlook on the world? Your church? Your neighbor?

### 3. GOD’S SECOND SUMMONS—WEEP AND WAIL, FOR HOARDING WEALTH CONDEMNS YOU (v.3).

Wealth will condemn the rich in three ways.

1. Wealth will stand as a witness against the uncaring rich. When? Now and in the day of judgment.
  - ⇒ Every person who is concerned with the desperate needs of this world sees that some rich are living selfish lives. They wish that the rich and hoarding would wake up and get to their task of meeting the critical needs of the world.
  - ⇒ Every poor and needy person sees that some rich care and that others are heartless or insensitive toward their needs.
  - ⇒ All others in the world, including the rich themselves, see that many rich are hoarding and living selfish lives. But they ignore the fact or do not care enough to change or to fulfill their duty to the world and God.
  - ⇒ Worst of all, God sees those who are living selfish and hoarding lives. Occasionally the rich have to fear the poor, who sometimes rise up against them and threaten to destroy their lives. But the rich must always fear God, for God is the One who can destroy both body and soul in hell.
2. Wealth will consume the whole person as a fire. If we hoard wealth, the passion to increase or stockpile more and more money will burn within us. And the more we hoard, the more we will desire and lust after wealth. Ultimately, the passion for more and more will consume us. We will never be satisfied or fulfilled. The obsession with acquiring more wealth will in time destroy us, both here and now and for all eternity. It will eat our flesh and become the consuming fire and passion of our lives.

***“But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Ti.6:9-10).***

3. Wealth will be stored up as a treasure against us in the last days. This refers to the days of coming judgment when all men will stand and give an account to God. The words heaping together picture a person working day by day and hour by hour to heap up treasures on earth and, at the same time, heaping up wrath against himself in the terrible day of God’s judgment. The wrath heaped up will savagely fall upon the rich person. Why? Because the rich person hoarded while a world of needy people died from hunger, cold, or disease, or were doomed eternally because no one cared enough to share the gospel.

***“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Mt.6:19-20).***

#### ILLUSTRATION:

*The story is often told of a carpenter who had worked many years for the same company. But the carpenter was dishonest. He took shortcuts and had unfortunately learned too well how to do so. The shortcuts enabled the carpenter to pocket a lot of money that should have been spent on the houses. One day, the owner of the company told the carpenter he had a special project for him. The carpenter was told to construct a very special house. As usual, the carpenter used cheaper materials and took many shortcuts. When the project was completed, the owner presented the house to the carpenter as a gift. “I cannot think of a more fitting present for all you have done over the years,” the owner of the company told him. Much to his dismay, the carpenter was doomed to live with the penalty of his own shortcomings.—SOURCE UNKNOWN*

One day we will all be called to account by God, the Owner of our souls. Live your life in such a way that, when that day comes, you will not be ashamed of what you did with the resources entrusted to you.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What do hoarded riches say about a person? Do to a person?

## QUESTIONS (continued):

2. How can you avoid the selfishness of hoarding riches?

## 4. GOD'S THIRD SUMMONS—WEEP AND WAIL FOR THE WAY YOU ARE LIVING (vv.4-6).

Four descriptions are given.

1. Some rich people cheat, steal, and defraud their workers. Note what usually happens when they do: the cheated person cries out to God in his suffering. When he does, God hears him. And note who God is: the Lord of Sabaoth. This is the Hebrew word meaning Lord of hosts or Lord of armies. It refers to God's omnipotence, His unlimited power to help the poor, the disadvantaged, and the oppressed. God will execute judgment, wrath, and hell upon the oppressors. This is exactly what God will do to those who cheat and defraud the workers and laborers of the world. Rich people can steal and defraud...
  - by not paying just wages
  - by not paying a full hour or day's wage
  - by not paying for all the work done
  - by withholding more than what they should
  - by adding to the bill the laborer owes for supplies
  - by adding weight to the scales that measure what is being bought

On and on the list could go as to how the rich cheat the worker and the poor. Scripture has much to say about cheating people out of their due wages.

⇒ The person who lies in order to get wealth is a person seeking death.

*"The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death" (Pr.21:6).*

⇒ The person who oppresses the poor is going to meet a day of severe need.

*"He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want" (Pr.22:16).*

⇒ The person who oppresses the worker will face the judgment of God.

*"And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers and against those that oppress the hireling [worker] in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal.3:5).*

Scripture also has much to say about treating workers justly and fairly. No person is to get money by extortion nor to charge more interest or taxes than what he should.

*"Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy...at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee" (De.24:14-15).*

2. Rich people who hoard their money live selfishly in the luxury and pleasure of this world. They hoard and build up bank accounts and estates. They seek to live lives of pleasure and gratification, being recognized as successful and powerful people who can have and enjoy what this earth has to offer. Note how selfish living forgets God and the cries of the desperate and needy of the world.
3. People who hoard their money are making themselves fat for the day of slaughter. This is graphic language; nevertheless, it is the warning of God to all of us who bank and hoard more than we need. We are rich in comparison to the poor, needy, and dying of the world. Our hoarding is adding more and more weight for the coming day of slaughter, that is, for the wrath of God's terrible judgment.
4. Some of the rich condemn and kill the righteous, and the righteous do not resist them. Note this: the one person whom the rich dislike the most is the person who teaches self-denial—that we are to give all we are and have to meet the needs of the world. Therefore, the rich reject and condemn the righteous. The rich reject the message of self-denial and sacrificial giving that the righteous practice and teach. In addition, in a society that is given over to covetousness and pleasure, the rich and powerful will even persecute and kill the righteous because of their message.

Note: the righteous do not retaliate. They just keep on proclaiming the glorious message of the gospel of Christ Jesus. They continue to reach out to meet the desperate needs of the starving, diseased, poor, and needy of the world.

*"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).*

## QUESTIONS:

1. What will God do if we take advantage of the poor? When will He do these things?
2. What does money tempt you to do? How can you overcome this temptation?

## QUESTIONS (continued):

3. Why is the righteous message of giving often rejected? What is the best way you can proclaim this message?

## SUMMARY:

Money—just the mention of the word stirs emotions in most people. Tragically, the emotion is often that of clinging and hoarding and acting selfishly. But giving to meet another's need is simple obedience to the royal law of love, to love your neighbor as yourself. We often ignore an opportunity to give because we fear we will not have enough left for ourselves. What foolishness! The Lord has promised to meet all of our needs if we seek first the Kingdom of God.

What does God want you to give? Scripture is clear: you are to give to meet the needs of the deprived, the disadvantages, the poor—holding nothing back. You must be serious about the summons James gives:

1. A strong summons—weep and wail if you are hoarding wealth.
2. Summons 1: weep and wail, for wealth is not lasting.
3. Summons 2: weep and wail, for hoarding wealth condemns you.
4. Summons 3 weep and wail for the way you are living.

## PERSONAL JOURNAL NOTES:

(Reflection and Response)

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

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## Prepare Your Heart

—by David Little

It is sad how quickly one generation of believers can walk away from following the Lord Jesus.

King David was a man after God's own heart. His son, Solomon, built a temple for the Jehovah God, but did not have the passion for God that his father had.

Then Rehoboam, Solomon's son, came to the throne. He was unwise and did evil in the sight of the Lord. Following an invasion by Egypt, he humbled himself, but not to the extent that he should have. It is sad in 2 Chronicles 12:14:

*"And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD."*

Prepare means to establish or make

ready, a word involving anticipation. A woman who is having company will "ready" her home in anticipation of company. The word "seek" is used as a diligent activity. Everything else is set aside while preparations are made.

Rehoboam knew about the Lord and could talk the talk, but his heart was not actively interested in being serious about his walk with God. He obviously had his heart in another place or on another object.

Many weddings are taking place during this time of the year. Preparations are made with diligence, seeking to nail down every detail. The bridegroom has

prepared and sought every means to gain his bride. He has traveled long distances to visit, spent endless hours talking on the phone, bought special gifts, and has pursued this lady with all of his heart for a wife.

How easy it would be following the honeymoon to move on with life and not prepare and seek to love his bride with the same passion.

Is this not what happened to Rehoboam?

My prayer:

Let it not happen to my heart.

*"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6).*

At church, we read together and learned about:

- in those days
- in our days
- in the last days

In Luke 2:1, we read:

*“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.”*

In those days, God had been silent for 400 years - about six generations. The government was overpopulated and out of control. Taxes were high. Man-made religion had crept in and taken over. God was put on the top shelf, almost out of reach.

So long as the common man submitted to the government and religious authorities, obeyed their long list of do’s and don’ts, and lived in their box, life crept on and everybody appeared good.

Outwardly, people seemed to have it all together, but inwardly, people were struggling. They were filled with anxiety, frustration, and discouragement. Life was dull. Empty. Meaningless.

But then it happened! Bursting forth out of thin air, an angel appeared to the shepherds. The glory of the Lord lit up the entire area, and the shepherds saw what appeared to be a multitude of heavenly hosts. They were praising God and saying:

*“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14)*

Peace on earth! That was their message. Peace to all.

This was not temporary worldly peace, which so many are seeking for in our day. It was God’s peace. The kind of peace that passes all understanding, fills your cup until it overflows, relieves you of all anxiety, frustration, and discouragement. It is the kind of peace that calms your body, your mind, and your spirit. It supersedes all earthly circumstances, builds your confidence in God, and allows you to experience God’s eternal rest to the fullest.

Jesus said:

*“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let*

*not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).*

My friend, let me tell you something. It does not matter how wicked and corrupt the world has become in our day. You can rest in perfect peace. God does not want you to live in fear. He wants you to trust Him.

Will you please consider the words of Jesus? Let’s read it.

*“Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (Matthew 6:25-26).*

May the Peace of God flood your soul and wash away all your discouragement, frustrations, and anxiety today! You are in God’s hands. Trust Him. He will never let you down. Never!

## Do You Know the Effects of Laughter?

- ⇒ Releases endorphins from your brain (natural feel-good chemical)
- ⇒ Reduces the level of cortisol (stress hormone) in your body
- ⇒ Stimulates circulation
- ⇒ Aids in muscle relaxation
- ⇒ Strengthens the immune system
- ⇒ Increases infection-fighting antibodies
- ⇒ Increases tolerance and temporarily relieves pain
- ⇒ Improves the function of blood vessels
- ⇒ Increases blood flow



...or, as the Bible put it long before these scientific facts were discovered:

*“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”*  
(Proverbs 17:22a)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

During every sermon, we hear the words, “I wish upon all of you the grace of God, the rich, pure love of Jesus Christ, and the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit.” Do we understand and acknowledge how deep and how important this blessing really is? We often hear explanations and parables about the grace of God and the love of Jesus Christ, but seldom is the power of the Holy Spirit expounded upon.

I will try, with the help of God, to clarify and explain the way to receive and be filled with the Holy Spirit and to live out our life in that way. I will be the first to say, with humbleness, I do not have all of the answers.

This is how my journey worked out. I became convicted that the power of the Holy Spirit is just as important as the grace of God and the rich, pure love of Jesus Christ. I began asking God, “How do I receive this awesome gift?” The answers did not come overnight. I prayed and read the Bible and a number of books. One day, the answer jumped out at me from the Bible!

I have a Bible translated directly from Greek. Greek is the language that the disciples and apostles knew and used. The New Testament was originally written in Greek as well. In the footnote it explains the verse,

*“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”* (Matthew 7:7).

The footnote says that the force of the Greek language means this:

Ask and keep on asking.  
Seek and keep on seeking.  
Knock and keep on knocking.

I thanked the Lord for this answer and decided then and there to not give up until I **KNEW** that the Holy Spirit was leading me and that I was filled with this awesome power.

I wish that I could say exactly when, where, and how this was fulfilled, but it

did not work out that way for me. I fully believe and trust that some people receive the Holy Spirit instantly and miraculously, but it was not that way for me. However, the important thing is to ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking. I would like to add to this ‘trust and keep on trusting.’ When God gives you this, and He will if you truly seek and are not afraid of what this may bring, you will know without a doubt!

I still make sinful mistakes and think sinful thoughts, but now I know that God forgives and loves me and helps me to do those things less and less. I also find myself thinking and praying for people in my life in this manner: “Does he/she have the Holy Spirit? If not, give them the desire and hunger to seek it.”

This has changed my life. I still have moments and times when I doubt, but then I have many more times and days when I feel the Spirit bubbling out and overflowing.

*“...for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh”* (Luke 6:45b).

*“...because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the*

*Holy Ghost which is given unto us”* (Romans 5:5b).

Please do not ever think that you will just so happen to receive this gift, as that is just as impossible as thinking that you will just so happen to spend eternity in heaven. As in all aspects of our Christian walk, it takes dedication, perseverance, and an unbelievable amount of trust and prayer!

Is it worth it? The only way that it would not be worth it would be if a person is still living in fear of man and will not act upon the Spirit’s prompts. This letter is proof of the Holy Spirit’s prompts, as I hesitated to write it. It is always easy to think and say that there are others more qualified (and there are), but if God wants us to do something, we **MUST** humbly and obediently do it.

May God bless you and use you to show others true brotherly love and servant leadership. In the name of Jesus Christ, let us pray, “Lord Jesus, help me to live the way that You would. Help me to have the same attitude that You do. Help me live for You so much that those around me will be compelled to know You as I do. Amen.”

## A Joy Inside

—by Keith Rawlinson

A joy for no real reason, at least none of which I know.  
It started as a seed of warmth and then began to grow.

It began way deep inside my soul and worked it's way on out;  
I'll enjoy this peace within and I don't care what it's about.

Some days I don't feel it, It's like it isn't there,  
but it turns out that it's still inside and I'm just not aware.

A joy that gives me comfort; a joy that gives me hope.  
It guides me through hard times in life and gives me strength to cope.

The more I give it thought, the more I think it through,  
this joy is always with me and is really nothing new.

It seems the more I contemplate, I come to understand,  
that this joy is helping me through life, it leads me by the hand.

I now know that I'll have this joy from now until the End  
It's joy bestowed by Jesus Christ, my Savior and my Friend.



Pain.

We are familiar with that word. Most of us have experienced it at one time or another. There are many kinds of pain – physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional. We talk about emotional pain like grief because we know what it’s like to lose someone close to us.

But I’d like to draw your attention to a different kind of pain. Most of us know of people who’ve experienced it. Some of us have experienced it first-hand, but few people talk about it. Few people know what to do with it. Most people don’t know how to find healing for themselves, or how to help someone else find healing. Sometimes, it isn’t even acknowledged as pain.

I’m talking about sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is a full-blown epidemic in most Anabaptist communities across the globe. The numbers of victims in our churches are not much different from the general population. According to statistics,<sup>1</sup> one in three girls and one in five boys will be abused by age eighteen. (These numbers are on the conservative side. Most conservative counselors say the statistics are much higher in some communities.)

If you have experienced this kind of pain, you are not alone. You are not crazy. It was not your fault. No matter what the voices in your head tell you, the truth is you are not trash. You are not ugly. You are not worthless. You are not beyond hope.

I once was a little girl who felt broken, ugly, worthless and dirty. I felt like a rosebud that someone tried to pry open before it was time to bloom. My innocent childhood was snatched away from me. I wondered if I was normal. I even asked my mom if I was a virgin. Sub-

consciously, I knew something had happened to me, but at that time, I had no memories of the abuse. In fact, I remembered very little of anything before I was ten years old.

When I was 21, I married a wonderful man who is better than my wildest dreams. Ben. It was on our wedding night that I realized I had been raped years before. It was physically impossible for me to have a sexual relationship. I was devastated. Hurt. Here I was, a young bride who wanted to give everything to my husband, but I couldn’t. My body was remembering the trauma, even though my mind had blocked the memories.

Ben and I contacted our premarital counselor who suggested that we see a doctor to make sure that I was physically healthy and able to have a sexual relationship. A few days after our honeymoon, I was examined by a kind doctor. The invasiveness of the pelvic exam was like experiencing the rape all over again. Everything inside of me screamed, “Stop! Let me go! Why are you doing this?” The pain was so unbearable that I thought I would pass out. Then came the dreaded question, “Have you ever been raped?” The doctor explained that I had vaginismus, which is when the body remembers trauma and causes muscles spasms to occur as a way to protect itself.

For nearly twelve weeks, I faithfully performed the exercises the doctor had prescribed. I cried. I prayed. I was an emotional train wreck. My husband never made me feel like I should just “brace up” or “get over it.”

One day, as I was reading the Bible, I came across the story of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus’ garment. Hmm, I mused. Jesus healed people instantly back then. Maybe we should ask Him to heal me. So I asked

my dear husband if he thinks that God cares about sex.

“Of course,” he replied. “I think He does.”

“Do you think He cares enough to heal me?” I asked timidly.

“Why don’t we ask Him?”

So we prayed. It was just a simple prayer. I didn’t “feel” any different, except that I had peace. But in that instant, God healed my vaginismus! It was gone! (Thank you Jesus from the bottom of my heart!)

The next year was a difficult one for me. Though I had experienced physical healing, emotionally my heart was an open wound. I began to have flashbacks of the abuse. My first flashback happened in a dingy cabin while we were camping with our church.

I had just laid down for a nap. As I stared up at the rafters, I suddenly became a little girl again as I tried to distance myself from a man. His eyes reminded me of a vulture eyeing his prey. I immediately curled myself into a fetal position and began to heave deep sobs that had never been released before. I shook, moaned and writhed on the floor for a few minutes. My mind screamed with sheer horror at what had happened many years before. The mental anguish was just as painful as the actual rape. My husband held me as I wept. I was physically, emotionally, and mentally exhausted. I felt like I had been run over by a train. In a way, I had.

Flashbacks are hard to describe. Usually something triggers them. Sometimes they are more of a body memory than an actual mental memory. They leave you weak and vulnerable. In those moments, I felt like a little girl who needed someone to protect me. I wanted to hide. At first, it was hard for me to realize that I was having a flashback, simp-

<sup>1</sup> Statistics are from “11 Facts about Child Abuse” by dosomething.org.



ly because I couldn't "feel" anything. But Ben learned to read my eyes. He would say, "Ann, are you okay?" And I would burst into terrified tears.

"So," I hear you asking, "how did you find healing?"

In some ways, the answer is simple. Jesus. In other ways, the answer is complicated. Healing is a journey that takes time. Sometimes years.

First of all, we have to acknowledge and accept what happened. This is an important step. You simply cannot find healing for pain that you refuse to acknowledge. Childhood sexual abuse involves much more than "just" rape. It includes inappropriate touching over and under clothes, the exposure of a child's body, exposure to porn or adult nakedness, using force or trickery to make a child to perform sexual acts, inappropriate sexual comments made to young children and any kind of vaginal, oral, or anal penetration.

In my case, my mind had blocked those memories as a way to survive the horror. They simply didn't re-surface until I was at a safe place in my life. If you suspect that you have repressed memories of abuse in your past, I would strongly encourage you to commit it to God. He doesn't hide things from us that we would be better off knowing. If He thinks that you are ready to deal with things, you will remember enough to work through what happened.

Not everyone blocks memories. Maybe you remember everything, but you don't want to deal with it. It is hard to face the pain. It hurts. But you really can't have true joy or peace by stuffing pain. Pushing away pain only works for so long. Eventually, it will stick its ugly head up and scream for your attention until you choose to deal with it. It does not go away on its own.

It isn't fun to face pain. But let me tell you: It is worth it. It is worth every tear.

It is worth every flashback. Please don't fight it any longer.

Grieve. Grieving is another step in the healing process. After you acknowledge the pain, you will likely be very emotional. After all, your innocence was stolen from you. In some ways, grieving your innocence is like grieving a loved one who walked away from God. Innocence can never be returned after it is gone.

Everyone responds differently to grief. Some people need to talk about what happened. Others need to write or journal. You will have days that you do more crying than smiling. You will feel really good one minute and the next you will burst into tears. And sometimes you won't even know why you're crying.

During those time of intense grief, bring your pain to Jesus. Climb up onto His lap. Rest your head against His shoulder. Tell Him exactly how you feel. He wants to carry your pain. Let Him do that for you. Spend time in His Word. Mediate on it. Talk audibly with God. Ask Him hard questions. Read good, wholesome books. Take walks. Find someone you can trust who is willing to listen to your heart anytime of the day or night. Your heart is an open wound, so give yourself a lot of grace during this time. Take care of yourself, and don't rush the process. Take time to grieve.

Renounce the lies. Women who have experienced sexual abuse often face many lies that are deeply rooted in their soul due to the abuse they experienced as children. Some common lies are: "I'm worthless." "I'm ugly." "It's my fault." "God doesn't love me." And so on. Identify the lies you are believing.

Once you have identified these lies, renounce them. Use the Word of God to fight them. There is great power in the Word! (Hebrews 4:12). Stand in front of the mirror and speak truth to

yourself. The devil cannot stand the truth. Share your struggle to believe truth with people who will stand and fight with you. Write the truth (opposite of the lie) on a paper and stick it on your closet door where you will see it every day, or write the lie on the bottom of your socks, and then "tramp on that lie" all day long. Visuals like this have helped me to break the bondage of lies in my life.

And now for the most important step in healing from sexual abuse: Forgiveness. I have no idea what comes to your mind when you hear this word, but I would like to explain what forgiveness means to me.

I'm not talking about forgetting what happened to you. I'm not talking about giving the person who abused you a "Get Out of Jail Free" card. I'm not talking about trusting the person who broke your trust. It makes me sad to hear of churches and individuals pushing "forgiveness" on the victim in order to protect and hide the sin of the perpetrator. That is not true forgiveness. I am sorry if that kind of emotional and spiritual abuse is part of your experience. You probably want to scream when you hear this word, and I don't blame you. But please, keep reading.

True forgiveness is something that is impossible without Jesus. In order to forgive, you need to realize your own sinfulness and accept God's love and forgiveness for you. Without this, it is totally impossible to truly forgive your perpetrator. When you realize that your sin is really no less sinful in God's eyes than theirs, it makes it easier to choose forgiveness.

Forgiveness means that I accept what happened and that I choose to deal with the consequences of my abuser's sin with a cheerful heart. It is saying, "Ok God, I choose to be okay with the flashbacks. I can not help what happened to me, but I can choose my reaction to it."

Another aspect of forgiveness is taking responsibility for my reaction to the pain. Because we are human, we respond to pain by becoming selfish and bitter. Forgiveness means that we repent of bitterness and that we choose to say, "Yes, what he/she did was terrible, but my bitterness is hurting others too; so I choose to repent of it."

Forgiveness is not a one-time deal. You may need to forgive your perpetrator 100 times a day. That's fine. When Peter asked Jesus, "How often should I forgive my brother?" Jesus said, "Until seventy times seven." (Matt. 18:21-35) Let me translate that in terms of working through sexual abuse. Every time you think about what happened and you feel that familiar bitter spirit begin to rise within you, FORGIVE. Don't wait. Do it right away.

If you struggle with flashbacks, forgive the minute the flashback is over. You don't even have to remember who it was that abused you. You can still forgive them. Do it every time. I will be honest with you: Forgiveness is the only way to deal with flashbacks. They are horrible experiences. But I have found so much healing in forgiveness. The prayer I often pray is as follows:

"Jesus, today I choose to forgive (name) for the pain he/she caused me when he/she (what they did to you). I choose to forgive him/her and release him/her. I don't want to hold this against him/her any longer. Please have mercy on him/her! I will accept the consequences of his/her sin. Will you forgive me, Jesus, for being so focused on myself and bitter toward him/her?"

If you want to find healing, but feel powerless to choose to forgive, ask God to help you. He doesn't want to see you stuck in bitterness. He is more than willing to give you the power you need to make that hard, but important, choice.

No, forgiveness is not easy. But it is necessary if you want to find healing and peace.

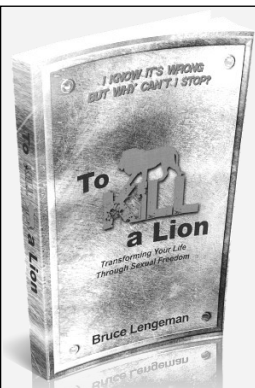
And finally, don't waste your pain by keeping silent about the healing that God is doing in your shattered heart. Tell someone. Look for opportunities to help someone else find healing from sexual abuse. Don't forget how it felt to be the little girl with a battered, bleeding heart. There are so many people who need to hear about the redemption Jesus brings to broken children.

I have asked God, "Why? Why me?" I think it is okay to ask questions, but don't demand an answer. Job asked God "why" too, but God never answered his question. It is not that God didn't care or didn't hear. Believe me, He does! He cares about what happened to you, but because His ways are so much higher than ours, our minds cannot always grasp the plans He has for us. (Is. 55:9)

So do I know why I was raped and abused? No. But there's one thing I am choosing to believe: God has a purpose for everything: even for a little girl who was brutally abused by men who professed to know God.

Has the healing journey been easy? No. Is it worth the pain? YES. A thousand times, yes.

Dear sister, if you have experienced this type of pain, please don't try to stuff it in or pretend it is not there. There is hope, healing and redemption in Jesus Christ. You don't need to stay a victim to your past. Remember, He loves you. He wants to carry your pain. He specializes in giving "beauty for ashes". (Is 61:3) "...And with His stripes, we are healed." (Is 53:5)



## Do you struggle with lust or other sins and addictions?

*To Kill a Lion*, written by Bruce Lengeman, is designed to help men find the roots of their sexual addiction. The theme is, "Men cry out, 'I know it is wrong, but why can't I stop?'" *To Kill a Lion* will help men understand their own sexuality and what makes it operate "out of alignment" with God's design. You'll learn why it is healthy to be sexual as a man, but in a pure and Godly way. Though this

book was not written for women, many are reading it and getting an understanding of things they never knew about sexuality.

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**WRITE TO US!**

**The Amish Voice, 575 US Highway 250, Greenwich, OH 44837**

It was a Sunday that I will never forget. It was 2019 and I was in the hospital recovering from a surgery that had taken place earlier in the week. Saturday was a good day for me, and I was on pace to get home that coming Monday.

On Sunday afternoon, I began not feeling well. A few people from the church stopped by, and I began to wear down very quickly. I asked my wife, Carrie, to not allow any more visitors to come in to my room. No sooner than I said that, there was a knock on the door. I remember drifting in and out of consciousness during that visit. Carrie kept waking me up because it was rude for me to sleep while people were there, but I couldn't control it. I woke up several minutes later and seemed to feel better. I told Carrie to go home and rest.

I'll never forget what happened next. As I was laying there, my heart rate accelerated to 155 bpm. At that time, my resting heart rate was usually 45 bpm. I called the nurse. My temperature shot up to 104. Things got real in a hurry. They drew blood and ordered a bag of antibiotics. The nurse said, "You are septic and we are preparing a room for you in the Intensive Care Unit."

Knowing that might be the case, I called the church to have them start praying. I called my good friend (who was a medical student) to come up immediately. I called Carrie and told her that she better come back to the hospital as soon as possible.

While waiting for the ICU room to open, Carrie and Jeff kept rotating cold rags on my face and body in an effort to cool me down. Miraculously, my temperature started dropping, my heart rate subsided, and my white blood count went back to normal before they transferred me to the ICU!

It was, on all accounts, a miracle.

God can do the miraculous. God can do whatever He pleases. Why then does God choose to heal some and not others? Some will attribute a lack of healing to a lack of faith. Some will even blame a lack of healing from God to sin in a person's life. Others say we see no miracles being done because we don't expect them, and therefore don't pray for them.

If God is a God of love, should He not just heal everyone? Why does God choose to heal one and not another (John 5:3-8)?

As one follows a progression through Scripture, he will find healings begin to cease as the church matures and the Scriptures are being distributed. There is no longer the need to validate the gospel or the church as is seen in the book of Acts. If you exit the gospels and the early church, you will find Paul battling an illness (Gal 4). In 2 Corinthians 12 he was afflicted. Epaphroditus almost died of sickness according to Philippians. Timothy and Trophimus both were said to be sick in the pastoral epistles.

What does this mean for us today?

The first thing that we must understand is that God does all things for His glory. He desires ultimate glory and will receive the glory through your sickness or through your healing.

How does God receive the glory in your illness?

## 1. By Healing

I love hearing stories of people who have seen God do amazing things in their lives. The reactions of those who were healed by Jesus must have been amazing. The healing hand of God upon an individual is awesome. I believe God heals.

## 2. By Helping

Many times God chooses not to heal but to help (Heb. 4:16). We often get so consumed wanting a healing act of God that we fail to see His helping. "*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help*" (Ps. 121:1). Our God is the One who helps. God's grace is sufficient to help and empower you despite the difficulties.

## 3. By Handing us Over

This is one that I would rather not believe or write about. Job was handed over to Satan for God to receive the glory in his life. Without this tragic scene, the world would not know of Job. How difficult trials would be today without the book of Job! Job is an example of God remaining in control while allowing Satan to destroy him. It might be that the Devil is trying his best to destroy you, your marriage, or your ministry, but God is allowing it for your good and His glory.

## 4. By Heaven

Healing might not come until we see Jesus. God might see fit to allow us to struggle and deal with sicknesses until He takes us home. It could be the healing that we pray for comes through leaving it all behind. Sickness and pain cannot follow us there. When we pass from death to life we will know it was worth it all! We will then understand how it all worked together for good (Rom. 8:28).

**God's glory is His priority. How He receives that glory is unique in each of our lives.**

I trust that no matter what situation you find yourself in, as you pray for healing, you would equally pray for God to be glorified in accordance to His will.

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## September

### **Walking in the Spirit** (part 1 of 2)

Pastor John Marino discusses the importance of walking in the Spirit as the strategy for Christian sanctification. If we are going to fight against our own flesh, we are going to need to be equipped with the right tools. We can't "pick ourselves up by our bootstraps." We need grace.

### **Cultivating Spiritual Intimacy**

What's the secret of a 30, 40, or even 50 year marriage? In this message, Chip shares the newest volume in his ongoing series, "Keeping Love Alive." He emphasizes the importance of couples cultivating spiritual intimacy, which is the first of 4 biblical skills he will share in this series.

### **Free at Last: Miracle of New Birth**

Message by John Piper

### **Is Jesus Still in the Foot Washing Business?**

Throughout history, scholars have questioned the reason Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Many dismiss the spiritual significance. Dr. Vernon McGee answers these questions with a real and raw message that requires us to respond to this gentle act, just like the disciples did.

## October

### **Walking in the Spirit** (part 2 of 2)

Message by Pastor John Marino

### **Effectively Communicating (God's Love to Your Mate)**

Have you found that you and your spouse talk less and less? And the times that you do get some fact-to-face time, there's a constant misunderstanding, hurt feelings, and unmet expectations. In this message, Chip Ingram discusses how couples can better communicate. Learn how to have genuine, heart-to-heart conversations with your mate, starting today!

### **Why Do We Need to be Born Again?**

If God did not make us alive to His grace and glory, we would remain dead—completely enslaved to our sins. Message by John Piper.

### **When Jesus Went Through Samaria**

As He traveled to Jerusalem with the shadow of the cross looming over His head, Jesus took the time to fulfill His appointment with a woman at a well who needed to experience the truth of salvation in her life. Message by J. Vernon McGee.

## November

### **Resolving Conflict Peacefully**

How do you handle conflict? Are you a person who bursts out in anger or are you someone who completely shuts down? In this message, Chip Ingram offers an option to resolve conflict in marriage. Don't miss how you can radically transform your relationship!

### **Son of God, Son of Man, King of Israel**

Jesus' many titles show His divinity and universal rule, yet His identity is what drove man's wickedness to reject and kill Him.

### **When Jesus Met a Dad and His Lad**

One of the most significant relationships a son can have is with his father, for it is by the father's influence that a boy grows up to be a man. But what is a father to do when a crisis comes to his son's life? Message by J. Vernon McGee.

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The cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.75 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come alongside of us by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit, as well as highly appreciated. Thank you. —Joe Keim, Executive Director

# What Can We Learn from the Woman at the Well?

—www.gotquestions.org

The story of the nameless Samaritan woman at the well, recorded only in the Gospel of John, is a revealing one, full of many truths and powerful lessons for us today. The story of the woman at the well follows on the heels of the account of Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and prominent member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (John 3:1-21). In John 4:4-42 we read about Jesus' conversation with a lone Samaritan woman who had come to get water from a well (known as Jacob's well) located about a half mile from the city of Sychar in Samaria.

This was an extraordinary woman. She was a Samaritan, a race of people that the Jews utterly despised as having no claim on their God. She was an outcast and looked down upon by her own people as evidenced by the fact that she came alone to draw water from the community well when, during biblical times, drawing water and chatting at the well was the social highpoint of a woman's day. However, this woman was ostracized and marked as immoral, an unmarried woman living openly with the sixth in a series of men.

The story of the woman at the well teaches us that God loves us in spite of our bankrupt lives. God values us enough to actively seek us, to welcome us to intimacy, and to rejoice in our worship. As a result of Jesus' conversation, only a person like the Samaritan woman, an outcast from her own people, could understand what this means. To be wanted, to be cared for when no one, not even herself, could see anything of value in her—this is grace indeed.

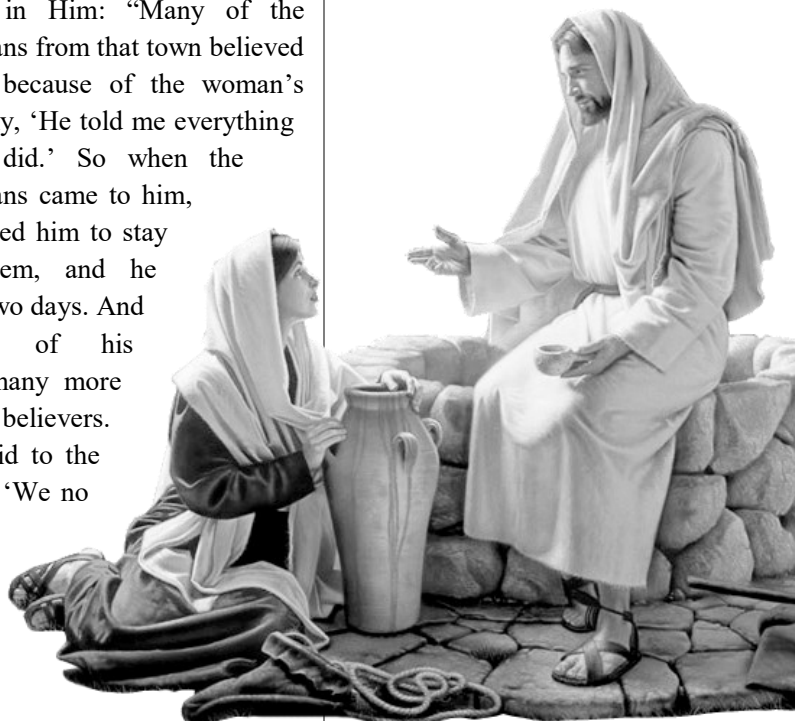
But there are many other valuable truths we glean from this story. We learn that:

- 1) Only through Jesus can we obtain and receive eternal life: "Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life'" (John 4:13-14; cf. John 14:6).
- 2) Jesus' ministering to those outcasts of the Jewish society (the Samaritans) reveals that all people are valuable to God and that Jesus desires that we demonstrate love to everyone . . . including even our enemies (John 4:7-9; Matthew 5:44).
- 3) Jesus is the Messiah (John 4:25-26; 1:41; Matthew 27:22; Luke 2:11).
- 4) Those who worship God, worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24; Psalm 145:18).
- 5) Our testimony about Jesus is a powerful tool in leading others to believe in Him: "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, 'We no longer believe just

because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world'" (John 4:39-42).

Additionally, we learn from Jesus' dialogue with the woman at the well three absolute truths about salvation:

- 1) Salvation comes only to those who recognize their desperate need for the spiritual life they do not have. Living water can be obtained only by those who recognize that they are spiritually thirsty.
- 2) Salvation comes only to those who confess and repent of their sin and desire forgiveness. Before this immoral woman could embrace the Savior, she had to concede the full burden of her sins.
- 3) Salvation comes only to those who take hold of Jesus as their Messiah. For the absolute truth is that salvation is found in no one else (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).



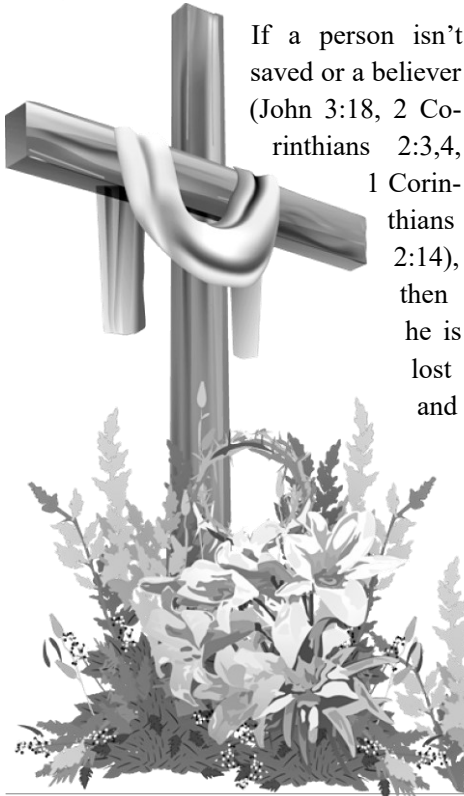
The Bible teaches that a person is either lost or saved (born again, if you prefer).

John 3:3-5 says:

*“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*

There is no “middle” or “almost.” It is saved or lost. Period.

If you are saved, then ALL of your sins are forgiven (1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 2:13, Colossians 3:13), and you will know that you are a son of God because he puts His Spirit in you (Romans 8:16, Galatians 4:6, 2 Corinthians 1:22, 1 John 5:13, 1 John 4:13, John 14:17, and 1 Corinthians 2:12).



If a person isn't saved or a believer (John 3:18, 2 Corinthians 2:3,4, 1 Corinthians 2:14), then he is lost and

can't understand spiritual things, and his sins are NOT forgiven!

Romans 6:23 says:

*“For the wages of sin is death; but the GIFT of God is ETERNAL LIFE through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

No sins will make it into heaven! And it is impossible for a human being on this earth to not sin within his own power (Ecclesiastes 7:20, Romans 3:10,23). It doesn't matter who you are; the same rule applies to all (Romans 2:11, Acts 10:34).

It doesn't matter if a person is Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, Amish or Mennonite etc. If a person is trusting in ANYTHING besides Jesus Christ, then that person is trying to serve two masters (gods), and that's impossible! (Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13)

Jesus was very serious when he said the following in John 14:6:

*“...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 says:

*“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”*

This is the gospel and the way to salvation for everyone in this present age of grace. NOTHING can be added. It does not matter

who you are (denomination) or were you came from. The same truth applies to everyone!

Romans 10:9 says:

*“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”*

Romans 10:13 says:

*“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

How could a person confess and believe after he is dead? This decision must be made now! Not in the future after a person is dead, because by then it will be too late.

Ephesians 2:8-9 says:

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of WORKS, lest any man should boast.”*

That's basic English and is very plain and simple!

We have established that a person MUST have salvation (be born again or saved) on this earth BEFORE they die, or it will be too late. We have also established that there is only ONE WAY to heaven and that is through JESUS CHRIST! (John 14:6)

Ephesians 4:5 states there is “One Lord, one faith, and one baptism” (Holy Spirit baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13) into Christ, not water.

There are not many ways to heaven but only one! Anyone who says differently is telling a lie that is from the devil!

Salvation does not come through a certain dress code or a bunch of manmade rules. You might say, “Well, those things are keeping us safe” That, my friend, is trusting in another god (idol), not Jesus Christ!

The grace of God is probably my favorite topic to write or to preach about.

Grace is getting what we do not deserve. Grace shows the heart of God. No place is this more evident than in the parable of the prodigal son. The prodigal son had it all. He had a kind and loving father, a good secure job, and a great future. But he walked away. He wanted to spend his time enjoying the pleasures of life for a season.

The kind father gave him what he asked for: freedom to do his own thing and freedom to go his own way.

We also can do that. Many of us can identify with the prodigal son. We go our own way, making money, pursuing riches, and spending our money on pleasures. In the process, we become farther and farther away from God, and we end up in a far country.

The prodigal son ended up in a situation which he never had thought could happen. All of his efforts failed him. He was slowly dying of hunger in spite of all his efforts. He thought of his father. Maybe, just maybe, his father would let him be a servant. Notice that the son was still willing to work. His only thought was to earn: to try to stay alive by his own efforts.

Grace was the farthest thing from his mind as he started the long journey back to his father. All that he hoped for was an opportunity to work hard, and by that be able to live.

Today if you have messed up your life. Take that all important step like this son did. **“I will go to my father.”**

I love to imagine what happened next. The son knew that he was not worthy to be a son anymore, and tried to explain that to his father. The father would have none of it. **“You are my son.”**

It wasn't about the son and his worthiness. It was about the father and his mercy and grace.

I try to picture the weary son when this slowly started to sink in. “In spite of all that I did to mess up my life, I am wearing this beautiful robe. I smell real food being prepared, a feast for me. For me? I don't deserve it, yet my father is going all out to celebrate, simply because I came home.”

That, my friend, is the grace of God. He wants to celebrate. When we turn and come to the Father, He will come running to meet us. He will make a feast, a celebration. Not everyone will want to join in that celebration. There are many

older brothers who are working, toiling, and rejecting the grace of God, expecting that their hard work will earn them a position. They reject grace because they see grace as not being fair.

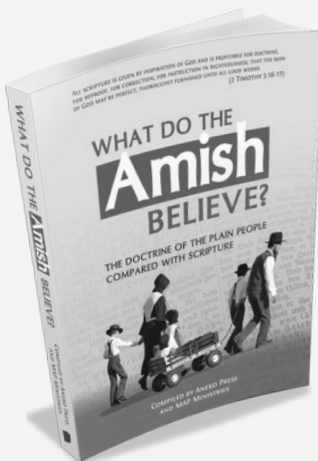
If you have ever gone your own way for a season, you will think, “But my sins, they are so many! Will the father really accept me?” Our human reasoning seems to be that as the sin increases, it will work towards depleting the grace of God. No, my friend, **NO**.

We never go and sin to see grace work. But there is a promise given to us by One who can not break His promise. It is one of the most amazing verses that you will ever read. A promise from the Father:

*“...but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20).*

Grace, that outworking of love by the Father, will abound much more than our sins. If we get a picture of this grace, all of our desire to sin will go. In its place will be a deeply grateful heart—a heart that marvels at God and His love toward us. Thank You, Lord Jesus. Thank You.

## 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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**When the Old Still Hurts**

—By John Weaver

Many years ago, I sprained my ankle very badly. I went to the doctor expecting that it would be broken. He said that it was not broken, but it would have been better if it was. What? He explained that the ligaments that I stretched and tore would be slower to heal than a broken bone. He was right. For many years afterward, I endured a lot of pain when there was a change of weather. The old hurts still hurt.

Many people have the same problem. Old hurts still hurt.

All kinds of abuse, verbal, emotional, physical, spiritual and more will cause deep wounds. Unless those wounds heal correctly, they will continue to hurt on and on.

Different wounds must be treated differently. Many wounds will heal with a bandage and some salve. Other wounds, such as burns or infections, may need to be opened so they can heal from the inside out.

The wounds from abuse or harsh words are like that. Those wounds need healing. Painful as it may be to open the wound, it is the thing that needs to be done for healing to take place.

Years ago, I came face to face with the realization that I had stuffed pain from my childhood deep inside, and it had caused a root of bitterness in me. God, in His great mercy, showed me scenes from my childhood. I was a hurting little boy. The harsh words that I thought had gone in one ear and out the other, had, in fact, gone in both ears and lodged in my heart.

I asked for help. Several men gathered around me and prayed earnestly for me. Slowly, a deep, long, forty-year-old root came out. I was able to finally heal.

For days I wept as the tears cleansed my stuffed and bottled up pain and hurts.

I don't know your hurts, but I do know hurt. We have all experienced being hurt. The thing is, what are we doing with it? God has made it possible for us to be healed from any wounds. Yes, I know, some of you have suffered tremendous abuse. I am so sorry.

But I am deeply grateful that Jesus came to heal all our diseases and wounds. He said that He came to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliver-

ance to the captives, to set at liberty those that are bruised...and more.

We need to release our pain and those who hurt us to Jesus. Once we let go, God can heal. When we forgive, we set the captive free—not the person who caused the hurt, but you, the victim, will be free.

Forgiving is not saying that what happened was okay. It is not setting them free. It is saying, "Lord, this is too big for me to handle. I give it to you. You promised that vengeance is yours. I give it to You, and I choose to let it there."

Sadly, many people want justice and even revenge. They think that if the person who hurt them has to suffer, then it will bring closure to their hurts.

It doesn't. In fact it is the opposite. If we want revenge, we will relinquish healing. Healing only comes by releasing. As painful as it may be during the process, it will be worth it all.

Instead of going through life with wounds that always hurt, we will have scars. Scars tell a story.. there was a wound, but it has healed.

Praise Jesus.

*The perfect healer!*

Amen.

