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The Heartbeat of

The Remnant



. . . is Effectual, Fervent Prayer

The Heartbeat of
The Remnant

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John Paton's

Home Life

by Denny Kenaston



My soul magnifies the Lord as I ponder the beautiful character of the rare jewel we have to study in this Home History. John Paton was a missionary of the highest sort. His autobiography reads much like the Acts of the Apostles. Truly he was an apostle (“a sent one”) of the heathen who lived on the South Sea Islands, called New Hebrides. He was born in Scotland in 1824 and left this world shortly after 1898. The material for this article was gleaned from his auto-

biography published by *Banner of Truth Trust*, PO Box 621, Carlisle, PA 17013 USA.

As I begin this study, it is again worthy of note, to see this godly missionary's heritage. I know that God is no respecter of persons, and He will use any and all who give themselves wholeheartedly to Him. Even though this is true, it seems to me that those who have been preserved from much evil by a Christian home go deeper, and further, with God. This should be a great motivation to both young and old. To the young, to keep themselves pure, for God uses the pure and unscarred more. To the old, that we would keep our children from evil, for their future benefit. I am not saying that God won't use the others mightily, for we know that He has many times. What I am saying is that those who have been left to themselves have more hindrances in the Christian life.

John Paton grew up in a beautiful Christian home. His father was sincerely seeking God from his youth. He could be found almost daily stealing away to a secret place in the woods, to pray, and memorize, and meditate. These patterns set the course of his whole life, as he never missed his quiet time. At the age of seventeen he was brought by God into the experience of the new birth. From that time, James Paton began to make many deep choices that affected his whole life and the life of his future family. He read of the lives of the old Scottish Covenanters who would not agree that the King of England was the head of the church. Many hundreds of them gave their lives for this conviction. His heart said, “That is the kind of Christian I will be.” While still at home, he appealed to his father and mother to follow the example of the old saints, and have family devotions morning and evening. His request prevailed because he also offered to

help in leading them. He continued in this practice till his death at age 77.

John's mother Janet was also known for her God-fearing character, from youthful days onward. John described his dear mother with words that clearly show us the influence she had on him. "Our mother," John says, "was a bright-hearted, high-spirited, patient-toiling, heroic little woman." Toward the end of his life, looking back on her influence, he said, "I worship the memory of her." So James and Janet Paton began their home together with a deep Christian commitment. God gave eleven children to this holy union. John was the first born, and that a son. It was the custom of the godly to dedicate the first born son to God and His service, and so John was given in this way at his birth. Years later when John was struggling with the call to go to the heathen, his parents revealed to him their secret dedication and prayer. For twenty-some years they had been praying that God would send him to the heathen. John never questioned his calling again, but moved forward in faith nothing doubting.

As I have studied the history of godly homes, I have observed that the patterns of influence are not always the same. At times the father is not very active in the training of the children, yet the mother pours her life out for them. At other times the father is the one with the vision, and the mother keeps the household running, with very little spiritual influence on the children. Both of these patterns have produced a godly seed to the glory of the God who broods over our homes. I write this to encourage fathers and mothers where the roles are not in proper biblical order. Oh, the power of a home where both parents are united with purpose and vision to raise servants of the most high God. In this study, it is a little hard to discern the place of influence that John's mother had in his life. Perhaps she was a hidden woman. This being the case, I have chosen to focus on his father, which is what John did in his autobiography.

The Godly Man's House

This may seem like an odd title for a major point in the study of a man's homelife, but let me explain.

James Paton's house was laid out in three basic sections, which are worthy of note. The one end of the house was mother's domain. This was the living, and household-working side of the house. The kitchen was there, the eating area was there, and it was also where the children slept at night. The other end of the house was father's side. James made stockings for a living, and there were several looms there for this purpose. It was interesting, as I noted again, that the father worked at home. His oversight was not far away at any time, though he had to make a living for his family. The center section of the house was called "the closet". This was the inner chamber, which served as the bedroom for the parents, but had a more significant use of spiritual renewal. It was the place where James would go, enter into his closet, shut the door, and pray to his Heavenly Father in secret (Matthew 6:6). All three sections of the house were used with purpose, as tools in the hands of dedicated parents. A close and orderly family grew up here in this godly man's house.

The Godly Man's Prayers

Herein did his great strength lie. James was a man of prayer, in secret and in public. The closet was the Sanctuary of the little cottage home, the place where the fires of the heart were kindled. Every day, and many times each day, John's father would retire to this secret place. He would often go there after every meal, and shut the door. The children knew, more by instinct than anything else, that it was time to be quiet, father is praying. Priestly prayers were offered up to God continually for the family. The children often heard the sound of a broken man's voice pleading with God for strength. Father lived in the Divine Presence of God, as he continued to bathe himself in this holy exchange. What an example to the children who looked on with assurance, saying, "Father walked with God, why can't I?" Oh, what holy lessons were being taught as the children saw his face aglow with light and joy as he finished his time of prayer. The influence of this praying man cannot be measured, for prayer is one of those mysterious hidden tools that work to mold the children's



lives. John testified of his father, "When on his knees, and all of us kneeling around him, he would pour out his whole soul with tears for the conversion of the heathen, and for every personal and domestic need." "We all felt as if in the presence of a living Saviour, and learned to know and love Him as our Divine Friend." John continues, "I used to look at the light on his face, and wish I were like him in spirit, and hope that in answer to his prayers, I might be privileged and prepared to take the Gospel to some portion of the Heathen World." Dear brothers and sisters, let us beseech God to make us like him also, that our children may have a true example of one who prays.

The Godly Man's Order

Mr. James Paton had a strong desire to be a minister of the gospel. These doors did not open for him, so instead he dedicated his home to raise children who would. We have already mentioned his prayers, which were a beautiful part of the order of this home. Family devotions were never missed morning or evening. These family times were divided into three sections. A portion of scripture was read and discussed, psalms and hymns were sung, and father lead the family in prayers as we have already described. This went on for forty years, and even as the children began to leave home, he still held them up in prayer morning and evening. John said, "No hurry for market, no rush to business, no arrival of friends, no sorrow, or joy, or excitement prevented this exercise." Father only missed church thrice in forty years, and the joy and excitement of going was passed on to all in the house. The children grew up listening to many enthusiastic dialogues about spiritual things. Christianity was a blessing, living for God was a joy, and John caught the spirit of this at an early age.

The Lord's Day was made to be the greatest day of the week. It was not a day to endure, but rather a day that everyone looked forward to all week long. The day started with a happy four-mile walk to church, talking and visiting along the way. The sermons were full of zeal and unction. Then sober musings over the sermon on the way home. Many times mother was not able to go to the meeting because of

the many children. This provided father and the children the joyful task of telling her all about the sermon. Father would pace back and forth giving the sermon over again. He would engage the children to help with this activity by reading verses from the Bible, and would often branch over into some Bible story or something from Pilgrim's Progress. The evening was spent in more teaching, often from the Shorter Catechism, with explanations of verses that went along with the lesson. As I studied the many holy activities of the day, a warm sense of togetherness prevailed in this lovely home.

One more area of this godly man's homelife is worthy to consider. Although the home was very clearly ruled by love and not by fear, and obedience was the norm, there were still times when the children needed a spanking. This was a holy and reverent affair. Father would first go to his inner chamber for a season of prayer where he would pour the need out before God, and ask for wisdom. This became the severest part of the punishment. It was, in fact, a message to the conscience, and brought the Almighty into the discipline. As the children beheld the pain and sacrifice that their father went through to spank them, their love for him abounded. The need for spankings were few, because of the effective way it was done.

The Godly Man's Relationship

Malachi chapter 4 speaks of the importance and power of the relationship between a father and his children. The closeness of this father and son is exemplary. As I studied their love and respect for each other, and the soul tie they had and held all their days, sweet memories rose in my own mind. I remember saying good-bye to two of my own children, who were heading to the foreign fields. The many deep, silent communications that passed between us at our parting will never leave my memory. In his Autobiography, John reflects upon the time when he left home to prepare for mission work. He was twenty-two years old at the time. I will be quoting him heavily in this section, for this is the best way to see the deep respect he had for his father.



I quote from the book: “My dear father walked with me the first six miles of the way. His counsels and tears and heavenly conversations are fresh in my heart, as if it had been yesterday. Tears are on my cheeks as freely now, as they were then, as memory steals me away to the scene. For the last half-mile we walked on in almost unbroken silence. His lips kept moving in silent prayers for me; and his tears fell fast when our eyes met each other in looks for which all speech was vain. We halted on reaching the appointed parting place; he grasped my hand firmly for a minute of silence, and then solemnly and affectionately said: “God bless you my son! Your father’s God prosper you and keep you from all evil!” Unable to say more, his lips kept moving in silent prayer; in tears we embraced, and parted. When about to turn a corner in the road, I looked back and saw him — gazing after me. Waving my hat, I was round the corner and out of sight in an instant. My heart was too full and sore to carry me further, so I darted into the side of the road and wept for a time. I then climbed the dyke to see if he yet stood where I had left him; and just at that moment I caught a glimpse of him climbing the dyke and looking out for me. He did not see me, and after he gazed eagerly for a while, he got down and set his face toward home. I watched through blinding tears, till his form faded from my gaze; and then I hastened on my way. I vowed deeply and often, by the help of God, to live and act so as never to grieve or dishonor such a father and mother as he had given me.” Oh, what beautiful words which flow from the heart of a loving son. They are a humbling challenge to me. It is easy to see from this account that what we do when the children are home will last long after they are gone. May God renew our vision to build close ties with each child as we still have them with us.

The Godly Man’s Fruit

There are many things that we could put under this title, because of the many years of faithful service from his missionary son. John Paton, who he was, and all he did, inspires my own heart. I recommend a reading of the entire book. However, I would like to

focus on a bit on young John Paton for a few moments. John grew up in what he called a peasant’s home. The large family of eleven children created an element of ongoing necessity that molded his character. We often look at these necessities as hardships and setbacks. This is not the case most of the time. In fact, God uses them for the molding of choice servants for His Name’s sake. John had to begin working in his father’s business at an early age. Before he was twelve, he was working from six in the morning, until ten at night. There was time off for meals, but still the hours were long and hard. The income went to help the family with the many expenses incurred just by living. This meant school would have to be set aside. This did not slow the aspiring missionary down in the least. From the age of twelve, his heart was set on being a missionary, and every spare moment was spent in study and preparation. We may look on from our more modern perspective, and think that this is mean or unfair. But let us look again. In the days of most of the godly people that we read about, a boy became a man when he was about twelve years old. Our modern play mentality has blurred our vision of what a child can and should do at an early age. We think that they must have many years of fun and play before they start shouldering responsibility. The hardships and burdens he learned to bear in his youth went with him and sanctified his way all his days when on the field. Brothers and sisters, let us prepare soldiers for the spiritual battlefields of the world. No army would train their soldiers in fun and ease, and then send them out to a battlefield of hardship and pain. The Lord of the harvest will send forth prepared laborers into His harvest fields. □

John Paton’s autobiography
is available from:

Cumberland Valley Bible Book Store
133 N. Hanover St.
Carlisle, PA 17013
U.S.A.

Phone#: (800) 656-0231



Offended in Christ

by *T. Austin Sparks*

One of the greatest perils of the Christian life lurks in the common pathway of discipleship. It is the peril of being offended in Christ. The fellowship to which the Gospel calls us will bring a constant new and humiliating discovery of self; and a disturbance of established order in our lives, as His will corrects and opposes our own. The danger in this exercise is that we are apt to break down under the test and training of it all, to go back and walk no more with Him. We become, in fact, offended in Him. It is always possible, despite every sincere profession of the soul, that what God meant for blessing should become blight to us by our misunderstanding of what He is doing.

But Christ, with that absolute frankness which is a large part of His attractiveness to men, cannot be held to blame for such pitiful defecations. For He never disguises the possibility. In His Gospel, He combines welcome with warning as none other has ever done. Hence it is that to the most earnest and self-convinced of us all He says: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." The blessedness of the unoffended, despite all the danger without and the weakness within, is the possibility of receiving a blessing from every trial. And this is blessedness indeed.

Now it is necessary to remember the meaning of the word "offend." In its original form it is the very word we frequently use—scandalize, and has the force of causing to stumble. So we may translate and expand this saying of Christ as being: "Blessed is he who does not find in Me any cause of stumbling."

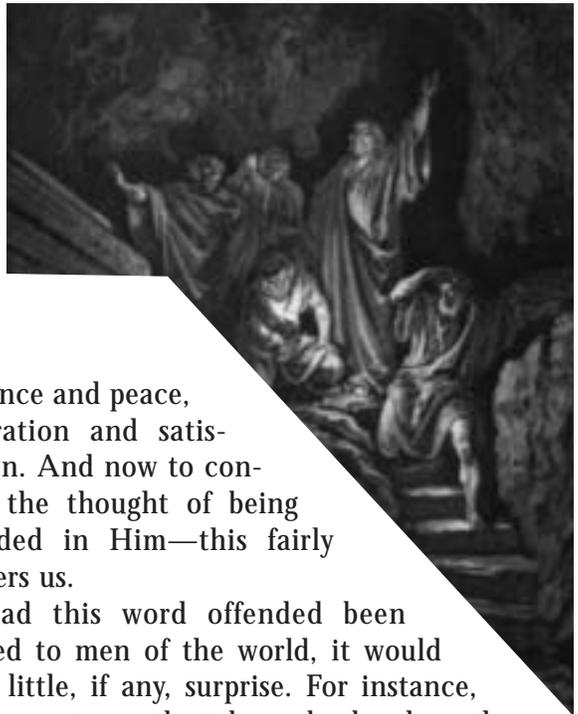
Now we are prepared to find offences in the world, in the opposition of the devil, in the proven insincerity of others—but in Him! This is surely the most startling of all His warnings. For in Him we have already found life and salvation,

guidance and peace, inspiration and satisfaction. And now to consider the thought of being offended in Him—this fairly staggers us.

Had this word offended been applied to men of the world, it would bring little, if any, surprise. For instance, we are not greatly taken aback when the Pharisees were offended in Him because He spoke to them of the evil thoughts, adulteries, murders, and the like, which proceed from the hearts of men; for His words convicted them of sin. We are not much surprised that He should be a rock of offence to those who are purposely disobedient to His demands. But when His own friends, those who really know Him, and have been admitted into the intimacies of fellowship with Him, should find cause of offence, this seems very strange at first. And its very mystery warns us to take heed to ourselves.

The setting that surrounds this verse in Matt. 11:6, is very revealing. John the Baptist was languishing in prison on the shores of the Dead Sea. This was the end of a life of utmost faithfulness. He had been tremendously loyal to Christ, splendidly in earnest concerning his mission, wonderfully courageous in giving forth the message committed to him, and yet it had all ended in a dungeon.

It seemed as though his faith, his self-restriction, his willingness to decrease that Christ might increase, had all been unrecognized and unvalued. His present experience so entirely contradicted God's assurance of a Messiah, that it is easy to understand the perplexity of mind which led him to send his disciples to Christ with the searching question: "Art thou He that should



come?" For here is One who has come to deliver captives, and yet He does not deliver the man, who, more than all others, seemed to have claims upon Him. He has proclaimed His own mission in terms of sympathy and love for the heartbroken, and yet here is a crushed and heartbroken man of whom He apparently takes no notice.

We should not be surprised, that at last, doubt has overcome his faith. We should not wonder why he who sits in prison would send messengers to Christ in the hope that He will declare Himself plainly. He probably had hopes of an explanation of such utterly contradictory circumstances. After all, he was the one who had at immense cost to himself maintained a devoted loyalty to the Son of God? Christ's only answer to these messengers was an exhibition of His sovereign power over the forces of destruction and death, and an injunction that they should tell John what they had seen. He told them to give John a special message; which calls for a new triumphant trust on his part: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." It was a reminder that in the pathway of blessing, the providence of testing will always be experienced. Its implication is that there is true peace only for that man who will trust Christ when he has no external aids to faith. The blessing is for he who believes Him and who holds to his loyalty without stumbling when God's treatment of him tests his endurance to the uttermost.

Now, it is not disloyal to Christ to say this: that He not only masters men but mystifies them also. While He blesses them He bewilders them too. His ways and thoughts are so much higher than ours. He persuades us to love and loyalty; but He puzzles us too. And in the life of every true follower of Him, there will always be, some great unanswered "Why?" None of us will ever be exempt from the need of acquiring by faith and patience the blessedness of the unoffended.

Now, let us think of an ordinary and typical instance of offence. It is not commonly a matter of open backsliding, of heartless rejection of the truth, or of bitter denial of past experience. Rather, doesn't it begin with the disappointment of some hope, the failure of an expectation, the weariness of an unanswered prayer, or the ache of a heart that seems to evoke no sympathetic answer from God. All this generates an unspoken

and almost unspeakable distrust. Then as we brood over it, a sense of injustice grows, a feeling that we have not been treated quite fairly by Christ. And how many there are all around us of whose lives it is a true description! From small beginnings of distrust the largest disasters grow. If two parallel lines are produced into infinity, there will never be any variation of the distance between them. But let them diverge at any point by only a hair's breadth. Then the farther they are produced, the wider the divergence becomes, until at length there is a universe of distance between them. So also in our fellowship with Christ. This kind of distrust and disobedience is charged with the potential of infinite loss. If we do not discover this attitude and repent, it can eventually put an eternity of distance between the soul and the Savior. If therefore, we can estimate some of the unchanging certainties of discipleship; and explore some of the perilous causes of offence in Christ, then we can establish a new relationship of implicit trust with our Lord, and be saved from this threatening peril. And this is surely the aim of His forewarning Word. Let us look at some of His unchanging ways.

There is first of all the severity of His requirements. When we first come to Christ the pathway seems to be strewn with roses, and the air seems filled with sweet and soothing perfumes. Though Christ is absolutely frank with us, and veils nothing of the hardships and conflicts we must endure, our own powers of understanding are so limited. We see but one thing at a time and that one thing is that Christ meets all the immediate needs of my life. Hence we march to a glad strain of faith and our hearts are in tune. But before long we discover that the conditions of fellowship are severe, a real separation, without popularity. It involves a severance of ties, the sacrifice of material prosperity, and the end of self-indulgence, a crucifixion. And when all this comes to be clearly apprehended, then it is that men are offended in Christ.

Then there is the mystery of His contradictions. It often seems as though Christ is unsympathetic with our best desires, with those desires that have originated in our fellowship with Him. You want, for instance, to do some great service and to fill some great sphere; but Christ's answer to your longing is to set you down to face the dif-



facilities of a small work where there is little, if any, recognition of your toil. You ask for spiritual service, and all that has been granted is a monotonous round of secular duty. And you are in danger of being offended in Him, just because there seems so little justification for His treatment of your high aim.

Or, maybe you have asked the gift of rest, and claimed His great promises on this line; but the answer has come in the necessity for stern and continuous conflict. The fires of temptation blaze around you, not less, but far more fiercely than ever. And, you are both puzzled and provoked at such realities. Or, you have desired to have a life less burdened and strained, but His only response has been to impose other and heavier burdens upon you. And you are well nigh offended in Him. The mystery of it all baffles every serious purpose, and the temptation to distrust is at times almost too much.

In reality, He is only unsympathetic with our egotism. He only seeks to destroy within us any kind of self-love, self-pride, and self-sufficiency, and to reproduce in us something of the beauty of His own character.

Beyond these causes is yet another in the slowness of His methods. We come to Him and put our lives under His control, expectant of immediate realization of a deliverance, which shall lift us beyond all concern regarding temptation and opposing forces. But how disappointingly slow is this realization; and how hardly won are our victories even when we are re-enforced by His Spirit.

Quite early we find that life is not a song, but rather a strife; that the grace of Christ is not a mere ecstasy but rather an energy which works painfully for righteousness in us. And the slowness of Christ in this matter of our own spiritual conflicts is often the cause of offence to us.

The same is true also in regard to the progress of the Kingdom. How often we find the slowness with which spiritual results are achieved a cause of offence in Christ. We begin by expecting that when we lift up Christ we shall immediately see crowds flocking to Him. We imagine that we have but to work faithfully in the service of God and man, and results are certain to be apparent. But how different is the reality!

We face the difficulty of believing that God is on the field when He is most invisible and it is too much for many who commence to work for Him with high hopes and valiant beliefs. Like the disciples, they think, "the Kingdom of God should immediately appear"; and it does not. As He attempts to guide their enthusiasm, and deepen their consecration into perseverance, they are apt to be "offended." Now it would not be difficult to bring instance upon instance to prove that, in spiritual work, when results are least visible they are often most real. The worker who will go on without the stimulus of outward success, who will continue His witness even when he is met by cold indifference is the one who gets the blessedness of the unoffended. And part of that blessing is in knowing there will be a harvest of all his sowing, and the sure reward of all his service.

But perhaps over and above these suggested causes of offence in Christ is the unreasonableness of His silences. I have total sympathy with John the Baptist in his perplexity. If this is really the Christ, why does he not act as Christ? Why does He do nothing to deliver His captive herald, or to bring peace to his troubled heart? One visit from Christ would have changed his prison to a palace. One handshake from Him would have transmuted his gloom into glory. But He did not give it. It was the same at Bethany, when He left Martha and Mary to their sorrow for two long and weary days. I sympathize with them in their utter inability to understand His delay in the light of His love. I understand the implied protest of the word with which they at length greeted Him: "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." His silence seemed so entirely unreasonable.

Even now for us, it seems unreasonable when He apparently pays no heed to our prayers, and we cry as to a silent heaven. Who does not know this bitter experience and the subtle temptation lurking there? You have prayed for the conversion of loved ones, but they are apparently today as unyielding and impenitent as ever. You have prayed for temporal things, which seemed entirely necessary, and no answer has come. You have sought relief from some pressing burden, but no lightening of the load has been given; and today it is heavier than ever. And the thought that Christ's silence is unreasonable is never far away.



Loyalty to Him is strained sorely, almost to breaking point. It is almost excusable to be “offended” in Him. But as with John in prison, and the sisters at Bethany, and host of others in all ages, He is not unmindful, even though His silence may seem to point to it. He is training them and us to undaunted faith, to live in the realm of the unseen and eternal; to walk in His own steps.

Sometimes what we call unanswered prayer proves beyond question a greater blessing than the desired answer could possibly have been. He withholds secondary mercies to teach us the importance and value of the primary.

His denials are our enrichments, not our impoverishments. For His purposes are vastly bigger than our prayers; and while His speech may be as silver, His silence is as gold. “Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me.”

“These things have I spoken unto you, that,” despite the severity of My requirements, the mystery of My contradictions, the slowness of My methods, and the unreasonableness of My silences, “ye should not be offended.” □

This article was edited and condensed for space and readability. It was drawn from a 25-page booklet titled *The Blessedness Of The Unoffended*, by T. Austin Sparks. A free copy of this booklet is available by writing to:

Emmanuel Church
12000 East 14th St.
Tulsa, OK 74128
U.S.A.

Prayer's Revealing Challenge

There are many things that you can do in the Christian life, and not be right with God. Think about it a moment. You can read your Bible and not be right. You can go to church faithfully. You can lead your family in devotions. You can tell someone about the Lord Jesus. You can even preach the sermon on Sunday morning, and do it without an open heaven. But prayer is the great revealer of a man's true spiritual condition. You cannot have an effective, activating prayer life unless you are continually walking with a clear heart before God. Let us slowly ponder our prayer life before the all searching eye of God. How is it really? Do you have a pattern of answered prayer in your experience? The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails.

—Gerard Du Toit

The cover for this issue of *The Heartbeat of The Remnant* is a drawing by Harold Weaver. It is taken from a graphic in an old copy of *Why Revival Tarries* by Leonard Ravenhill.



Sharpened Words for Little Ones



Dear Fathers and Mothers,

T*his section of the Remnant is especially for you. We are attempting to gather meaningful lessons from our readers that will help you teach your children.*

God's Word instructs us about our responsibility to teach and train the children. The old English word "catechize" is very descriptive of this task. It means to teach Christian principles by questions and answers. The idea is to get the children thinking, talking, and answering questions, with the purpose of teaching them the truth of the Bible. The goal is to get them involved in this interaction. Take up these few suggestions we have offered, and God will give you other ones on your own. We have been very encouraged by the letters we received from parents who have been using this section, with much success.

--The Editors

God bless you as you teach!

Controlling Our Thoughts

II Corinthians 10: 5 teaches us to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. This concept is often hard for a child to understand. Here is a way that they can grasp the principle of watching over the thoughts that pass through the mind. If you will do this a couple of times during the formative years, they will never forget it. You will need someone old enough to carry out instructions and remember what you want them to say. Your helpers name will be "a thought." Sometimes he will be a good thought and sometimes he will be a bad thought. When he is a good thought, you will embrace him, and welcome him. When he is a bad thought, you will chase him away with a broom. Now picture the scene. You are sitting with the family at devotion time. Then your helper walks in humming. Ask him, "Who are you?" He should answer you with his name. "I am a thought." When you hear this, grab him and wrestle him to the ground. Then ask him, "What kind of thought are you?" Your helper should answer with an actual thought, good or bad, such as, "I don't like my parents." When you hear this, grab the broom and chase him out of the room. This little exercise can be repeated several times, alternating between good and bad thoughts. If he gives you a good thought, then you bless him and give him a seat. Explain to the children, that this happens in our minds. Sometimes it is just our minds thinking, but other times it is Satan putting bad things there to get us to think on them.

Kindness to Animals

For this lesson, you will want to secure any kind of baby animal you can find. It is very important to use a baby. This will do two things for you. One, you will have the children's undivided attention. Two, the baby animal will evoke sympathy and tenderness in every heart, even in the boys. After you have allowed everyone to enjoy this little animal for a while, take your Bible and turn to Proverbs 12:10. This verse is perfect to explain God's heart concerning animals. We can see that it is righteous to care for the animals. The care and concern we have for the animals when they are young should also be felt when they are grown. This is a good time to affirm responsibilities at chore times. To forget to give food or water to the animals is not right. When you have finished teaching some of these positive lessons, take time to speak strongly about the sin of being cruel to animals; the delight that boys sometimes have when they are mean to God's creatures. To bring the element of the creator into the lesson has a sobering influence on anyone who enjoys such evil. Some boys have a real problem with cruelty to animals, and it is good to affirm this lesson often. These patterns reach further than animals when they grow older, if not subdued when young. There are actually two lessons here if you take some time and develop them.

Sinking Sand

Sit the family down for devotions as usual. After the time of singing is over, announce to them all that we are going to have our lesson today out at the sandbox. They will light up with interest and joy at the thought of it. Some preparation must be done ahead of time so that the lesson flows along quickly. If not, you will have them all playing in the sandbox in short order. When you arrive at the location, proceed to build a small house on the sand with wooden blocks. After you have finished the house, open your Bible and read the verses from the Sermon on the Mount. Spend a short time teaching what Jesus said, and how it applies to our lives. Then take some kind of a water source and pour it upon the house. You must have enough water flow that it begins to wash the sand away from under the house. As this happens, the house will fall to pieces before their very eyes. Oh, what a teachable moment you have. Turn back the text again and make further applications.

Pull the Weeds When They are Small

You will have to wait a couple of months before you can do this lesson, but I assure you, it will be worth the wait. When the time of weeds has returned again, and it will I assure you. After you have had a time of singing with the family, march them all out to the garden for a very important lesson. You can allow most everyone to be involved in this one, as there will be plenty of weeds growing—right? Locate some of the big weeds first, and let them try to pull them out, each taking a turn. You want them to see for themselves, how hard it is to pull the big ones. When you feel that point has been clearly made, allow them to pull some of the small ones. Now you want to go back into the house and have a teaching on dealing with needs in our lives while they are small. Note that you often need help to deal with them if you wait till they get well-rooted in the heart. Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence," is a good verse to consider. You can bring out the importance being open and honest with mom and dad about our struggles. You can tell them, "Don't let little feelings of disrespect or anger grow into big weeds that are hard to pull."

Listening in Prayer

The truth that you want to teach here is the importance of listening to God while you are having a time of prayer. Many people spend all their time in prayer making requests to God. Have your wife do a little preparation for this one. She should make a list of about twenty things that she wants to talk about on the phone with a friend. An outline of subjects is enough, and then she can fill in during the lesson. When it is time to teach, tell the children that you want them to listen to mother talk on the phone. They should listen carefully, and see if they can tell what is wrong with the conversation. Your wife should talk non-stop without listening, till she is finished with her list, and then hang up. The children will know what is wrong before she gets done. Then you ask them what they think. Turn to the Bible and refer to verses about listening to God, hearing His still, small voice, etc. Bring out the point of how it must seem to God when all He hears is requests during prayer. No one comes to listen or to have interactive fellowship with Him. It is like we are using God for our own plans and wishes.



Praying “The Lord’s Prayer”

Greetings in Jesus’ name, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The time has gone by very swiftly, and here we are again ready to do some exercises. How do your spiritual muscles feel? I hope they are at least a little sore.

In the last issue we had a family exercise with some tremendous potential. This time we have a personal exercise that could change your prayer life forever. When our Lord Jesus Christ was in the garden praying at His greatest hour of temptation, He found His disciples sleeping. His words of reproof and challenge to them are also convicting to us. He woke them and said, “What, could you not watch with me one hour?” He continued, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” Now the Lord Jesus knew the temptation they were about to face. They could have used some of the strength that He had just received. When the trial came, He passed, and they failed. A consistent prayer life is a mainstay in the life of a believer. We are going to explore a method of prayer that you will find helpful. It will help you get a handle on fervent prayer.

What is this method of prayer? The prayer that is called “The Lord’s Prayer” is not actually His prayer. When Christ gave this prayer, He was in fact teaching on prayer. He said, “after this manner pray ye.” Many people pray this prayer word for word and that is all. I



have no problem doing this; however, there is a deeper exercise here. You will notice while reading the prayer that it is divided into six major parts. If you take each of them and make them an area of prayer, you will see that you have a prayer out-

line. Many Christians down through the centuries have found this outline helpful. With this prayer outline, you take the main points, and fill in with your own life with God. Let’s see how this can work for us.

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.”

Use this to begin your time of prayer. Spend a season praising God. Let this be a time of worship. Tell Him how much you love Him. Find a song of adoration and worth, and sing it to the Lord, from your heart. Loosen up and bless the Lord in your closet. Do this for ten minutes.

“Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

Pray these words, then use them as a springboard to personalize the prayer. Pray about God’s will for your life. Bring the things of your everyday life to God. What decisions are you facing? Pray about them. Pray about your family,



your church, or any area that is before you at the time of the prayer. Please note: these things change every day. This is the blessing of using an outline. You fill in the blanks before God each day. Spend ten minutes on God's will.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

Personalize these words to the Lord. This point covers the area of God's provisions. You can pray about your finances. Maybe you have a need, and you don't know how it will be met. Again, these circumstances change all the time. Pray for the physical needs of others. You can also transfer the idea of need to spiritual needs. "Lord, give me bread for today, you know what I need." Pray for spiritual bread to feed your family, or anyone else you are responsible for. Take ten minutes to focus on needs. George Mueller would often spend an hour on needs.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Again, you want to personalize these words to begin with. Then reflect upon your life. Allow God's Spirit to search you, and as failures, shortcomings, and sins come to mind, confess them. What a beautiful way to start the day.

After you have cleared your conscience, move on to others. People have hurt you; forgive them before the Lord. Someone is against you; bless them and forgive them from your heart. You can easily do this for ten minutes.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

You know your needs. Pray about them as you pray this point. Think of the temptations of your present life. These are



areas where you need to be strengthened. Remember also, you just finished confessing sin to God. Now you can verbalize the longings for victory. Pray about any besetting sins you are struggling with. Cry out to God

for deliverance. I wonder how many of them would vanish from your life if you prayed about them this way for ten minutes each day.

"Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever."

This is the last point of the outline. Finish your season of prayer the way you began; with a time of praise and worship. You have much to honor Him for. Reflect back over the time you have spent with Him and all the ways He has helped you. Let your heart overflow with thanksgiving and your tongue be loosed to exalt Him. Find another song that is fitting to sing to the Lord from the heart. Do this for ten minutes.

It is easy to see how quickly an hour can go by. I assure you, if you spend an hour in meaningful prayer like this, it will change your life. A new level of grace will begin to flow into your heart and life. Maybe you feel that one hour is too much for you to begin with. Then I would suggest five minutes for each point. This will give you a half an hour in prayer. Try it for a week, every day, and remember this is a spiritual exercise. It is suppose to be a bit difficult. This kind of prayer will prepare you for the temptations that you will face in the day that is ahead. □





Noah and a Father's Faith

by Rick Leibee

Parents sometimes wonder what is one of the most important things I can do in the areas of family life, child training, and home issues? They wonder, "What am I missing, what else can I do?" Dear parent, have you considered faith; faith so deep, so real it moves you, the parent, and the family to follow God? The Bible says without faith it is impossible to please God.

I would call this area the duty of parental faith. It is a misunderstood part of Christian parenting or home life. We begin to trust in the flesh, or in tapes we have heard, or in books we have read, instead of trusting in God and His promises and provisions.

One common misunderstanding that happens with faith is as follows: A couple will claim a faith in God and in Bible promises concerning the home. In fact what they really have is a whim or hope that something good might happen to their child and in their home. Thus they become lax or lazy, waiting for the rewards of their so-called "faith." No! The kind of faith I am talking about has shoe leather to it!

Faith is not often spoken of in regard to the home and parenting, but I believe if it is not laid properly you will be frustrated later on. If this foundation is missing it will cause things to go off later. Therefore, I feel very strongly faith is a missing gem, in the home.

Noah is a wonderful example of a man of faith. His faith made a direct and dramatic difference in the lives of his family. We are introduced to Noah in Genesis chapter 6:8. There we are told that he, of all men on the earth, found grace in the eyes of God. What a wonderful word grace is, and here is the first time in scripture it appears. And it is directed to Noah! Then in verses 9 and 10 we are told he is just and he walked with God. Then God tells Noah of the coming flood. What an awesome moment in the history of world. What will be his response? To get the answer let us go to the New Testament to get a commentary on what took place there between God and Noah and his family.

In Hebrews 11:7 the Bible says "*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving*





of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Please take note of the simple phrase “by faith.” This phrase shows that faith is the agent or power, which caused him to obey. If we say a building is destroyed “by fire” we mean the building was destroyed through or with the power of the fire. So it is when the Bible says “by faith”: through or with the power of faith. Look at the verse again. What did that faith do? What was its effect? Noah built an ark to the SAVING OF HIS HOUSE.

Noah would have agreed with James in the New Testament when he said that faith without works is dead. For approximately 120 years, as best we can figure, Noah labored on that ark. He labored day after day, week after week, year after year, and decade after decade for more than a century. Noah obeyed in faith though it had never rained on the earth. Faith will do that; it will produce in you obedience and get you to do things you have never done before. It did just that very thing for Noah. Has it done that for you? And that kind of faith will make you very, very different from the rest of the world. Look at Noah. He was the only one building an ark in the entire world. Though he preached the coming flood for decades, he alone was preparing an ark for the saving of his house. But, he did not get on that ark alone. Who went in that ark with him? Remember, when they entered the ark it had not yet rained or flooded. Yes, his family walked up that ramp into a boat that was sitting on dry land hundreds of miles from any sea or ocean! His faith was somehow passed from the father to the sons. The torch of faith was burning in his breast and in his children. His family could see that and it affected them. It helped to

save them. No, this is not another gospel; but God does use faith-filled godly parents to draw their dear family along.

Parents, do not be afraid if having great faith in God makes you different from your neighbors or others in your family. Faith and the resulting obedience to God will make you and your family very different from everyone else. If you think you are misunderstood for wearing a headcovering or dressing modestly or giving up television or sports, how could you get any more different than Noah and his family building a boat on dry land when it had never rained? How the others mocked them! But faith in God will give you strength to be different. To be separated. And more importantly – to be separated UNTO Jesus!

Would your children follow you up a ramp in the desert onto a boat when all others are mocking? A milktoast faith will not do. Great faith means great obedience. We only obey in areas where we have faith. If you have little faith you will only obey a little, or none at all. Could Noah have built half an ark? Would it have floated? What if he just stopped short of completion and did not tar and pitch it? It still would not have floated and he would have lost his family. Will your boat float? Your children may not be theologians but they know exactly what you truly believe in, what you have great faith in. And they will follow you as they see your heart and your faith in God. By faith, Noah, a father with faith in his God, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. What is God saying to you and me? WILL OUR CHILDREN SEE OUR FAITH? May we, by faith, believe God and His promises and provisions for our families, and see the saving of many future generations! □



GOD

Give Us
Women

by
Mary Troyer



God give us women who know what it means
To pray and work behind the scenes,
Who know their God in such a way,
Who will cling to Him, let come what may.

God give us women with hearts aflame,
Who will raise their children to be the same.
Who look to the ways of their household well,
Yet yearn for those who are headed for hell.

God give us women who will fast and pray,
For her husband and children night and day.
Whose heart is submissive in everything,
Who honors her husband, for he is her king!

God give us women who will stand the test,
Who in big or small things, will do their best.
Who know that all they say or do,
They do as they would do to You.

God give us women who are full of grace,
With hearts serene as they run the race.
Whose desire is not for a life of ease,
Who long the most their Master to please.

God give us women who find great delight,
In the lot that God gave them in life.
Who embrace with joy the little things,
Who fulfill their duty with a heart that sings.

God give us women with a vision clear,
Who live in reverence and Godly fear.
Who abide in Christ all through the day,
And seek to please Him in every way.



Book Review

by Andrew Weaver

The Release of the Spirit

by Watchman Nee



The *Release of the Spirit* is a deeply searching book written by the great Chinese author and preacher, Watchman Nee. The material in the book was first delivered in a series of messages in 1948 under the title “The Breaking of the Outward Man unto the Release of the Spirit.” The author uses the pattern suggested by 1 Thessalonians 5:23, “*I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless...*” in his descriptions of man’s three-part being as spirit, soul and body.

*First of all, when God comes to indwell us by His Spirit with His life and power, He comes into our **spirit** at the time when we were born again (John 3:6). This regenerated spirit located at the center of man’s being is what we call the inward man. Secondly, outside the sphere of this inward man indwelt by God is the **soul**. Its functions are our thoughts, emotions, and will. Thirdly, the outermost man is our physical **body**, characterized by its external instincts of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.*

The author uses the story of the penitent woman who broke an alabaster box in order to release the perfume to show us God’s desire to break our outward man, the soul, in order to allow the release of the inner man, the spirit. Until the independence and proud self-sufficiency of the outward man are destroyed, we can do nothing of value for God. All of our best efforts will still be based in our own strength, willpower, or intellect. But with the breaking of that outward man, usually through trial and difficulty, comes a release of our spirit, united with and controlled by the Holy Spirit, and then God can truly work through us. Nee writes:

Strange to say, many are still treasuring the alabaster box, thinking that its value exceeds that of the ointment. Many think that their outward man is more precious than their inward man... One will treasure his cleverness, thinking he is quite important... Others highly regard themselves, because they feel they are better than others, their eloquence surpasses that of others, or their quickness of action and exactness of judge-



Only God

by Charles & Crystal Taylor



- Part 1 -

God has graciously and mercifully answered a lot of prayers that went up for the Taylor Family. All of this happened within 1 year, 4 months, and 3 days. All glory be to God for the blessing of seeing God's hand at work with us and our children. Our children are growing up with the knowledge that the God we serve is doing marvelous things in our home and our lives. We would like to share the things that God has bestowed upon us.

On March 25th, 1999, my husband and I found deliverance from a crack cocaine

addiction that had haunted our lives for over 16 years. The captive was finally set free. *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"* (John 8:36). We knew we could not fight this battle alone so we went to Remnant Ministries and became followers of Jesus Christ. We realized that the only way to have complete victory in this battle was to strive to walk holy before Christ. God had provided a job for me which involved working for the Commonwealth of Virginia. We were set free from the bondage of living on Welfare and Food Stamps that bound us for 18 years. We continued to live in a drug-infested neighborhood and a roach-infested apart-

ment. But God kept us clean from the drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. He didn't stop there. He continued to help us clean up our lives. After a struggle, we overcame the addiction of television as well as worldly music. This was a big change for us as well as our children. But we knew that in order to live a Christian lifestyle, we had to be cut off from the world. We became a peculiar people, especially on 14 Galveston Place. We continue to have some hard times. But we found that when we lived on God's promises, He saw us through. We started praying for deliverance while living on Galveston. The abusive language that was used outside our apartment, the selling of drugs on our street, and the continual seeing of people that we had bought drugs from and smoked drugs with were things that we had to endure from day to day. WE WERE SET FREE only to realize God was shaping us for something greater. He was calling us to a lifestyle of holiness. We proceeded screaming and hollering all along the way. God has not only delivered us from the world of drinking and drug-ging but He also delivered our daughter Charlene from the drugs and alcohol.

As a family we started praying for a second vehicle. Within a couple of months God saw fit to bless us with one. It didn't cost us a dime. The praises continued to go up, so God's blessing continued to come down. We prayed on a daily basis for a computer. God heard and blessed us with not only one



but two computers. ONLY GOD! We continued to pray that God would move us from Galveston Place. We looked at several ads in "The Washington Post" and "Home Guide Magazines." We realized that we didn't qualify for anything so we made a choice to wait on the guidance and the provision of God to move us (and He did). We started packing. He used the body of believers to help provide a home that was beyond our wildest dreams. Whoever would have thought that the Taylors would become suburbanites? AGAIN, ONLY GOD. For the first time in our lives we are LEGAL in everything. Living here has brought on so many other blessings. Charles can come home for lunch since he works closer to home. We have been in prayer for me to be able to work closer to home. Not only has God answered that prayer but he also saw fit to bless me with the hours at work to be able to be at home with the children when they come home from school. God isn't finished yet. We are now in prayer that I will be able to stay home and homeschool the children. God has opened the door so CeeCee (our son) could be granted a \$10,000 fund scholarship at a Christian Academy. Having come from a South East, DC, public school system, it is truly a blessing to him to be in North Carolina in a Christian School. He's no longer thinking about running away from home, but instead he wants to come home because he's homesick. We owe God all the honor and praise.

We are continuing to pray that our children would become Disciples of Christ and that we would continue to grow closer to Christ.

Part 2

In part 1 of our testimony, we had mentioned God wasn't finished yet. Since then we prayed that I could become a stay-at-home mom and homeschool our children. I had gotten a job closer to home at the local Target. I thought that the hours I had from 10:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M. would somehow make things better in our home. (It wasn't God's plan). After lifting, sweating, hauling, bending, pushing and compromising with the worldly music they played over the loudspeaker, I knew this job was not from God. During the eight hours that I was there I asked God to lead me and guide me in the direction He wanted me to go, because I knew this was not His will. The music that was played over the loudspeaker started to bring back memories of the past. So I asked God to block out anything and everything that did not glorify Him.

As I was leaving work that day, people asked me if I was coming back. My only thoughts were that I was praying that I would not have to. Every part of my body was hurting. All I could think about was going home to my nice, cozy bed. But it did not work out that way. The children were up by the time I got home. I had to spend time with them. The phone

constantly rang and I was very irritable and could not get any sleep. The TV baby-sat my children for 6 hours while I tried to get some sleep. I knew there had to be a better way. My husband called and said I did not have to go back. We were going to trust God. But at 9:30 P.M. I started to get dressed for work. I was murmuring the whole time I was ironing my uniform. I did not believe that my husband was sincere about me quitting. At this point I wasn't trusting God to provide. As I was getting dressed I looked at my husband and said, "I don't want to go back." His reply was, "Well then, don't. God will provide." We prayed that God would provide our every need and we placed our trust completely in Him. Immediately I called the place where I had worked for only one day and told them that I was not coming back. We also realized that if I am not working, there's no need for us to send the children to the neighborhood school. So now we were not only living in the suburbs and trusting God with one income, but we were also planning to homeschool the children. Now the question was, "How do we afford the books?" Before we had time to worry about this God blessed us through a friend that gave us the money for the whole year's curriculum. ONLY GOD!

We prayed that God's will would be done in our son's (CeeCee) life and that he would want to come home. Well, it didn't take long for that

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The Blessing of Authority

by Andrew & Elisabeth Weaver



It is an unfortunate fact that many of God's best blessings to us are not recognized as blessings except in retrospect. The blessing of authority in our lives is one that most people fail to recognize for what it is, an evidence of God's loving care for them. In fact, many are making the tragic mistake of resenting and resisting the authority God has placed in their lives, and so are missing out on many beautiful blessings. During our recent courtship and marriage, we experienced many of these blessings firsthand, and want to share some of our reflections on the subject.

Obviously, a person's first encounter with authority and submission involves his/her parents. We were both privileged to have godly parents whose authority in our lives was a

reflection of God's authority over them. It was a gentle shepherding and consistent leading by example instead of a demanding system of law. We both learned very early that the authority our parents exercised in our lives was not something they used for their own selfish gain. Rather, it was their way of protecting us under the umbrella of their authority. We cannot begin to recount the ongoing blessings our lives received through their protection.

Clearly understanding that our wills were in submission to a better and wiser will (our parents') made it easier for us to count the cost of surrendering that will to God at conversion. It is so much easier to make a complete, unconditional surrender of your will to God when it has already been yielded to your parents. When obedience

to your parents is simply natural, whether you understand fully or not, obedience to God can become your natural response, too. And surely anyone would agree that complete obedience to God is the key to many of the richest blessings in our lives.

Understanding that God placed authority in our lives for our protection and blessing made it easy to remain under that authority even when we were old enough to begin forming ideas and opinions of our own. An important step in learning the blessing of authority is to realize that imperfection in your human authorities does not change in any way your responsibility to respect and obey them. Young people are often eager to try their own ideas and methods, especially after being disillusioned by fail-



ure on the part of their authorities, but God's best blessings are reserved for those who can wait until He establishes their own authority.

Courtship often tests young people's acceptance of their parents' authority like nothing else. We found, however, that by the time we approached that season of life, our parents' authority had simply become a reflection of the convictions that had formed in our own hearts through years of learning to know God. We still marvel at how perfectly God revealed His will concerning our marriage first to our parents, then clearly confirmed it to both of us. This is the most exciting step of all in learning the blessings of authority- when you discover that the will you have submitted to your authorities has become like

theirs, and God is now ready to validate your own authority as it is given to you. We feel that God Himself has established our respective places of authority in our new home simply because we first learned the blessing of accepting the authority God had protected us with.

Surrendering your will to God and the people He has placed over you brings an unshakeable peace. Life becomes so simple and uncomplicated, because you simply follow those who are called to lead you. So much of what is called stress is nothing more than a self-inflicted problem that comes from trying to "help" our authorities when God has only called us to submit. Life is both too short and too long to miss this principle of accepting and appreciating the authority over

you. It is too long to waste precious years resisting your authorities and missing out on beautiful blessings and usefulness for God. And it is too short to settle for anything less than the best God intends for you.

Although we are still learning about authority and its blessings, we have learned enough already to testify that it really works! As we have begun our new home together, we have been blessed beyond anything we thought possible. We know that many of those blessings came as a result of accepting the place God had for us under our authorities' protection. It is one of God's principles and promises that blessings follow submission. Try it and be blessed! □

continued from page 21, Only God by Charles & Christine Taylor

prayer to be answered. When we came home from Bible study on a Wednesday evening, there were several messages on the answering machine from him, stating that he wanted to come home. When I called him back that night he said, "Mom, I want to come home and you can even homeschool me." At first the only thing I could think of was, "How are we going to go get him and when, for he is five hours away." We shared this at church. On Saturday our Pastor decided to pack up and take the 15-passenger van and go get him. So Monday morning at 5:00 A.M.

we were on the road headed toward North Carolina to pick up our son. When we arrived at, he was standing outside and his bags were all packed and ready to go. He threw the stuff in the back of the van and we headed back to Maryland rejoicing all the way. Once again we sent up prayers for homeschool materials for our high school son.

God has answered, and through blessing of family and friends we have what is needed to get him started. We are continuing to pray for God's guidance, grace, and mercy as we enter this next phase of walk-

ing, trusting and being guided by Him. ONLY GOD.

Charles & Crystal Taylor □

Cast your cares on
the Lord and He will
sustain you; He will
never let the
righteous fall. Psalm
55:22



The SPIRIT of the HOME

by Rachel Weaver



There are many different influences that make up the whole of child training. Some of these are bold and open and can be seen by all. Others are more hidden, and only noticed by a discerning eye. As we know, it is often the hidden ones that bear more fruit. I would like to focus on one of these quiet yet powerful hidden principles of child training. There is nothing in the way of direct teaching that will ever have so wide and lasting effect on our children as the spirit of the home.

What is the spirit of the home? It is the atmosphere of the home. It is that mysterious air that a child breathes in every day quite unconsciously. One author, of a hundred years ago, explained it this way.

“It is the environment that surrounds the child, where he breathes in unconsciously, ideas of right living that emanate from his parents. Every look of gentleness and tone of reverence, every word of kindness and act of help imprints on him. The child does not think of these things. But they excite in him the desire to do that which is right and good. It is here the child gains those enduring things that express themselves as a lifelong kinship to either things earthly or things divine.”

As I read these words, I was inspired and awed. What a challenge is ours! What a glorious calling! The words we speak and the attitude with which we speak them, the way we live before our children every day shapes them for eternity. The atmosphere we make in our home is so much more important than the house in which we live and the education that we have or do not have. It does not matter if we have plenty of goods with which to live or if we are living on a shoestring and scrimping and scraping to make ends meet. What matters is the attitude of our heart, the disposition of our will. What counts is the spirit with which we live each day.

One can do all the right things and not be able to achieve this sweet peacefulness. In fact, it is far more a matter of *being* than *doing* that creates this sweet atmosphere. One preacher said it powerfully. “The mother is the Holy Spirit of the home...it is her attitude that determines the beautiful spirit of the home.”

I know that this is true. We have lived in times of sweetness and in times of trouble in our home.



When I am troubled in spirit, not emanating that gentleness and peace, I see it reflected in my children and I find myself desperately wishing that I were not such a thermometer, that goes up and down with the changing temperature. I have cried out in desperation, "Why does it matter so much how I am feeling? Why does everyone reflect me?" But a mother sets the tone of the home, and our Heavenly Father so carefully designed it this way. He has given us this blessed opportunity to imprint on our children His divine ways. He has called us to this high and holy calling of parenting. It is up to us, as we assist our husbands, to instill the godly values and the sweet, peaceful spirits in their little minds before they are even old enough to understand what we are about. Let us look at some Bible principles that affect the spirit of our home.

The Inner Spirit of the Cross

The first thing that we need is the inner spirit of the cross. If we can get a vision of the serving love that our Savior shared in His life and death we will be on our way to understanding what it takes to have a sweet atmosphere. Jesus gave His very life for us. He claimed no rights of His own. He just gave all He had and expected nothing in return.

If we could get that settled in our hearts, our own spirits would be so much sweeter. My Saviour went the whole way to Calvary and no one noticed. He went alone for me. A heart understanding of that should change my whole outlook and that in turn will change everything. It will change what I do and why I do it. It will profoundly affect how I act and interact with my family and friends.

Grace Filled Singing

The second principle I would like to consider is grace filled singing. The psalmist said, "he hath

put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD." This powerful tool flows from the first. Ephesians 5 says we should be "singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord."

I have very fond memories of coming down to the kitchen early in the morning to hear my mother singing as she made breakfast for all of us. Some of these songs are still my favorites. A singing mother makes a happy atmosphere where children early learn to sing and praise and rejoice. Sing while you work and when you rock your little ones. Sing together and sing alone.

Proverbs 17:22 says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." This is so true. A joyful, happy, singing mother communicates happiness to everyone around her. Many times I find myself in such a hurry doing this and that. My rushed, hurried spirit definitely does not make a peaceful atmosphere. It takes time to be the right kind of mother with the right kind of spirit.

A Mother's Communication in the Home

Let us now ponder the subject of a mother's communication in the home. When a mother has a right heart response to life around her, she is in a very strategic place. Now she can speak into the children's lives out of her right response to her world. This has a quiet effect on them. You see, the children live in a real world also, and they are learning to respond. Oh, the power of a mother as she graciously talks her way through life with the children. Who can measure this influence?

Come, let us live with our children. Let us establish the sympathetic relationship that characterizes communication and openness of heart. Feel with your child. Share with him. Every child wants to share his joys and sorrows with his parents. If we keep that avenue open then whenever the child



has a problem he will feel free to open his heart and whisper his inmost thoughts, hopes, and ambitions to you.

Take time to talk with your child as you work and as you do school. Use the problems as they come up for springboards of communication. Look at how God views the problem and what He says to do about it. Don't just spank and go on. Use that time to train them. It is such a teachable moment. Hold them, teach them, and hear their hearts as you correct them and dry their tears. It is time invested in eternity. When you are done the atmosphere will be peaceful again and you will have laid a stone in the foundation for communication with them when they are older.

Pray with your children about your problems and theirs. We have one lad who gets into mischief more than some of the others and yet his heart is very sensitive. When he is struggling with his attitudes and I pray with him about his problems, he responds so much more positively. He absolutely loves it! So do I, for that matter. It is so refreshing and it changes my perspective helping, me focus on God and His design and plan for my day.

My Peaceful Spirit

Another quiet, hidden influence is my peaceful spirit. Peacefulness is defined as "freedom from tumult, commotion, quarrels, quiet, undisturbed, not agitated"; that is how the old Webster dictionary puts it.

I only reflect peacefulness when I am in touch with God. This peacefulness overflows as a quiet spirit into every happening in the day. This walk with God that brings peace is made strong as I take time for personal devotions. Quiet time is not wasted time in a busy mother's life. I have seen how desperately every mother needs this quietness of heart. With a house full of children there is a lot going on and this peace enables us to face each new demand and problem.

Someone once said, "Troubles are a test of the heart. We cannot spill out sweetness if bitterness

is there. But if our cup is filled with the fruit of the Spirit, then when it gets bumped, then only sweetness will flow out of it. If when our life is bumped and jogged and we respond peacefully amid the interruptions and trials that present themselves, then we are in possession of the fruit of the Spirit." Ah, if we always could say that, we would have far less trouble managing our little band of followers. So much is done right inside the spirit of the parents. So much is caught as our children watch us and unconsciously copy us. Have you ever noticed that when a mother is in a hurry and is impatient that family harmony tends to disintegrate and everyone is soon out of sorts and grouchy? A quiet, peaceful spirit goes a long, long way, in making a gentle, happy home. This sweet spirit will eventually change the family. Then you will have a peaceful family, and that is a beautiful testimony for the Lord.

Harmony with My Husband

The last ingredient I would like to look at is harmony with my husband—"to harmonize is to agree, to fit together, to live in peace and friendship."

First I must be in harmony with God. Then I must be fully one with my husband. If I am not living in harmony with my spouse, I can expect to find this unrest passed on to my children.

Recently, there was an issue in my life in which I was not fully resting under my husband's authority. It put a serious cloud over me. My devotional life was not warm and free and inspiring like it usually is. Then one Sunday I listened as a pastor said this.

"Adam refused the authority of God. When he did that, the glory, light and power of God were gone from his life! Gone - Gone - Gone! How different it was from the life flowing out before. He could not fellowship with God and God could not fellowship with him. Until that fellowship was restored, Adam could not be a whole person."



He was not even referring to a husband and wife relationship, but my mind raced on to the authority that God has designed in the husband and wife relationship. I had to face up with the fact that I was not completely resting in my husband and this was the reason for my dryness and my lack of peace. What remorse and shame I experienced, yet what peace as I confessed it to God. What clearing!!

When we refuse the authority God has placed over us, no matter what the issue is, the glory, the power and the light are gone from our life. It is so simple, yet so profound!

Many, many times we wives complain about not having any power. We say we are dry and we have no inspiration, no light, and no joy. Is it possible that we could trace it to this area? It is so easy to do just as Adam did and step outside the plan that God has for us. We will to do our own will and we begin immediately to pay the consequences.

A wife whose mind is not completely at rest, trusting and delighting in her husband, will find her fellowship with her husband is affected. The greater the problem, the poorer the fellowship. If she is at odds with her husband and does not desire to do his will, the relationship will quickly deteriorate. If she is dominated by her emotions, she will not find it easy to be under his authority.

When a husband and wife have a relationship that is according to the word of God they have sweet fellowship. The lines of communications are open and their spirits are in peace and harmony with each other. They trust each other completely and enjoy each other to the fullest. They each delight in the happiness of the other. This will create a lovely and right atmosphere in the home.

Once again, your children follow your example. If you are not fully following your husband, your children will probably not fully follow you.

But you say, "I am not sure He is doing exactly what he should be doing. I am afraid he is making some serious mistakes." Have you really given your worries, expectations and cares all to your Heavenly Father? "The government is upon His shoulders!" God will be IN CONTROL if you allow Him to be. The song writer puts it so well,

"Hidden in the hollow of his blessed hand, never foe can follow, never traitor stand; Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care; not a blast of hurry, touch the spirit there."

When we have a flexible spirit with no plans of our own, what blessings flow upon our union with our husbands! What a challenge to truly have that spirit. Any mother with a number of children, knows what it is like to have her day change on her at a very inopportune time. School is under way and lunch time is coming all too fast and Dad calls over the intercom. "I need a can of red ink to finish the job that is to be done by 4:00. There is no way I can get it. Could you go and get it for me?" Can I stop my school, pack up the children and go for that important ink without getting all bent out of shape? These things happen to all of us in one way or another. What a wonderful example it is to our children if we can sweetly say, "Sure. I will gladly help you." A mother with a flexible spirit can wear old clothes, live on simple food, and work with a limited budget, cheerfully and with a thankful and sweet attitude. Children who live with a mother like this are extremely blessed. What a valuable lesson in the will of God for their lives!

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1 Thes. 5:18. A thankful spirit is one of the sweetest perfumes to scent anyone's home. It brings joy and cheer and comfort to every circumstance and every relationship.

Well, much more could be said on this subject, and I have a long way to go even as I write these lines. Will you join me in heart as we cry to God for a sweet, quiet spirit in our homes? My prayer for you is the prayer that Paul prayed for the church at Thessalonica: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24). □



Painful Realities of Missionary Life

by Harold Herr



Jesus said and He still forcibly calls to us today, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” We all know that when we fail to do this, it brings trouble and unrest into our lives and into the lives of those around us. Missionary life provides many challenges in this matter of trusting the Lord. I would like to share some of my stumblings and some of the Lords dealings with me, in hopes that it will help others to deal properly and honestly with their burdens.

An ancient poet of the 1800s sat in his padded pew in a very orthodox church. In front

of him sat a sophisticated, proud matron, with ne’er a wrinkle upon her dress, with her bonnet ribbon “starched” to perfection, covering her stoic face. But, meandering up her “starched” bonnet ribbon, unbeknown to this prim lady were several lice. There she sits, so confident that everything is just right, and she doesn’t realize that she will be scratching like a dog in two days. In response to what he saw, the poet penned these lines:

Would that God some
gift would give us,
To see ourselves as
others see us.

I would add to these lines, and
*to see ourselves as our dear God
sees us.*

This would perhaps be revealing, embarrassing, humbling, and shaming. We would join with Isaiah and cry out, “Woe is me, I am undone.” One preacher said, “One of the greatest gifts that God can give a man, is the gift of self revelation.” Now this kind of gift is bittersweet. In my situation as a missionary in the field both of these happened to me. I attempted to carry burdens in my own strength, and this revealed many “lice” in my life that others saw. They were very real and very offensive. What then did God see? Oh, the rottenness of my sinful, proud heart!

David beautifully shares in Psalm 55:22, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.” The Amplified inserts, “releasing the weight of



it.” In Psalm 37:5 (AMP), David also admonishes, “Commit your way unto the Lord (roll and repose each care of your load on Him).”

There are many burdens in life God gives us to bear that are right burdens—the care of families, of churches, of missions. These should drive us to our knees in prayer and fasting. Many times we do not take them seriously enough. But in the midst of these right burdens we need finally to release them, roll them on Him in trust, to find the rest that Jesus invites us to receive. If we do not, the very proper burdens and responsibilities given to us by God will finally crush us, wound us, and disable us. Then we start to fret—the very opposite of rest, of commit, of trust, and of peace. Fret means “to worry, to burn, to eat away as leprosy, to dig a pit, to be displeased, to wax hot.”

Haiti is indeed the land of the unexpected. The demands of life, the requests, the need to make decisions come plunging in upon one, day after day. I knew, and most of us know, “His grace is sufficient”, “I will give you rest”, but I was not experiencing the rest and grace. I took the load of the finances, the wear on the trucks, the daily demands of routine mission life, the total responsibilities and started to fret. Indeed, it started to “eat as leprosy.”

Someone always gets hurt in such situations. In my case, it was my missionary helpers; it was the native missionary helpers; it was the native laborers; it was others in my path who were hurt. I say this to my shame, failure, and sin. I would see this failure to commit my way to the Lord at times, and seek release, but would stumble again and again. I did not want to go this way. I said in my heart it must be different, but it wasn't. I battled and prayed and failed again and again.

I struggled with the oft-medical trips to T-Guoave, too much wear on the trucks, too many dollars spent. I overshadowed the missionary workers in their routine decisions; the native laborers did not produce enough or well enough. I became curt with the Nationals in their many requests and expectations of the mission and me. I would see some of it and ask forgiveness at times, but like a tire taking a deep, muddy rut, I was soon back wallowing in my muddy rut again. How I wanted out of this “trap”—or did I?

God's kindness is so great, so good, to show us our need. He has his ways of setting us up in real life situations that reveal the problems in our lives. In the midst of the flurry of many medical trips, I was returning from Port with supplies on the Toyota. On our rugged road

from T-Guoave to Ailigue, I met our other truck coming my way, loaded with our workers and (you might guess it) another medical case for the hospital. I sensed my spirit rising up; not another case! I sought to conceal my feelings. You never can. What's there comes to surface sooner or later. I asked a few questions and made some remarks. I forget them exactly. But I shall not soon forget what I saw—the deep hurt and wound upon their faces. It haunted me. As I left, I cried out to God, “Give me another chance.” This dare not continue. I will not keep hurting my friends. If I cannot find rest and freedom I must go back to PA.

That night I climbed the steep hill to my little kay with resolution. I was determined to go the whole way, whatever the cost. Next morning I was up early crying out to God for mercy and deliverance. I said, “God, I can't go on like this.” I sent a letter down the mountain to the other workers via e-mail asking for a meeting.

Before the meeting I felt led to go to the house nearby where Levi, Bruce, and Raymonde stay. I wanted everything clear. There I confessed my impatience, curtness, and lack of love. With tears we all shared together. I repented and confessed. I was a deeply broken, wounded man. This was but the beginning. I then met with my



loving, fellow workers. I told them to be very frank and share their hearts where I hurt them and others. It was difficult at first for these dear younger people to, as it were, expose and rebuke me as an older grandpa. But I wanted God's knife to go deep. We had a painful but healing time of sharing, praying, and weeping. God was indeed cutting deeply.

Next morning I continued struggling. I went down to my little prayer place and tried to find direction and comfort from Psalm 51—David's prayer of repentance. It was difficult to read it and receive it for myself. God kept revealing my heart in its true state, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." For two days I struggled to find total clearing. My heart was shattered so deeply. I went to each one of the missionaries and told them I want everything to be clear. I want to be able to bless you and bless the natives. Again and again I simply said yes to God. That indeed is my heart. All my righteousness is indeed as "filthy rags," very filthy rags. Clothe me with your righteousness. And He did. He also went deeper. I felt a need to publicly share sins and failures to the natives at the morning service. I wanted no stone unturned. That afternoon I met with deacons and opened my heart to them likewise. I

was finally "casting my burden on the Lord," the burden of sin in my failings and then I was finding as Jesus said, "My burden is light."

There were some natives who were a continual "pest" to me, drained me and I had trouble accepting and loving them. I asked the Lord to give me special love for them. Indeed He did. I had offended a deacon's son at T-Guoave one time. I tried to clear it in the past but in vain. But praise God, that very Sunday afternoon he walked into my courtyard. You know when you are clear, then God can work with others too. When I saw him coming, I said in my heart, "God, whatever he says, whatever he asks, I want to take, I will make no defense." There was nothing to take; God had already worked in his heart. We embraced and forgave each other. Oh, how lovely are the ways of God.

In the midst of all this I told God, "I choose to surrender all to you, the trucks, they are

yours, the finances, they are yours. If you want me go back to PA and give up the work, I am ready." I was more concerned about peace, rest, and the grace of God in my life. Yes, God had shattered my life, but He picked up the pieces. May He put it together as He chooses, for His glory. I indeed chose to "commit my way unto the Lord". He promised He would bring it to pass.

Missionaries are very human people. They need your prayers, your love, and your understanding. Praise God, I am a forgiven one clothed in His righteousness.

*For His glory, my humiliation,
E. Harold Herr*

□

*Wherever you ripe fields behold
Waving to God their sheaves of gold,
Be sure some corn of wheat has died,
Some soul has there been crucified,
Someone has wrestled, wept, and prayed,
And fought hell's legions undismayed.*



THE YEAR 2000:

Gifts of Courage, Confirmations, and Concealed Glimpses of the Victory Ahead!

by Daniel Kenaston

Christian greetings to each of you at the end of this monumental year 2000! As I write this, we are in the last couple of days before we begin the new year, and the switch from one year to another is a perfect time to look back over the last year meditating on God's goodness, and look ahead to God's will for us in the year to come. Christy and I have been doing this in a more specific way than normal because of the fact that we arrived here in Ghana on the 26th of December last year, so we are looking back over our first year as missionaries as well as the year 2000. We have been studying the life of Gideon some over the last weeks and have been applying some of what occurred in Gideon's life to our life and ministry here over the past year. Once again we have marveled over God's faithful goodness to us in so many different circumstances, including the birth of our sweet, healthy little daughter 2 weeks ago!! (See the announcement in the last Mission Newsletter), and feel that the story of Gideon encapsulates beautifully the feelings we have when reviewing God's loving guidance and encouragement throughout the whole year.

What I would like to share here is definitely an application to the scriptural account of Gideon, and not strictly my interpretation of this story and its meaning to us as New Testament believers. I am asking you to allow me some freedom to apply these scriptures to our lives over the last year, and maybe you will also see aspects of your own journey in the story of Gideon as we have applied it to ourselves. My desire is that

those of you who have prayed for us throughout this last year would

also join with us in praising God for His blessings during this period and most specifically for all of the "wet fleeces on very dry ground." Walk with me through these "praise ponderings."

God's Calling and Gift of Courage to the Weak-hearted

A quick look at the circumstances surrounding Gideon's call will assure us right from the start that he was not a superman, a spiritual giant full of faith. He was rather a very downcast and doubtful man who was hiding in the winepress threshing grain so that the Midianites would not find it! In his heart there was still an element of faith, but in the face of such difficult times his actions and attitude showed that doubt had gained the upper hand. It would seem to us that Gideon was a hidden, shrinking sort of man, who feared conflict and had a very low view of his own value. But wait, how does the angel address him?; *"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor."* (Judges 6:12) We say to ourselves, "a man of valor?" It is clear by Gideon's responses to the angel's words that he is asking the same question. But the angel continues and says, *"Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel..."* I can almost picture Gideon looking down at his body thinking to himself, "What might is he speak-



ing about?”. How often we have done the same! We have heard the call of God to some work or responsibility, and in our heart we have questioned whether God has gotten the right person.

But in our lives, as in the story before us, God does not answer each of our little doubts and questions. Rather, He sweeps them all away with 5 little words loaded with meaning and power, “*Have not I sent you?*” Hallelujah! In these words we see all that is really important about Gideon. Victory was not to be won through him because of his family status, his personal strength, or his great faith in Jehovah up until now; it was going to be won through him because he was being sent!! When the angel spoke of him as a man of valor, he spoke in the reality of his calling, when he told him to go in the strength he had, he knew that inside of the call of God was all the strength that would be necessary to fulfil all that its accomplishment would require. This is not to say that Gideon had nothing at all to do with it, since we can be certain that God chose a willing, even if not faith-filled individual. But the reality of man’s willingness in no way detracts from the power that lay in the calling of Gideon. Was he a man of small authority? God’s call gave him all the force he needed to command an army. Was he naturally a fearful man? God’s call, confirmed repeatedly, as we will see, gave him the courage that he needed to take on the Midianite army against the incredible odds of 450 to 1!! Oh, the blessed, vital energy in the call of God!

Almost exactly one year ago, as we were preparing to move here, we wrote our first article in which we described the Konkombas and the work that God was calling us to. In that update, we wrote these words, “In every area of our lives we see God’s fingerprints, revealing to us that He has gone before us, and yet we still hear His precious voice behind us saying, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it.’” One year later, we still wholeheartedly attest to the truth of these words! But to be honest with our own weaknesses and God’s grace, there have been many moments, both before and since we have been here, that we have had more of a doubting attitude than one of faith like the penned lines quoted above. There have been many times that we have been faced with a situation that seemed so far beyond our capacity, whether of wisdom, grace, or faith, that we have

wondered deep inside whether maybe God made a mistake in choosing us.

In these moments, we have thought of a thousand reasons why others should be here instead of us, why they were more qualified, etc., and asked ourselves what power it was that God had told us to go in. But, praises to God, in these moments, God does not sit down beside us and try to convince us that we are up to the task at hand. He only reaffirms the truth that brings everything else into perspective, the fact that He sent us here. Oh, the freedom, Oh, the joy, oh, the courage that flows out of that simple truth being applied to our life and ministry once again!! We may not be qualified for the tasks ahead, and indeed we are not, but the simple truth that we have been sent by the Lord Himself, coupled with a willingness to obey in faith, is all the qualification that is needed to fulfil some of God’s greatest victories! Once again, God brings us to the basics; Have I been sent?, and, Am I willing to obey?, and that answers all of the other swirling questions of doubt and inability that would incapacitate us to fulfil God’s plan for us. It is true that we should seek to be qualified in every area possible through prayer, bible study, etc., but there has been such a rest in knowing that we have been called and that that is ENOUGH! We praise God for His repeated gifts of courage throughout this last year, given not with accompanying thunder and lightening, but given through the quiet bedrock of our call and commitment to obey it!

God’s Commencement and Gift of Confirmations of His Will

As we continue to walk through the story of Gideon we move out of the realm of God’s calling and into the commencement of actual obedience. Gideon now begins to follow through with some of the call that God has just given to him. He moves forward, somewhat timidly, to break down an idol grove and builds an alter to the Lord on the spot. Then the Midianites begin massing for another offensive, camping against Israel. In verse 34 we read, “*But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet....*” We see in Gideon a willingness to obey, a yieldedness that allowed the spirit of God to control him, yet we still see some of the



same doubt and fear creeping up into his heart as the soldiers begin to gather around him that we saw above when the angel met him the first time. Remember that he watched the angel do a miracle in front of his eyes, he saw how the Lord protected him from the crowd who wanted to kill him for smashing their grove. He experienced all of this, yet in this decisive hour when the thousands of newly recruited soldiers began to look to him for direction, he felt a need for confirmation. The beautiful thing is that God, in His mercy, gave it to him not once, but several times! God saw that Gideon was sincere, saw from his obedience so far that he was willing, only he still struggled with some doubts about whether he had really heard the voice of God. He lovingly gave to His servant the needed confirmation that would calm his doubts and inspire his faith, a visible sign that he could feel. A sheepskin laid out at night; in the morning, dry ground all around and a bowl full of water wrung out of the fleece! Then God reversed it the next night, proving once again both His calling and command to Gideon, and His longsuffering guidance to those who want to obey!!

This is the specific application that initially gripped my heart in relation to our lives here over the last year. I stand continually amazed at the mercy and gentleness of God in His dealings with us when He knows that in our heart of hearts we want to obey Him! When we look at these past months, we feel that the picture of dry ground all around with Gideon squeezing a bowl full of water out of the fleece describes perfectly our experience. All that we left to come here, the circumstances of life that we now face everyday, the strains of ministry, the heat and sometimes ill health, the adjustments we have had to make, all of these are “dry ground” so to speak, things that could take away from a sense of joy and surety that we are in the right place. But, if I may say it again, to be honest with God’s goodness to us, our daily experience is not at all one of “dry ground.” We feel as though we daily go out and find the fleece of God’s grace, joy, and contentment in our lives soaking wet with God’s goodness and we squeeze out yet another bowl full!!

When we do struggle (and we do at times), with whether we are supposed to be here or are cut out for this job, we look once again to the daily

fleece, and find ourselves filled with the assurance again that though sometimes the going is tough, we could never find this joy, delight, and satisfaction in our lives if we were not living in His will. Let me hasten to say, lest I be misunderstood, that I am not referring to everything being rosy as an indication of being in God’s will, for if that were the case, we would be on the next plane home! Rather, I am speaking about the inner sense of peace, joy, and contentment that is unshakable, though the outer circumstances are not conducive to these feelings. But, “When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way”!! His smile on our lives, seen in the little physical blessings He sends, or in the inner ones He gives to us when we need His gentle confirmation, is so very, very wonderful and the ecstasy of walking in it is beyond compare. I am sure you know that I am not saying we always obey, or that we never wander from God’s will for us; I am rather rejoicing, not in OUR staying in God’s will, but in HIS goodness to continually confirm to us that we are right where He wants us, though the surrounding circumstances would say otherwise. Space will not allow specific examples, but suffice it to say that there have been many such occurrences in the last year. God’s confirmation into our hearts as we commence the fulfillment of His plan for us here has been our lifeline at times throughout this year, and we give Him praise for His gentle goodness to us in this area!

God’s Commands and Gift of a Concealed Glimpse of the Victory Ahead

Follow the story of Gideon yet once more with me; after the double confirmation in the wet and dry fleece, Gideon immediately leads his army towards the enemy camp. Moving forward with this army of 32,000 to fight an army of 135,000 is a real step of obedient faith, but God is not done stretching Gideon’s trust in Him! He commands Gideon to remove from his army those that are afraid, and when Gideon obeys, more than two-thirds of his army leaves! Gideon continues to obey in faith as God whittles his army down to a mere 300 troops, and he is camped with them,



poised for attack, just above the huge enemy camp. In the middle of the night comes the command, *“Get up, go down to the army of Midian, I have delivered it over to you.”* Remember with me the fact that when Gideon asked God for the 2 confirmations that He would rescue Israel through his army, Gideon was surrounded, not by a small group of 300, but by an army of 32,000! For God to win victory with that number seemed to be possible if you looked at it with faith, and Gideon had even obeyed God as he pared down the force to only 300, but now he needed another assurance, another signboard on the way that convinced him that he was indeed hearing from God. And once again, the beautiful thing is that God knew what His servant needed, and He did not chide or reprove him for his lack of confidence; He did not even wait until Gideon asked for a confirmation. In chapter 7, verses 10 and 11, God said to him, *“But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Purah thy servant down to the host: and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thy hand be strengthened...”* God sent him down for a hidden preview of the victory that was to be won, gave him the opportunity to look behind the scenes and see the ways in which God was already working to insure the final victory, even though Gideon’s men were still sleeping up on the mountain. This concealed glimpse of what was about to happen, this undercover intelligence that only God could provide, was exactly what Gideon needed and he went back, woke his men, and went on to claim the overwhelming victory for the “sword of the Lord and of Gideon” that we all know about! What an incredible story of God’s longsuffering guidance to help His servant to fulfil His will, and what a marvelous testimony of the power of God to take a weak but willing vessel and outfit it for His purposes!!

As we close out this article today on the back door of the year 2000 and on the threshold of 2001, the above saga of Gideon is our personal experience. We have begun our work here following God’s commands, but as we continue to go deeper into the heart and culture of our people, and work in an ever widening area, we are confronted with the enormity of both the task and the enemy. At times this realization, along with all of the problems and challenges that come with ministry,

threaten to remove us from the path of God’s will for us here by making us pull back to our comfort zone. We do desire to see the Kingdom of God raised up here in the hearts and lives of the Konkombas, and we are willing to obey, only at times we would rather stay in our tent on the mountain than to go out to face the hordes of our evil enemy. We feel at times that our numbers are too small, both in experience and spiritual power, to effectively fight to see the church of Christ raised up here. But, in these times, God is faithful, and we rejoice that Gideon’s God is our God!!

In the same way that God lovingly allowed His servant the reassurance that he needed to go forward in faith, He continues to give us little glimpses of the victory that is ahead. He allows us to see the beauty of His character in the life of a Konkomba believer here and there, He gives us the encouragement of hearing the foundations of evil begin to shake in several villages, and He continues to give us visions in our hearts of the future church that He desires to raise up here, standing firmly against the evil that surges around us! In all of these ways and more He confirms in our hearts the fact that we are here at His command, and that victory, though not always apparent on the surface, will be the final outcome of our labors here! How we thank him for His continued gentle guidance of us, calling us unmistakably to be here, commanding us to step out in faith, and assuring us with His confirmations when we are discouraged! Though we may have our struggles, the overarching expression of our hearts as we close this year is expressed in the words of this song;

“Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, Just to take him at His word; Just to rest upon His promise; Just to know, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’

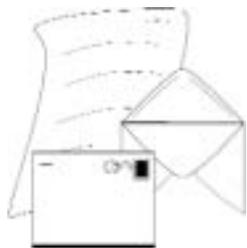
I’m so glad I learned to trust thee, Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend; And I know that thou art with me, wilt be with me to the end.

Jesus, Jesus, how we trust you, How we’ve proved you o’er and o’er! Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! Oh, for grace to trust you more!”

*In praise of past faithfulness, and hope for the future,
Daniel & Christy and Abigail Kenaston*

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Precious Letters from Our Readers



We thank God for the many letters of counsel and encouragement we have been receiving. It is the only way we can evaluate our progress. Keep them coming. Our desire is to foster a free flow of edification, inspiration, and burden; from us to you, and you to us. That way we can pass some of the blessings on to the others who are reading. We would love to hear from you in any of the following ways.

-  A meaningful lesson in family devotions that you can pass on to other fathers.
-  A testimony for *The Blessing Corner* where you found God's blessing in some area of obedience.
-  A question that can be answered to the edification of all.
-  An area of spiritual growth, obtained by one of the exercises suggested in the magazine.

A word of encouragement or counsel about *The Remnant*, or any section of it.

Dear Remnant,

Thank-you for all the effort you all are putting into *The Heartbeat of The Remnant*. The Sept./Oct. issue was tremendous, from cover to cover. The articles on *Hudson Taylor's Home Life*, and *A Season Alone with God* were highlights for me. My husband and I were able to get away for a weekend to practice a season alone with God. I wish there were words to tell you how the Holy Spirit brought healing to our tired spirits. He also taught us some gems of truth as my husband did a Bible Study on what grace really is. Praise the Lord! Thank-you for

pressing forward to the goal. Please put us on the Remnant mailing list.

*Don & Karin Litchfield
Kokomo, IN*



Dear Remnant,

We would like to thank you sincerely for sending *The Remnant* magazine to our family. I can't tell you how much of an encouragement it has been to us. We are growing, learning, and changing through your ministry, and we thank our Lord for that. My husband especially

appreciates the fresh ideas for teaching the children. They are fun and the message really gets through to them and they remember! We are really enjoying this. As always, your feature articles are truly "life changing" when applied. Thank-you!

*Stephen & Laurie Stamper
North East, MD*



Dear Brother Andrew,

I want to take a few moments and express my heart about the new *Remnants*. I have been challenged by them, and enjoy them thoroughly. To read through one slowly, observing the sketches and photos, to feel a very vibrant heartbeat pulsing through them, is like sitting through a week of evangelistic meetings.

I would like to make one suggestion. When you write a book report, you should include an address and/or phone number of where to get it. Maybe even give the current price. It's like giving people one bite of fantastic dessert, without giving them the recipe for it. I really am savoring them with joy. *The Remnant* HAS a heartbeat again.

*Linda Weaver
Clark Range, TN*

Guarding the Spirit of Your Home

Beloved Sisters, do not judge and criticize your husbands,
or your husbands will judge and criticize you.
Beloved Sisters, do not judge and look down upon your husbands,
or God will judge you.

To the degree that you judge and find fault with your husbands,
to that degree shall God and others judge you.

Why do you focus on the speck in your husbands' eye,
and you do not see the beam in your own eye?

Why do you say to your husband,
"Let me correct the speck in your eye?"
and behold, there is a big timber in your eye.

**If you do this, you are a hypocrite,
you chase away the Spirit from your home.**
Why do you judge and scrutinize your husband's
actions?

For he has a judge who will correct him.

Who do you think you are, to take God's place and pass judgement?
Beloved Sisters, let us stop judging and finding fault with our husbands.
Let us stop speaking evil of them, and questioning their every move.
For what ever a wife soweth, that shall she also reap.

The Heartbeat of

The Remnant

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