

GOOD NEWS

Lost Opportunity



"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" Luke 19: 41-42.

Opportunity Rejected: Many think opportunities come again and again in life. But the fact is, we may never get another chance in life! Here is the historical record of how the Lord Jesus approached Jerusalem and as He looked at the beautiful gold domed temple, He began to weep and prophesy. We may wonder why the Lord wept? This is the second instance we read that Jesus wept. Another occasion was when the Lazarus was dead and all the people were sorrowfully mourning. To share and identify with their sorrow and pain, Jesus wept too. In original Greek, it means to shed tears. Here, at the temple, it means, to lament audibly. Jesus was overcome by uncontrollable sorrow and pain when He, as God foreknew what is going to happen after a few years to that great city. As the Lord saw the way enemies would destroy the city, He expressed His deep displeasure and agony in crying out. In this He also showed His love for sinners, who reject His love and salvation.

Judgment Ahead: People of Jerusalem rejected the Messiah who came to save them. Now what is left is only destruction and death for their sin. God gave them opportunity, even now, this day, He reminded them, but they did not realize it. They did not respond to His drawn out hands in love. They did not understand how much He loved them and desired to spare them from the coming judgment upon them and the city.

How often, we also do not realize the times and miss the opportunity or reject the offer of God's free gifts of salvation, peace and new life? Even now, He is offering us His grace freely, to forgive us and cleanse us from all our sins and make us His own chosen people. Yet we refuse to repent and turn to Him. Because we love sin and the lusts of the world which perish and bring judgment upon us. The Scriptures warn us that God's wrath is hanging over all those who reject the truth and practice wickedness. Romans 1:18ff.

Though God is a God of love, yet He exhausts His patience in waiting for you to repent and come back to Him. One day, He closes His door of opportunity and nobody can open it. The history is full of sad examples of lost opportunity, such as Esau forfeiting his birthright and blessings and even though he repented, he lost them irretrievably forever. Similarly, Judas repented but it was too late and he perished.

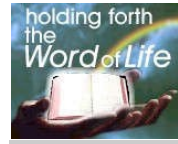
Friend, today God is offering you the opportunity to realize you are a sinner and to repent and turn from your sin to Him, and trust the Lord Jesus as your own personal Savior and Lord to receive the salvation prepared by His death and resurrection. Will you make this important decision today and now!? Lord Jesus is calling you today to come and accept His salvation and peace, etc.

> Free copies can be ordered from :
**Green Pastures, P. O. Box 71,
 Thane- 400 601. Mumbai.**
 > Audio/Video CD/DVDs available.
 > Online resources on our websites at:
 www.aothniel.net & www.ctouch.org.in
Tel/Fax: 022 2597 0650. Cell: 098920 93534



> www.ctouch.org.in/
 calvarytv

Green Pastures- A publication of Calvary's touch Ministries, Mumbai. (for private circulation only)



www.ctouch.org.in

Green Pastures

~for healthy growth

to encourage, edify & equip you



Psalm 23

Volume 1. Issue 2.

Jesus Christ is Lord

February 2010



MINISTRY VISION

- To make quality, reproducing disciples. **Mat 28:18-20**
- To present each one perfect in Christ. **Col.1:28-29.**
- To reach the unreached. **Rom.15:20.**
- To defend the faith. **Jude 3.**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Welcome
- Worship
- Doctrine
- Foundations
- Spirit's Fruit
- Encouraging
- Youth lifestyle
- For Students
- Practical life
- For Women
- Family life
- Leadership
- Ministry Skills
- Bible study
- News, Views
- Missions
- Qs & Ans
- Good News

Eph 4:15 But that you, speaking the truth in love, may in all things grow up to Him who is the Head, even Christ.

Welcome to the second issue of this unique magazine that has been proved to be a blessing to many all over India. To God be all the glory for all the encouraging feedback I have been receiving after the first issue was sent out. This clearly underscores the need for sound teaching and feeding of God's Flock with Green Pastures as the Shepherd does in Psalm 23. There is still hunger in some for the real, pure milk and strong meat of the Word of God to grow healthily and do mighty works for His glory. Amen.

As stated in the first issue, the purpose of this magazine is to boldly take a stand for the truth of God's Word and to defend the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Jude 3. Biblical, Christ-centered and God-honoring and practical articles relevant to the present day situation and challenges are included in this magazine for every member in the family as well as the church and the world at large.

Growing Together—our Goal for the Year 2010.

This year the Lord has given us the goal from Ephesians 4, "to grow together". We have been meditating on this during the last month. In addition to growing up in the spiritual life as individual believers, God wants us to grow together as the body of Christ. Though the Lord wanted His disciples to bear fruit and multiply in John 15, here the focus is not on growing in quantity, but in quality. Each born again believer is a part of the Body of Christ and has to contribute to its growth by doing his part as the Spirit gives him gifts.

Unity, the Key to Growth: Paul begins Ephesians 4, with a touching exhortation to walk worthy of God's call as His chosen people in all humility, gentleness, patience, love and to make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit. Then he lists the foundations for the true spiritual unity among saints in the church, even today.

Equipping to Grow: The Lord gave gifted people to the church, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry so that the body of Christ can grow to full maturity in faith and knowledge of the Son of God. The goal of growth is to become Christ-like in all His fullness. Amen.

Bro. A.Othniel sends his prayerful blessings to you.

>> Send your comments/suggestions. Recommend to others. Get free CD/DVDs by sending addresses. God bless you. ><>

WORSHIP True Worship

Hebrews 13:15-16. " Through Him, then, continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips that give thanks to His Name "



In the last issue we have seen that worship is ascribing to God His worth, stating and affirming His supreme value. All of those terms carry the idea of giving and worship is what we give to God.

Modern Christianity seems committed instead to the idea that God should be giving to us. God does give to us abundantly but we need to understand that a consuming, selfless desire to give to God is the essence and the heart of worship. It begins with the giving first of ourselves and then of our attitudes and then of our possessions-until worship is a way of life.

Three Dimensional Worship: A key adjective, often used in the New Testament to describe proper acts of worship, is the word acceptable. Every worshiper seeks to offer that which is acceptable and at least three categories of acceptable worship are specified in Scripture.

Sharing. First, worship can be reflected in how we behave toward others. Romans 14: 18 says, 'For he who in this way serves (latreuo) Christ is acceptable to God.' What is this acceptable offering given to God?

The context reveals that it is being sensitive to a weaker brother. Verse 13 In other words, when we treat fellow Christians with the proper kind of sensitivity, that is an acceptable act of worship. It honors God, who created and loves that person and it reflects God's compassion and care.

Romans 15: 16 implies that evangelism is a form of acceptable worship. The Gentles who were won Jesus Christ by Paul's ministry became an offering of worship to God.

In Philippians 4:18, Paul thanks the Church for a gift of money to help him in his ministry. There, acceptable worship is described as giving to those in need. That glorifies God by demonstrating His love. So worship can be expressed by, showing love to fellow believers, sharing the gospel with unbelievers or meeting the needs of people on a very physical level. We can sum it up in a single word: acceptable worship is sharing. It is a love that gives.

Doing good. A second category of worship involves our personal behavior. Ephesians 5:8-10 says, " Walk as children of light... The word 'pleasing' is from a Geek word that means "acceptable." In this context, he is referring to goodness, righteousness and truth, saying clearly that to do good is an acceptable act of worship toward God. So sharing is an act of worship and that is the effect of worship on others.

Doing good is also an act of worship and that is its effect in our own lives. There is one other relationship that is affected by our worship-our relationship with God.

Pleasing God. This third category, which marvelously sums up worship, is described in Hebrews 13:15-16. Verse 15 says, "Through Him, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips that give thanks to His name." As we look at worship in its God-ward focus, we discover that it is thanksgiving and praise. With verse 16, the passage brings together all three categories of worship: 'And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.' Sharing with others, doing good and praising God-all are legitimate, scriptural acts of worship. Read also Hebrews 10:23-25.

><

Heb 10:22 " let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, ..." 2

MISSIONS

The Call of God to Go, in Spite of...



Go in spite of insufficient details!-- Abraham

"He went out, not knowing where he was going" (Heb 11:8).

Go in spite of lack of talents!-- Moses

"Moses said to the Lord... I am not eloquent...but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue. So the Lord said to him. Who has made man's mouth? Have not I the Lord? Now, therefore, go!" (Ex. 4:10-12).

Go in spite of threats in the field! -- Caleb & Joshua

The men told Moses, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we...Caleb quieted the people... and said, Let us go up at once and take possession... Do not fear them" (Num.13:27-31; 14:6-9).

Go in spite of the absence of spectacular miracles! -- Gideon

"Gideon said to Him,... Where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about...? Then the Lord turned to him and said. Go in this might of yours!" (Judges 6:13,14).

Go in spite of the hardness of the soil! - ISAIAH

"Go and tell this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand" (Is. 6:9).

Go in spite of inexperience! — JEREMIAH

"The Lord said to me: Do not say, I am a youth; For you shall go to all whom I send you" (Jer 1:7).

Go in spite of imperfections! - THE DISCIPLES

"He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart...And He said to them. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"

(Mk 16:14,15; See also Mt.28:17-19; Jn 21:20:22).

Go in spite of being a woman! -MARY MAGDALENE, JOANNA, SUSANNA & OTHERS(Lk 8:1-3; Jn 20:16-18)-PRISCILLA (Acts 18:18)

Go in spite of family responsibilities! - PHILIP

"Philip went... and preached Christ... Now this man had four virgin daughters" (Acts 8:5; 21:8,9).

Go in spite of prejudices! — PETER

"The Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing" (Acts 11:2-18).

Go in spite of being much loved and used in the local ministry! - PAUL AND BARNABAS

"In the church at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas... and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then... they sent them away" (Acts 13:1-3).— PHILIP

Go in spite of divisions and defections!--Paul and Barnabas. Ac 15:36 GO ANYWAY!

19 " Go, therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing....teaching.." Mt 28:18

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



WHYS OF GULLIBILITY (contd)

Q: Why are Christians so gullible and so prone to deception? What could possibly be behind it?

Ninth, because we are being conditioned by our culture and television, we have lost the ability to blush. Everything and anything is paraded before us in the media as being permissible for our mental diet. Murder, immorality, shock radio, abuse, perversion — nothing is off-limits. Nothing shocks us or grieves us. Our culture is becoming satiated and dulled and we are affected. Young people are piercing, branding and mutilating their bodies. Some seek even vampirism as an option. Some in the Charismatic world need still more frenzy, wilder manifestations and altered states of consciousness to satisfy and then they keep going back for more “anointings.” They are spiritually and emotionally jaded. They are hooked not on heroin but on adrenalin. So many are addicted to emotions and emotional highs. Many burn out spiritually in their quest.

Tenth, we have become a culture of hero-worshippers and celebrity-seekers. Evangelical heroes and popular writers and speakers dictate, are given total allegiance and followed like rock stars. Like the Corinthians, we say we are of Paul and Apollos and Cephas (1 Co 3:4). People have been led to believe that only the “biggies” carry the “anointing.” And if you want “it” you’ve got to come to them to receive it. “Fresh,” “Fire,” “New Wine” and every other brand and flavor of anointing are available to the Christian consumer.

Eleventh, we have substituted entertainment and “television religion” for a growing and intense serving relationship in a healthy, well-balanced church. Being in the presence of growing Christians in a doctrinally sound church is a wonderful reality check needed by all. Vibrant fellowship (including worship and Bible study) is an antidote to illusion and deception. We are full of blind spots and need others to help us make up areas in our pockets of deficiency and ignorance. Stray sheep are not only arrogant, they are very vulnerable. Proverbs 27:17 forcefully reminds us: “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” To stay sharp, balanced and informed, one must take the words of Hebrews 10:23-25 very seriously and be a vital part of a vital fellowship. People have abandoned the church looking for a supernatural quick fix.

Twelfth, people have become “ cliché-bound.” They are gullible and become easily subservient if someone says, “God told me,” or “the Lord said,” or “the Lord spoke to me,” or “the Lord impressed upon me.” After all, who can argue with God? The Church finds itself drowning in a sea of subjectivism away from the safe moorings of the objective Word of God! “I feel” and “I sense” have come to replace, “It is written.” The power of the cliché is explained by Peter Berger: “Once a cliché is firmly established in the minds of a particular group of people, it attains the quality of taken-for-granted truth and is very difficult to dislodge even by clear empirical counter-evidence. Human beings do not like to be confronted with what the psychologists call cognitive dissonance (‘I have made up my mind; don’t confuse me with the facts’). What is more, thinking in general and rethinking in particular are fairly painful processes, and most people prefer to avoid this pain.

> Send your questions for clarification and get correct answers <<

DOCTRINE

What comes first?

Luke 10:42 But one thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.



Today many are confused with priorities and values. What should come first has been kept as the last and least thing! Let us check some of the important qualities and see where they stand in your life and ministry.

Character or comfort? That God is interested more in our character than in our comfort becomes more clear when we read the Bible properly. The character qualities of Christ that the Holy Spirit is producing in the believers’ lives are called the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22. The greatest work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is to change him into Christ-likeness. To this end, God works all things for our good as per Romans 8:28-29. But today, many are focusing more on the temporal comforts, worldly pleasures and missing on God’s best, neglecting building their character.

Church or organization? Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed a great truth to Peter and hence to all believers in Matthew 16:18, “I will build My Church...and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it”. God is building His church which is His Body and Bride. Many today are more involved and promoting their own personal and family-based businesses called ministry organizations. Some have even named them after their own or family names! These are not for God’s glory but to bring honor, prestige and power to their own name. What are you into? What are you building?

Doctrine or results: Today the focus is on doing what works and brings results! Doctrine is given less importance if its not working practically to meet one’s agenda. We hardly hear any message on doctrines but on blessings so that crowds are attracted. Paul exhorted Timothy and Titus to preach the sound doctrine and to teach the Word in season and out of season. Titus 2; 2 Tim 4:2. Do you preach the uncompromising truth without fear or favor?

Discipleship or leadership? All want to be leaders today! Leadership conferences attract many people than other conferences. Why? Surprisingly, Lord Jesus never taught about how to be a leader or how to lead others! Rather He spoke much about being a servant and how to serve others. In fact, He demonstrated and showed by His own example how to be a servant to others. John 13. What do you want to be? Unfortunately, we have many leaders today who are not disciples! Read the Great Commission and think!

Lifestyle or ministry skill? What the world looks for in a Christian is not the skill of preaching or leading, but lifestyle. Today, many are spending or better wasting their precious time and money in getting endless degrees and meaningless titles to boast of their skill in missions, theology, etc. God is interested in our life. Paul exhorts in Ephesians 4, to live life worthy of His calling. What do you value highly and what are you striving for?

Gift & Calling or degrees & titles? God uses those whom He calls and endows with His gifts of grace. He does not take interest in the use of the earthly, carnal nature or abilities of sinful man. History is a testimony to how God works. Many are seeking after worldly honor by acquiring degrees and titles and doing nothing for God’s Kingdom or His glory. Think of the great men used by God, like John Sung of China and Bro. Bakht Singh of India.

Repentance or Blessing? What you hear today most of the time? Think and check in the Word what must come first. God wants all men everywhere to repent and come to the knowledge of salvation. Acts 17:30-31. Amen.

FOUNDATIONS

The Manifestation of SIN



Sin is manifested in many ways:

1. Transgression: the overstepping of the law: Ps. 51:1; 1Jn. 3:4.
2. Iniquity: (wickedness) an act inherently wrong or forbidden as breaking a commandment: Jer.2:22; Mat.7:23.
3. Error: the departure from right: Ps.51:9; 2Pet. 3:17.
4. Lawlessness: the spiritual anarchy: 1Tim. 1:9.
5. Debt: a failure in duty, omission, leaving undone: James 4:17.
6. Unbelief: an insult to the divine veracity of God: Heb.3:12; Rom.4:17.
7. Unrighteousness: evil character/ conduct: 1Jn 5:17.
8. Hamartia-missing the mark: failure to meet divine standard: Rom.3:23; 1Jn 5:17.
9. Trespass: the intrusion of self-will into the sphere of God's authority: Ep.2:1

The Various Sins listed:

Sins of Omission: James 4:17;

Commission: Deut. 9:7;

Secret: Ps.90:8;

Besetting: Heb.12:1;

Scarlet: Isa.1:18;

Great: Rev.18:5;

Fleshly: Gal. 5:19. Ex.20:3-17 (9); 1Cor. 6:9-10 (5); Rom. 1:29-31 (19); 1Tim.1:9-11 (6); Col. 3:5-8 (7); Gal. 5:19-21 (9); Mk.7:20-23 (3). (Over 50 different sins listed with variations).

The Results of sin:

1. death: Rom.6:23.
2. Lost: Lk.15:24;19:10.
3. Condemnation: Jn.3:18.
4. Guilt: Ja.2:10; Gen.42:21.
5. Perdition: 1Tim.6:9.
6. Punishment: Mt.25:46.
7. Eternal Fire: Jude 7.
8. Hell: Mt.25:41.
9. Lake of fire: Rev.20:14.

The Remedy for sin:

- * Lord Jesus as the sinless lamb of God: Jn.1:29. Eph. 1:7.
- * Confessing our sins to Him: 1Jn.1:7,9.
- * Forsaking our sins: Prov. 28:13.

2. SALVATION

What is Salvation?

It is the freedom from sin and its consequences. It is the deliverance from sin and its consequences. It is the gift of God: Rom. 6: 14, 23; Titus 3: 4-6. (Sin is any thought, word or deed that either violates or falls short of complete conformity to God's holy laws. Rom.3:23; 1Jn.3:4).

Salvation is deliverance from:

- * Sin: Matt.1:21, 1Jn.3:5.
- * Uncleaness: Ezek.36:29.
- * The Devil: Col.2:15; Heb.2:14,15.
- * Wrath of God: Rom.5:9; 1Thess.1:10.
- * This present evil world: Gal.1:4.
- * Enemies: Luke 1:71,74.
- * Eternal death: Jn.3:16,17.

Salvation is Three-fold: Past, Present and Future. (to be contd) >

>> Ask for a book with 21 Foundation Truths.

Ro 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus 4

GENERAL NEWS, VIEWS



All Youth are welcome to Celebrate Victory



All Nations Youth Festival (ANYF)

~ equipping youth with winning skills

April 15-17, 2010. (English & Hindi) at Jaipur, Rajasthan

What you'll Learn?:

How to be A Winner in Life - Biblical & Practical skills for-

- Victorious living- overcoming Challenges in life.
- Effective Communication & Successful study/career...
- Personality development skills: right relationships, etc...
- Spiritual growth & leadership development, etc

Why come? The Highlights:

- * Challenging & practical teaching,
- * Stimulating group discussions
- * Inspiring living testimonies
- * Enjoyable singing/music,
- * Meet new friends from various places
- * A variety of cultural entertainment
- * Sightseeing tour of Jaipur, the Pink city of Palaces!

Who can come?

All born-again, qualified Christian young men & women, fluent in English or Hindi & aged 16-35 yrs only. Students, single, or married youth welcome.

What are the provisions?

- Boarding & Lodging in a retreat centre in Jaipur.
- Travel subsidy given for only needy North Indian students.
- To Register:** Send your personal details with salvation experience. Only those selected & invited can attend. Reg. fees of Rs100/- to be paid after invite is sent. Apply Today. Limited seats. Reserve your place Now!

Contact address: ANYF-Jaipur, P. O. Box 71, Thane- 400 601. Mumbai.

Tel/Fax: 022 2597 0650. 98920 93534. Email: aocc85@gmail.com

FREE GIFTS!!! > Send us more than 5 addresses to mail this magazine, you will get music/messages CD/DVDs as complimentary gift.

> Order any of our books and get 2 small books **Free** on Marriage.

> Get a website at lowest rate! Join our Calvary Mentoring Network

17 Ecc 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,

**(Contd from previous page)**

It is in pouring out your life, forsaking all that you gain more. You are exhorted to seek for God's Kingdom and His righteousness first and all those needed for living in this world would be granted as an add-on! We are commanded to repent from all the desires to live comfortable life, or from coveting more riches or pleasures of this world, like the prodigal son.

In the N.T., you find the story of the beggar who lived in poverty and shame yet got a place at the bosom of Abraham in heaven, but the rich man, though visibly committed no sin, was tormented in hell.

In the N.T, it maybe more blessed and useful, as per Paul, to live life free from having a wife, family burdens, like him, rather than enjoy with many wives as in the O.T.

The main purpose of life in the N.T., is to glorify the Lord who has given His life for us. Galatians 2:20. Philippians 1:20-21.

To live for Him, death will be gain and far better than living, as that will result in meeting the Lord in heaven to be with Him forever. It is not how long you live but how much Christ-like and useful your life is.

So, like this we can go on listing so many differences, even stark contrasts from the O.T. blessings.

The author of Hebrews, just before closing his treatise on the heroes of faith, makes this tremendous statement in Hebrews 11:39,40.

“All all these having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.”

This simply means that the perfection is in the N.T, and even such mighty saints of the O.T, had to be content just to receive the promises but not experience them fully-apart from us! Hallelujah!

To sum up, in the N.T., the main focus is on knowing and living for the Savior who is the Source of all blessings. At the end, we will see more of this Person of Divine Blessings, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places through Christ...” Eph. 1:3.

Do you want God's blessings, then turn from your sins, confess and accept the Lord Jesus as your own personal Savior and Lord. You'll inherit all God's blessings today. Even Now! Amen.

>> Next month is “ The Promise of Blessing: through the life of Abraham” and so on... reserve your copy now!

> Read fully in a book on “The Secrets of God's Blessings”.

> Send 5 or more addresses to receive this magazine, and get this book free or music/messages CD/DVDs free! Contact us now!

> Send us your comments/suggestions. Thank you. God bless.

> For prayers/counseling; Call Calvary 98920 93534 for Victory!

**The Characteristics & How to Express Love:**

1. Love is a divine attribute (Jn.3:16; 1Jn 4:16) poured into our hearts by the Holy spirit, when we give our hearts to Jesus (Romans 5:5).
2. Love is known and experienced from its demonstration in the life of the Lord Jesus while he was on earth. Jn.13:1; 15:12,13; 1Jn 3:16,4,9; Ro. 5:8.
3. The Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to love one another and to love others (neighbors & enemies) with the love He loved His disciples. Jn.13:34
4. Love covereth all sins. Proverbs 10:12; 1Peter 4:8 (Ps.32:1).
5. Love is an act of the will, controlled and motivated by the Holy Spirit. You must determine to love whether you like it, or feel it or not. For it is the Holy Spirit's will. 2Cor.5:14.-(the love of Christ compels us to live for Him).
6. Love relates to real needs-not pander to perceived needs which are not real. e.g. See how Peter & John meet the real need of the crippled man at the beautiful gate; Ac.3:5-7.
7. Love is active-demands expression. It is never passive. It can't be. 1 Cor.13:4-8. Suffereth, rejoices, bears, believes, hopes & endures etc. Energized by the Holy Spirit. Nothing through the flesh or sinful nature.
9. Love is transitive. It demands an object. There's the challenge-"choose who you want to love" Joshua 24:15; John 21:15-17.
Love is serving-sacrificing, giving, doing good etc. James 2:16; Jn.13:15-17, 21:16; Gal.5:13, 6:2,10; Lk.10:34-35; Ac.20:35.
10. Love is unconditional. Puts no condition before expressing itself to others. Mat.5:46,48, 10:8 (Deut.7:7-8).
11. "Its the outgoing of the totality of one's being to another in beneficence and help." Mt.10:8; Jn.10:11,15,17-18,28; 15:13; Ac.20:31; Eph.5:25; Phi. 2:17
12. Love is permanent and hence greatest. Jer.31:3; 1Cor.13:13.

Three areas which demand our love:-

1. Love God. It must be exclusive, surpassing and all-consuming. With the totality of your personality. Mat.22:37; 10:37; Jn.14:15.
2. Love yourself. Loving God and accepting God's love is the foundation to love yourself.
God wants us to have a healthy self-esteem. True self-confidence issues from the domination of the Holy Spirit and a subsequent confidence in His leadership. Mat.6:12,12:12' 1Cor.6"20; 1Peter 1:18-19; Eph.5:28-29.
3. Love your neighbor. The first two are the foundation for loving your neighbor. Not just feel like loving but express it really and in action. Jn.15:17; Mat.22:39; 1Peter 1:22, 4:8.

Ten Principles to express love to others.

1. Demand nothing in return-Its not give and take. Give unreservedly.
2. Make conscious effort to show interest in others. Not expecting others to do so first.
3. Take time to understand-its not momentary, not superficial. Know in depth and well.
4. Listen with understanding. Show concern, care and give attention to what they say.
5. Be available, be near. Assure them they can count on you when they need you.
6. Treat as equals always. Don't behave as if you are superior to others.
7. Generously praise & encourage. Be liberal to compliment and appreciate.
8. Prefer them above yourself. Give preference & priority to others over your own self.
9. Love God totally and then others. Our love for others should flow out of our love for God.
10. Emphazise the strengths and virtues of others. and not theri weaknesses and failures. See Song of songs 8:6,7.

<< Ask for Book on the “Fruit”

ENCOURAGEMENT



Comforted to Comfort

Many ask why adversity comes into anyone's life? I had been thinking about all kinds of people God brought into my own life- sometimes those who come with heart-breaking stories and cause so much pain and sorrow. And those who are always in need of constant exhortation and encouragement that wear us down. And I came to realize the reason behind such people coming into my life- so that I could share my comfort with them. When I talk to them of how my faith in God and His Word sustained me in times of trials and discouragements they get encouraged and comforted. That is the reason God allows us to go through a season of adversity to prepare us for that very thing- to comfort and encourage others who are facing similar circumstances and crises in their own lives.

It is to make us "Comforters". And that is also the reason you are reading this article on encouragement. Many think they don't need encouragement or comfort as things are going on well for them or that they can cope with their own problems. However, one of the blessings of accepting comfort from others is to become comforters ourselves!

God wants each of us to be involved in the ministry of comforting others. But before you rush to volunteer, keep one thing in mind. It is a very poor comforter who has never needed comforting. So we come to yet another reason God allows adversity to touch our lives: to equip us to comfort others.

The God of All Comfort

According to Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4,6, part of the reason God comforts us in our times of distress is so that we can more effectively comfort others. The apostle portrays himself as one who is passing along to other believers the very comfort God used to comfort him. And what was true for the apostle Paul is true for all believers. God allows tragedy to interrupt our lives so that He can comfort us. Once we have dealt with our hurt, He will bring someone across our path with whom we can identify and therefore comfort.

To comfort others is "to impart strength and hope" to them. God wants to use adversity to teach us to rely upon Him. To impart hope is to enable others to take their focus off their immediate circumstances and place it on eternal things. Much of our suffering will not be completely understood or justified in our minds until the Lord Jesus returns. In His presence all the loose ends will tie together. All the questions will be answered. The Apostle Paul described our hope when he wrote, in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Why did Paul not lose heart when faced with great difficulty? Eternal Glory; that which is unseen. That was where he found great comfort. So it is with all of us when questions raised by adversity run too deep for simple answers.

Experience is Not Enough

Simply experiencing adversity does not automatically prepare a person to comfort others. Only those who have received comfort are capable of giving it. Simply going through hard time is not enough. Only persons who have allowed God to comfort them are ready to comfort others.

Your response to adversity will determine whether or not God can use you to comfort others. God is in the process of making you a comforter.

Be encouraged. >> A book with more encouraging messages available.

BIBLE STUDY

The Secrets of God's Blessings



God's Blessings in the O.T. & N.T.

Why we need to study the difference of how God blessed in the Old Testament times and New Testament times? Because there is a definite and remarkable difference and what worked in the ancient times is no longer relevant now! Though we have the same God who never changes, yet His way of working differs from generation to generation and from people to people.

In the **Old Testament**, God's blessings were mostly related to long life, more children, riches, increase in sheepfolds, cattle, lands, victory over enemies, kingship, leadership, miracles, freedom from sickness and sorrow, escaping God's judgment, curse, plague, death, enjoying comfortable and peaceful living, no disturbance from natural calamities, safety in travels, peaceful death and decent burial.

As you look at this list, all these blessings are to do with the life in this world. There was no much concern for the spiritual life or the life beyond. It appears both hell and heaven were to be experienced here on the earth itself!

Another noteworthy fact was that, there was no consistency in the lives of those who experienced God's blessings. Sometimes God's blessings were for a temporary period based on certain conditions like their obedience or to complete God's plan. e.g. King Saul and Samson. That means the blessings were not lasting long nor did they have any impact on the lives of those who were blessed.

Some people were initially good and faithful and experienced God's blessings, but in the later part of their lives they failed and perished. And sometimes, blessings overflowed to others from those whom God blessed. E.g. Joseph's masters in Egypt.

Salvation was not linked to the blessings. God's blessings were just given away to whom all He wanted to bless. Sometimes, we fail to understand God's ways which are so high and perfect. (Isaiah 55)

In the **New Testament**, God's blessings have a totally different colour and conditions. God's blessings begin when a person experiences the eternal salvation by God's grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, all the believers inherit all the blessings of God!

Now, in this age you cannot expect the OT blessings mentioned above. In the N.T., the blessings are all spiritual and material and earthly only for some people and at some times. In Eph. 1:3, Paul lists all the blessings and calls them as 'spiritual' and 'in heavenly places'. That does not mean, there are no blessings for this worldly life! But the focus and emphasis is more on the life beyond, the eternal life. The very reason the Lord Jesus gave His life on the cross is to secure eternal life for all mankind. And all the work the Holy Spirit is doing in the lives of the chosen people is to transform them to become like Christ. The goal now in the N.T. times is for the believer to become like Christ. The emphasis is thus on character and not comfort.

The paradox in the N.T. blessings is: you will have blessings increased when you invest for eternity and not store up for this worldly life. You will have peace in the midst of suffering for Christ and His Kingdom. Amen.

>> **Contd in the next page >>**

MINISTRY SKILLS

Opportunities for You!



"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Pe 4:10).

Many believers are interested to do something for the Lord yet they do not know how or in what way they can be useful to the Master. Perhaps, this may be your dilemma too. So then, here are nine avenues of Christian service in which experienced, mature and stable disciples can make a most significant contribution. They're listed briefly as follows.

1. An Investment (NT Model- Barnabas): Your greatest resource is your maturity. Why not invest your spiritual knowledge and understanding in the younger Christians? (2Ti.2:2). Note the 'encouragement' ministry of Barnabas in Acts. 9:26,27; 11:22-24; 15:38. So pray and learn to identify meaningfully with those you can encourage and take them under your wing for counseling, fellowship and encouragement.

2. A PRAYER MINISTRY (N.T.Model-Epaphras): Among the four levels of prayer mentioned in 1 Timothy 2:1, the deepest one is intercession. The intercessor accepts responsibility for the spiritual welfare of another. Epaphras agonized in prayer for Colossian believers. Col.4:12. You can intercede for people with obvious spiritual needs in your church, for leaders/missionaries etc.

3. A Home Ministry (N.T. Model-Aquila & Priscilla): The N.T. describes how homes were used for the evangelistic meetings, spiritual instruction, hospitality for Christian workers, prayer meetings, personal counseling and church services. Have you realized how strategic your home could be for the kingdom of God? Rom 16:3,4.

4. A SUPPORTING MINISTRY (N.T.Model-The Philippians): As you read the scriptural teaching on giving (2Cor.9:6-14) ask God to show you where your contribution can be most productive for the extension of God's Kingdom. Give special attention to those who are directly involved in evangelism and church-planting. Phil.4:18.

5. A COMMUNITY MINISTRY (O.T.Model-Joseph): Christians are desperately needed in the social and political life of the nation. Your life, testimony and influence could affect community standards for better. Why not be a light house on the hill for Christ? Gen.41.

6. A LEADERSHIP MINISTRY (N.T. Model-Titus): If you are spiritually mature, be open to consider the service of leading, using your administrative and discerning abilities as Titus did. Tit.1:4,5

7. A CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY (N.T. Model-Luke): In various capacities it is possible to reach out to the people of other community and culture as did the Luke being a doctor and a Greek, with Paul. So also is our ministry in Bombay past fifteen years.

8. A REPRESENTATIVE MINISTRY (N.T.Model-Tychicus): By organizing prayer cells, enthusing others for a missionary cause, arranging meetings and hospitality for the visiting speakers you can help stimulate interest and concern for the Lord's work as did Tychicus representing Paul on numerous occasions.

9. A COUNSELLING MINISTRY (N.T.Model-Paul) : Col. 1: 28-29; 3:16. >>>

YOUTH LIFESTYLE

How to be A Winner



4. Prepare for tomorrow. << Contd from last issue >>

The 21st century has been called "the information age", and we are overwhelmed with data. The point for us as individuals is that in our chosen fields of endeavor, what we know now will probably be obsolete in the next few minutes! Are you prepared?

5. Never be embarrassed to ask for help.

Ben Feldman, a great insurance salesman-still selling at seventy-seven-for the New York Life Insurance Co., said: "Only a fool learns by his own experiences." We can all learn from other people, especially those who have succeeded in the fields that we have chosen.

Look for constructive criticism. Assume that people around you may have some insights into you that you do not have. It is important to reach out to others if you need help. Do not try to "go it alone". Find help if you need it. The first person we should approach for help is the Lord. He is always available to help us. Matthew 7:7,8.

6. Find a Hero, a "Role Model"

Successful people leave footprints in the sand. Find successful people with whom to associate. "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established." Proverbs 15:22.

Then find someone to pattern your life after, someone who exemplifies excellence in some form in his or her life. Watch how this person acts and works and speaks. Then apply those principles to your own life.

"...Christ also suffered leaving us an example.. to follow in His steps: who did no sin...." 1Peter2:21,22. Hence, we have the Perfect model in the Lord Jesus Christ. Also in apostle Paul. 1Corinthians 11:1.

7. Be a leader

A leader is not a title...it is not a particular type of personality...a leader is someone who goes ahead and does what has to be done before it has to be done. Look for the good in a person. Project an attitude of forgiveness. Give favor to people and you will reap favor. Do more than is expected of you.

Everyone can be a leader in something. Remember, however, that people have a right to higher expectations of you when you decide to move out and be a leader. "... ye shine as lights in the world.." Phil. 2:15,16.

8. Set priorities

Drift, drown, or decide. Eliminate procrastination, maintain momentum, and you will get the job done. Be accountable to somebody. Have a vision, set goals and put timetables on them. Start working towards realizing those goals. Do something today in that direction.

9. Be yourself

If I could not play but one note on the piano, I would want it to be natural, to be my note. I want to be myself as God intended me to be. "It is better to die with a good name, than to live with a bad one." -Malay Proverb.

10. Forget past mistakes

You can learn from past mistakes, but there is no point in spending a lot of time looking back unless that is the direction you want to go! You can not unscramble eggs. Learn to go on. Press toward the goal. Here's what a winner has finally testified:

Read **Philippians 3:13,14.** >>>

>> Ask for a book on **How to be A Winner in Life.**

7 "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

SUCCESSFUL STUDENT



Successful Students Guidelines

Successful students exhibit a combination of successful attitudes and behaviors as well as intellectual capacity. Successful students . . .

. . . are responsible and active. Successful students get involved in their studies, accept responsibility for their own education, and are active participants in it!

Responsibility means control. It's the difference between leading and being led. Your own efforts control your grade, you earn the glory or deserve the blame, you make the choice. Active classroom participation improves grades without increasing study time. You can sit there, act bored, daydream, or sleep. Or, you can actively listen, think, question, and take notes like someone in charge of their learning experience. Either option costs one class period. However, the former method will require a large degree of additional work outside of class to achieve the same degree of learning the latter provides at one sitting. The choice is yours.

. . . have educational goals. Successful students have legitimate goals and are motivated by what they represent in terms of career aspirations and life's desires.

Ask yourself these questions: What am I doing here? Why have I chosen to be sitting here now? Is there some better place I could be? What does my presence here mean to me? Answers to these questions represent your "Hot Buttons" and are, without a doubt, the most important factors in your success as a college student. If your educational goals are truly yours, not someone else's, they will motivate a vital and positive academic attitude. If you are familiar with what these hot buttons represent and refer to them often, especially when you tire of being a student, nothing can stop you; if you aren't and don't, everything can, and will!

. . . ask questions. Successful students ask questions to provide the quickest route between ignorance and knowledge.

In addition to securing knowledge you seek, asking questions has at least two other extremely important benefits. The process helps you pay attention to your professor and helps your professor pay attention to you! Think about it. If you want something, go after it. Get the answer now, or fail a question later. There are no foolish questions, only foolish silence. It's your choice.

. . learn that a student and a professor make a team. Most instructors want exactly what you want: they would like for you to learn the material in their respective classes and earn a good grade.

Successful students reflect well on the efforts of any teacher; if you have learned your material, the instructor takes some justifiable pride in teaching. Join forces with your instructor, they are not an enemy, you share the same interests, the same goals - in short, you're teammates. Get to know your professor. You're the most valuable players on the same team. Your jobs are to work together for mutual success. Neither wishes to chalk up a losing season. Be a team player!

Best wishes. May God give you success. Keep doing your best always. Amen.

>> Ask for **a book** with 31 topics on "How to be A Successful Student"

Jas 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, **8**

LEADERSHIP

Maximizing your Leadership Potential



God wants to use all of us. Like the old jawbone of the donkey in the hand of Samson, the crooked stick in the hand of Moses, the broken vessel in the hand of Gideon, so the Lord takes the base things, the weak, the rejected, the youngest in the family the fishermen with a bad temper, the tax collector with a faulty character, the persecutor Saul, the harlot Mary Magdalene and changes and uses them. We all may have been like that crooked stick, but now we are instruments of righteousness, used to do His mighty works. Yes, we all have a great potential in Christ. There are no rejects, no impossible cases, no pat too bad, no fault too ruinous, no stain He can't remove. Yes, He can do this. Yes, we can receive this word of truth and face our generation with great confidence. So will you, with thousands of others say with me, "Yes...I can...become mighty in the hand of God. My past is buried with Christ, my future is resurrected with Christ, and my destiny is sealed by Christ."

Introduction: II Kings 4:1-7.

Deep within every born-again Christian lies the golden holy storehouse of unlimited potential. God has deposited many great and wonderful seeds into our lives. All we need to do is to cultivate them. God earnestly wants you to maximize His plan for your life in Christ Jesus. Is your Godly leadership lying dormant? Is it only half-developed? Do you feel there is a lot more in you, but you have not quite found the key to release it? I challenge you to take a serious look at your potential and commit yourself to a strategic plan of development.

Famous people with hidden potential:

1. Winston Churchill- He seemed so dull as a youth, that His father thought he might be incapable of earning a living in England.
2. Charles Darwin-He did so poorly in school, his father once told him, "You'll be a disgrace to yourself and all your family."
3. Thomas Edison-A teacher described him as "addled" and his father almost convinced him he was a dunce.
4. Einstein-His parents feared he was dull. He performed so badly in all his high school courses his teacher asked him to drop out, telling him, "You will never amount to anything, Einstein."
5. Walt Disney-He used to sketch, but when he tried to get a job for a newspaper they told him he should try something else because he had no touch for sketching. One man saw his sketch, gave him a dollar, and told him to keep trying.
6. Abraham Lincoln-He failed at least nine major times before he became President. He ran for Governor, Senator, and President and failed at all. They said he was too simple, yet he went on trying until he became one of America's greatest Presidents.

Defining the Believer's Potential:

Potential- from the Latin word meaning "something powerful lying within". That which has power or potency that can, but has not yet come into existence or into sight. something that is possible, unrealized, undeveloped, opposed to the actual. existing in possibility, but not in reality.

Natural Potential: That which a person has at the time of natural birth, which may be passed on through family inheritance. This natural potential or ability may be developed by the individual during his life span. **(to be contd)**

13 "...he that rules, with diligence.." that God in all things may be glorified.." Rom.12:8

WOMAN'S WORLD



Crowning Qualities of Womanhood (Proverbs 31: 10).

IN the modern world women are taking active part in every sphere of life. Especially in the western world, women do all that men do. Even in the conservative Indian society, women are taking up more tough roles that men used to do through ages. As Bible-believing women, what are the qualities to be exhibited as distinct from those of the world? Here are the main crowning qualities of womanhood according to the Word of God.

A. Spiritual:

1. A devotional spirit (Piety): 1Sam. 1:15; Esther 4:16. Prayerful. Pouring out before God. Through the power of prayer women in ancient times accomplished mighty things. e.g. Hannah & Esther & Lydia in Acts 16:14. Prayerful women can keep the home intact and also be a true helper to the man in his role as her head and leader of the family. Today, many believing women are tempted to follow the worldly lifestyle, giving less priority to prayer due to busy work and home schedules.

B. Physical:

2. Modesty: Esther 1: 11. Queen Vashti did not make a show of her beauty/body before the partying men. How contrasting this is to the modern women who bare to attract and tempt men in the name of fashion and modernity! Gods holy women are characterized by their attire and godly behavior before the world, as they keep themselves separate/sanctified.

1Tim. 2:9-10 women need to be godly. 1Peter 2:12.

1Peter 3:1-2 they have to be submissive to their husbands in fear. The importance of the inner beauty. The godly character of the heart is the beauty of a god-fearing woman. The Word of God emphasizes more on the inner attitude than the outward, superficial skin-deep beauty.

C. Social:

3. Liberality: being sacrificial, open-handed. Ex.35:25- they gave for the work of the house of God. Generosity comes from a virtuous woman.

Prov. 31:20- help poor and needy.

Lk. 8:2-3- ministered to the Lord out of their substance.

John 12:3- anointing the Lord (worship).

Acts 9: 39- Dorcas stitched clothes for the widows.

D. Mental:

4. Wisdom & Virtue: (Good character): Prov. 12:4; 14:1; 31:10; 31:30.

Wise women build their homes and desire God's plan for their families.

"Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised." Proverbs 31: 30. ><

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

HOW TO MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION!



“ Let your light so shine before men that they may see your

good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven”. Matthew 5:12.

Every single person you meet, every single day of your life, sizes you up in the first few minutes of meeting you and it is true that you are judged by the way you look.

A business environment is no different. While ability is the deciding factor, no doubt, the first impression is formed on the basis of appearance, speech and demeanor. And it's usually long lasting! Use these tips...

- **Give enough importance to good grooming.** You don't need to be a slave to fashion, but being neat, clean and smartly dressed goes a long way in creating good impressions. While your personal sense of style may be exotic and eye-catching, office dress codes usually demand a more subdued look. Choose clothes that can weather the corporate climate in your office and industry.

- **Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.** Forget trying to ape the voice of a radio broadcaster, but you can definitely infuse some enthusiasm in your voice and speech. Avoid swearing and be aware of when your voice gets shrill, your attitude gets naggy and your tone aggressive.

- **Carry yourself with confidence.** Be pleasant and positive in your dealings with others. It's the little things that add up.

- **A little time and energy spent on personal hygiene,** diet and exercise, is the quickest and most effective way of increasing your attractiveness quotient.

- **Pay attention to body language.** Fidgeting, picking at your face and clothes, and crossing and uncrossing of your legs are some of the most common and obvious signs of nervousness. Consciously eliminate them from your behavior pattern.

What Draws Me to People

- Understanding the Qualities you enjoy in others

The basis of life is people and how they relate to each other. Our success, fulfillment, and happiness depends upon our ability to relate effectively. The best way to become a person that others are drawn to is to develop qualities that we are attracted to in others.

- Are we quick to respond to others' needs?

- Do we run from problems or face them?

- Do we talk more about bad news or good news?

- Do we give people the benefit of the doubt or do we assume the worst? What is the Key to relating to others? It's putting yourself in someone else's place instead of putting them in their place. Christ gave the perfect rule for establishing quality human relationships. **The Golden Rule: Mat 7:12.** ><>



"Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us...Submit to one another out reverence for Christ." Ep 5:2, 21.

Ephesians 5:22-33 is one of the most familiar and most controversial passages about marriage in the Bible. Christian spouses at odds with each other often use it as ammunition in their conflicts. The husband memorizes all the "submission" passages and recites them to his wife in an effort to hold her accountable for their woes. The wife counters with references to all the "love" verses in order to emphasize her husband's responsibility for their problems. Even when the spouses decline to verbalize these accusations, their attitudes provide evidence that such thoughts exist. Christian counselors and pastors also misconstrue these verses in their efforts to be helpful. Therefore one of the most poignant and meaningful Bible passages, that delineates the essential ingredients to make marriages work, is either avoided at best or considered detrimental at worst. Let's examine the passage in light of its context for Christian living and its relevance to Christian marriage.

The Context And The Principles: In Ephesians 4-6 the apostle Paul presents a clear exegesis on godly living urging us "to live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph. 4:1 NIV). He describes what godliness is and isn't in very explicit and concrete terms. In Ephesians 5 two key principles of godly living are introduced and then applied to the marriage relationship as an example. Love is the first principle: "Be imitators of God, therefore, as E dearly loved children and live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5:2-3). Two powerful aspects of love are here entwined together. First is the love of a father who does all he can to protect and care for his child, thereby instilling a reciprocal childlike love whereby the child strives to be like the father. And the second, is a self-sacrificial love best represented by Christ's dying on the cross for us. Our attitude toward life is to be like that of children who love their father so much that they want to be like him and do everything to please him. Our lifestyle is to reflect and express love with an intensity and passion befitting those who have been loved to death: "We love because He first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19). Consequently, living a godly life requires that both these characteristics of love be activated in all of our relationships as standard operating procedure. Submission is the second principle: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21). A submissive attitude of honoring and serving one another in humbleness is promoted as the appropriate attitude for Christians manifest in relationships with others. Our humility should emulate Christ who set the example by living among us as one who served (Mt. 20:28; Lk. 22:27). Integrated into this attitude is the characteristic of respect. We are to respect others and esteem them more highly than ourselves (Phil. 2:3; Rom. 12:10). Consequently, the two dynamic principles of a Christian lifestyle are "living a life of love" and "considering others better than ourselves." These two concepts are then applied by Paul to the marriage relationship. He doesn't make up something new. Rather, he extends the basic principles of Christian living to the most intimate of all relationships-marriage.

>> Contd on the next page >>



In my work with couples I have found that the most common complaint husbands and wives have about each other is a deeply felt sense of not being appreciated. However, their meaning of "appreciation" is typically quite different. Husbands complain that their wives do not appreciate all they do for them or the pressures of their responsibilities for the family. They say their wives continually question and criticize their decisions and do not respect them. Their definition of "appreciation" is couched in terms of authority and respect. In contrast, wives complain that husbands show their lack of appreciation by taking them for granted, being insensitive and uncaring keeping their feelings to themselves and not showing them affection. Their definition of "appreciation" is framed in terms of considerateness and love. Consequently, it is not irrational that each is drawn to the other's directives in the Ephesians passage because they relate directly to their pain and disappointment. I have often husband and wife versions of this passage by blocking out the wife's verses in the husband's portion and sending them home to contemplate the result. The greatest challenge of verses is for each spouse to see, understand and implement the verses that are directed to them as a husband or a wife and not to use them as a criteria to judge the other's performance. Scripture is quite consistent in asking us to think, feel and act in ways that are always least appealing and most difficult from the natural perspective of our innate natures. It almost always asks us to do that which is most difficult or which we are least inclined to do. This passage is no different. It directs the husband to be the leader in love, and the wife to be the leader in respect. Each is given the task that is naturally most difficult to carry out, especially in the context of a marriage that is in turmoil.

The Mark of A Man: As A Mate: In writing to men as husbands, Paul asks them to be "leaders in love" and to invoke the principle of love over and above the principle of submission. In doing so he directs the husband's attention to Christ's example: "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). The task and challenge for husbands is to "love their wives as their own bodies" by nourishing them (helping them to grow) and cherishing them (making them feel special). So often these two ingredients turn into controlling and criticizing. However, husbands are reminded that the over-arching reason for marrying is love: "For this reason (to love her) a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife" (Eph. 5:31). As husbands we are to put a "banner of love" over our wives (Song 2:4). A penetrating question for every husband to ask is, "What does the banner over my wife say?" What do my actions and attitudes communicate to her and to others? Do I criticize her in front of my children and friends? Do I make fun of her idiosyncrasies or do I lift her up as special? If my banner says something other than "I love my wife," a change is called for. If you want to assess the nature of your love for your wife you can use the check list provided in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Ask yourself the question, "Where is my love falling short?" and then simply read these verses until you find the trait that is lacking and use that as an inspiration to change. Why is a man's love so important in marriage? When a man loves his wife in the biblical manner, he meets her greatest need, the need for security against vulnerability. In a biblical sense love is powerful. Song of Solomon 8:6-8 tells us this about it.

<< (to be contd) >>

><> Send your prayer requests for counseling/prayers. Thanks