

# BIBLE MONITOR

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“For the faith once delivered unto the saints”

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OUR MOTTO: Spiritual in life and Scriptural in practice.	OUR WATCHWORD: Go into all the world and preach the gospel.
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OUR AIM: Be it our aim to be more sanctified, more righteous,  
more holy, and more perfect through faith and obedience.

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## ALMIGHTY SOV'REIGN OF THE SKIES

Almighty sov'reign of the skies,  
To thee let songs of gladness rise,  
Each grateful heart its tribute bring,  
And ev'ry voice thy goodness sing.

From thee our choicest blessings flow,  
Life, health and strength thy hands bestow;  
The daily good thy creatures share  
Springs from thy providential care.

The rich profusion nature yields,  
The harvest waving o'er the fields,  
The cheering light, refreshing show'r,  
Are gifts from thy exhaustless store.

At thy command the vernal bloom  
Revives the world from winter's gloom,  
The summer's heat, the fruit matures,  
And autumn all her treasures pours.

—Isaac Watts

## PASS THE TIME OF YOUR SOJOURNING HERE IN FEAR

The Apostle Peter, writing to believers who were unknown to him, reminded them (I Peter 1:17) they had been called to be holy after the pattern of God's holiness. God set the standard of conduct high and He also set the terms of judgment high when they failed to adjust themselves to His standard. They were warned that every person would face a time of judgment concerning their faithfulness to Him. There would be condemnation for evil and commendation for good.

In light of God's dealings with each individual, all should be both afraid of Him because of His power of eternal condemnation and in awe of Him because of Who He is.

Fear can be a righteous fear of what God is able to do when He deals with men in His wrath. Fear can be the awe that His Person and Majesty inspires within a person.

Peter reminds his readers that their past lives had been full of evil deeds that were dishonorable and offensive to Him. Writing to us he would remind us that our lives before we chose His sacrifice for our sins were likewise offensive to a holy God. Now we recognize our past sins and dishonoring activities. We cannot undo those deeds but we can be thankful they are covered by the blood of Jesus.

Our time of sojourning here is of an unknown length. Many

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meet with sudden accident or consuming disease that shortens their lives. Others, not appearing sturdy or healthy, may survive far beyond the time expected. None know the day of their passing. Knowing that life is uncertain, it behooves each to make the best choices early. Being aware of God's might and wrath is to be forewarned about the uncertainty of life. When people realize the uncertainty of life, they should choose to honor the God who sits upon His Throne of Judgment. It seems compelling that avoiding that judgment should influence the choices and activities of life. Why risk the loss not only of life but also of eternal, Heavenly joy?

Even better than serving God through the fear of judgment and loss, is serving God through worship and adoration, not only of His might and power but also of His love and Grace. Is our faith in Him strong enough to produce lives that reflect who He is?

Sojourning presents the idea of an extended time of service. It is being settled in, like we feel when at home in the midst of family and friends. Sojourning avoids the pressure

of struggle and despair. As sojourners we are involved for the entire journey.

Although our sojourn as believers is of unknown duration, we are committed to God throughout that time. At times, we may be more inspired by His great power on an eternal basis. At other times, we may be more inspired by resting in Who He is. He is the one worthy of worship and prayerfulness. He is worthy of our total service and love.

As Peter writes to these believers, he reminds them of their former worship practices. They had worshipped before idols, formed by men, from wood, metal or pottery. They had worshipped animals, the sun and moon, and even immaterial ghosts and goblins. He tells them that they no longer need to fear idols of whatever shape. They are now called to worship the living God of Heaven.

Peter's message to these believers reminds us that we also owe our worship and fear to the living God of Heaven. He has provided to us the means of eternal life through the sacrifice of His own Son.

The service and fear that we bring Him through not only our

attitudes but also our actions show what we think of Him. Do our daily choices reflect our actual view of Him? Are we spiritually informed as we make our choices? There are many choices we must make about various activities that we engage in. Do the choices we make show where our hearts and minds are concerning the level of worship and fear we have towards Him?

This Thanksgiving season makes a wonderful time to allow ourselves to fully recognize who He is. He is not just a supplier of blessings. He is not just a buddy we can influence by our friendship. We are dealing with

the Giver of all that is sacred, holy and lovable in this world and in our lives. We should express our thanks through our attitude of allowing Him to direct our daily lives.

At this season are we only thankful for material blessings that have come our way? Are we aware of His call upon our lives, hearts and minds? What would be a better acknowledgement of our thankfulness than to express what we owe to Him in our daily duties?

How do you express your fear of God? In terror; in worship; in thankfulness?

M. C. Cook

## A FRIEND

As I have read the following verses many times over, the phrase "the friend of God" caught my attention, but I never really spent a lot of time on it until it intrigued me some time back. So I started studying it and ended up starting to preach on the life of Abraham.

I marvel at the faith of a man who had no written word, left everything to follow a God who called him to walk by faith and gave him the promise that He

would take care of him. In the end, he was called the friend of God. What does it take to influence God so He will call me His friend?

These verses tell us what God thought of Abraham. James 2:23, "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." Isaiah 41:8, "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have

chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." II Chronicles 20:7, "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?"

As we look at the life of Abraham in Genesis 11, he is living with his father's clan in Ur of the Chaldees. Although there was no written word that we know of, he would have heard the testimony of his ancestors, even possibly from Noah, himself, who would have heard the stories of his forefathers all the way back to Enosh, Adam's grandson. Abraham followed his father to Haran and there heard the call of God (at age 75). Genesis 12:1, "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." And God gave him a promise in Genesis 12:2-3, "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Abram leaves with his

possessions, wife, nephew, servants and animals on a journey not sure where he would end up and not having a place to call home. He travels to Egypt looking for food for his animals. He knew also that he might be challenged for his lovely wife so he makes an agreement with her to lie about their marital status (imagine having this discussion with your mate? also the fear in Sarah's heart and mind when she is taken from her husband.) Some would be critical of Abraham for his lack of faith and trust in God in this situation, but how often do we fail to follow the Lord when He calls us to follow Him?

He leaves Egypt a wealthier man and comes back to the land of Canaan where there is unrest between the herdsmen of Lot and Abraham. Abraham shows leadership and self denial as he lets his nephew Lot choose where he wants to live, and he chooses the plains. After Lot leaves him, God makes the promise clearer in Genesis 13:14-18, "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward,

and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord." I can see Abraham looking across the plain and seeing a dust storm rising and thinking how do you count dust, I don't even have a child to carry on my name and you say my descendants will be that many? But he follows God and his relationship continues to grow with God.

Abraham is called to rescue his nephew Lot and see the faithfulness of God's protection and help and then in chapter 15:1-6, "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of

Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." The discussion between God and Abraham can't fully be appreciated till you have the opportunity to be somewhere with no electricity and a moonless night when you can look at the stars and see them so clearly and you begin to understand what might have gone through Abraham's mind. God how is this going to be? When the test comes in our lives God wants us to simply trust Him as He is, able to keep His promises. In this chapter God also establishes the blood covenant with Abraham and gives the prophecy of the 400 years of slavery his descendants will serve in Egypt.

I can see Abraham taking

Sarah one night by the hand and taking her to the top of a little hill outside the camp and telling her the promise of God that their descendants will be that many, and her response, I am seventy-five and you think that this is possible? It hasn't happened yet and we might as well not try. Maybe if you have another wife, my maid (Hagar), she can help us to accomplish this task. Abraham following Sarah's suggestion results in the birth of Ishmael.

This brings an adversarial relationship between Sarah and Hagar. Hagar leaves but God tells her to go back and serve her master and gave a promise to her concerning her son. Genesis 16:9-12. "And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shall bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael: because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. {Ishmael: that is, God shall hear} And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every

man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." While Ishmael is not the promised seed God does pass a blessing on to him because of his relationship to Abraham. We see the results of this lack of waiting on God from this point in history to this day with all the fighting between the Israelites and the nations descended from Ishmael.

Thirteen years later God reaffirms the promise again and gives new names; to Abram, (high exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude of nations) Sarai (princess) to Sarah (mother of nations). The institution of the covenant of circumcision that would set the Jewish race apart from the rest of the world at that time, and point to the Messiah that would circumcise the foreskin of our hearts representing the old man and gives us a new life.

In chapter 18 and 19 Abraham sees the three angels coming and shows hospitality to them who tell him of the time of Isaac's birth and also the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. We see the concern and love Abraham has for his nephew Lot and pleads with the Lord for Lot and his family.

This shows us the character of the man that he remembered Lot and possibly heard about the wickedness of the city and continued to intercede in prayer on his behalf.

It's a sad commentary that Lot was not able to impact even one person to follow God in all those years. When Lot escaped the city he stopped on the mountain in a cave in fear and depression and fell into sin instead of continuing the journey to his uncle for comfort. When discouragement and depression come upon us we should never stop in a cave but should pursue the Lord and a good friend to help us overcome.

Although Abraham was a Godly man and was called the friend of God he was not without sin or mistakes. He again denied that Sarah was his wife but rather his sister. He feared for his own life instead of trusting God whom he had been following all these years, yet when I look at my own life I fail to trust God at times even though He has been faithful to me. God continues to provide protection even when we don't trust Him. He has a way of showing us that He is enough for us to trust in and there is nothing else that can suffice.

God blesses Abraham and Sarah with a son that they named Isaac which means to laugh, thirty years after the first time God promised him to Abraham. When Isaac is weaned there is a celebration and Ishmael begins to taunt or harass Isaac, possibly saying you aren't the first born, I am. This infuriates Sarah who says that Ishmael and Hagar have to go. He should not have any part of the inheritance.

After spending seventeen years bringing up Ishmael, it is a hard thing for Abraham to do but God tells him that it is His will. Genesis 21:13, "And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed." So Hagar and Ishmael leave and Abraham begins to raise his son and to teach him how God called him and how He has taken care of every detail and the promises of God and how Isaac fit into that picture.

In chapter 22 we find a testing taking place. Genesis 22:1-2, "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest,



and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." The word "tempt" would be better translated "put to the test". During the process of God putting Abraham to the test, we see if he was willing to offer up his son. Abraham was putting God to the test. Hebrews 11:17-19, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." It was a test for Isaac to be willing to allow his father to put him on the altar without a struggle, being around thirty years old, and know that his father's God was able to raise him up from the dead if need be. All three passed the test and we have the story of God's provision and a father and son's ultimate trust in the God they were serving. This story of Abraham and Isaac is a type of God the Father and His only begotten Son who He took to possibly the same mountain and offered up his Son. But this

time there was no substitute. He was the supreme sacrifice.

The next scene is the death of Sarah the life-long love of Abraham and mother of Isaac being one hundred twenty seven years old she is the only woman's age, death and burial that is mentioned in the Bible. She walked with Abraham for over sixty years in the Promised Land looking for the promise when all hope of a child seemed to disappear and seemed an impossibility. Genesis 18:14, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." God opened her womb and blessed her with a son Isaac, who she had the blessing of raising and watching him grow into manhood for about thirty six years. This miraculous conception is similar as the conception of Jesus. Sarah was told that she would have the promised son and through her lineage the miraculous conception of Mary was the culmination of the promised Messiah. Abraham buys the only piece of real estate he ever owned for a burying place for his wife and future family from the sons of Heth.

In chapter 24 Abraham is

concerned about a Godly wife for Isaac so he tasked his trusted servant with the responsibility of going to his family for a wife for him. The servant prepared the gifts and provisions for the approximately three hundred mile trip on the flying feet of camels. During the journey he is trying to figure out how he will know who the woman would be that he should bring home. He prays to God and devises a plan that only God would be able to bring to pass. This servant served beside Abraham for a long time and saw the faith of his master in the God he served. Eliezer possibly went along when Abraham offered Isaac for a sacrifice.

The servant asked for a drink from Rebekah and she responds as God fulfills his plan exactly the way he proposed it to Him and he worships and rejoices that God was faithful to answer even him. The servant then shares his identity with her and she runs to her family. The servant is welcomed and shares his mission with them. After a feast of celebration together, Rebekah is willing and ready to go and receives a parting blessing from her family. On the way home I believe she asked

lots of questions of the servant about her husband to be and his family. As they approach home she meets Isaac and is welcomed home and the marriage is consummated, and Isaac is comforted of the loss of his mother.

Chapter 25 brings us to the close of Abraham's life. He gives a blessing to the rest of his children and sends them to the east and gives the inheritance to his promised son Isaac. He had the opportunity to live with Isaac for about fifty-five years being a blessing to Jacob and Esau. I can see him sitting in the shade of his tent telling his grandchildren stories of his life's experiences with the God of heaven who called him out of his home country and led him to and through the promised land here on earth but as the scripture says in Hebrews 11:8-10, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which

hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Abraham died and was buried with his loving wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, his earthly possession, and moved on to the real Promised Land with his Friend, God. It causes me to wonder what they have been doing since the reunion in Heaven. It also encourages me to be faithful to the call of God in my life to seek His kingdom first instead of the things of this world, looking for that city where Jesus went to prepare a mansion for me. Could it be said of me that I am the friend of God?

For most humans it is important to have friends. Children get excited when they are permitted to have friends over to spend the night or weekend with them and they will start planning what they want to do

when they come. Sometimes friendships end because of actions or words that cause hurts and they don't want to be a friend anymore. Sometimes friendships are separated by a move to another area but remain connected. And then there are friendships that last a life time and distance cannot stop it. We all cherish these types of friendships. Most parents encourage their children at an early age to build friendships with many people and to include our friend's friends in the activities and so our network of friends continues to enlarge. Today you might get a request to be a friend on social media, but with God we get the invitation to be His friend by accepting His Son as our Savior. This friendship will not only last a lifetime but for all eternity.

Brother Merle Sweitzer

## **THANKSGIVING TO THE TUNE OF OBEDIENCE**

For many people Thanksgiving is the time to do exactly what you want to do. After all, it is a time to celebrate, have fun and stuff yourself while doing it. Extravagance is okay if it is a celebration of something, anything, that makes me happy.

Perhaps the lowest rung on the Thanksgiving ladder has to do with actually giving thanks for the right things. Sure, people are thankful for superficial things. If those things never happened it would never change their life. But to be thankful for those things

that really are significant is one of the great challenges we have in our culture today.

Celebrating Thanksgiving has become more of a secular holiday than anything else. Our secular world is taking over everything, including some of our religious celebrations.

Just think of Christmas and it is hard to think of it without thinking of Santa Claus. What I want to know is what in the world does Santa Claus really have to do with celebrating Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ?

The beginning of our spirit of Thanksgiving is in knowing God. This is where it all starts and nothing really happens significantly in our life until we have this knowledge of God.

The knowledge of God has to do with intimate personal experiences with God. Knowing about God is one thing and it is admirable, but not enough. Really knowing God is what is most important in our life.

I can be thankful about knowing about God. That is one level of Thanksgiving and most people are at that level. Most believe there is a God because they were told somewhere down the line that there is a God. Rare is the person who really knows

God personally and intimately and not by hearsay.

Thanksgiving begins with clearly understanding what is thanks-worthy. I am sure everybody has their different ideas along this line. What a person is thankful for tells a lot about his character. Evaluate a person's spirit of Thanksgiving and what he or she is thankful for and you will discover a lot about that person.

Looking at my own life, what am I really thankful for? What is it that really brings out of me a deeply thankful Spirit?

It is one thing to be thankful for what we know and for what we have and for our friends. That certainly deserves a good level of giving of thanks. The biggest level, I believe, is being thankful for God, more specifically, for knowing God.

Now, the only way I am going to be thankful for God is to get to know God and the only way I am going to get to know God personally is to commit myself to the Word of God in intentional reading and meditation. One of the most important aspects of my reading and meditating on the Word of God can be summed up in one word, obedience.

In order for me to really

know God personally, I need to be obedient to the Word of God, which opens up the door for me to really experience God.

Anybody can be thankful for the tangible things in life. Anybody can be thankful for all the gifts they receive. There is a level of Thanksgiving that rises above the tangible and pierces through that mystical element into God. That area is so indefinable that we need to come into that area through the door of obedience.

Many times our obedience is not based upon our understanding. Often our obedience is based upon our willingness to trust God even though we may not know or understand the outcome.

Many people rarely associate obedience with Thanksgiving. However, I think obedience enables me to be thankful at a level far above most people today. Obedience is the door that leads me to experiencing God.

Then it comes down to this. If I am only thankful one day of the year, I really do not know what Thanksgiving is all about. My Thanksgiving should be every day of the year. I am not against setting

aside one day to collectively celebrate Thanksgiving, but that is only icing on the cake. My Thanksgiving is a daily, day-by-day experience.

To really know God leads me to be genuinely thankful for my salvation, which I believe is the real beginning of Thanksgiving. To know what God has delivered me from and to be thankful for what I do not have, even though I deserve it, is really the epitome of a Thanksgiving spirit.

It is easy to be thankful for what we have but sometimes it is a little more difficult to be thankful for what we do not have. Moreover, as a Christian I need to be thankful that I do not get what I deserve. Because I have been obedient to the Lord and have surrendered myself to Jesus Christ, I now come into that realm of divine grace that gives me what God wants me to have. The key to all of that is obedience.

To know the amazing grace of God is really the beginning of being thankful to God. I am not so much thankful for what I have, as I am thankful for Who has me.

James L. Snyder  
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## WHAT DID JESUS DO?

“And he healed them all...”

Matthew 12:15

He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. (Acts 10:38) He spoke words of comfort to those in trouble. He can do anything. He is the Son of God. There is no limit to what He has done, and to what He can do.

Do not doubt Him. Do not trust in personalities or any mere man. Do not trust in political entities or organizations. As ministers, we must preach Jesus Christ as the only foundation for our faith, and the Bible, rightly divided, which is God’s message to mankind.

What did Jesus do? He attracted needy people. People who were well in body did not need Him, or at least, that is what they thought. People who were well fed did not need Him, but it was not the food that was important. Many followed Jesus for the loaves and fishes, even some of the disciples thought that was all there was, but there was so much more. He pulled people away from established religions and because of this He threatened the status quo. Unfortunately those who were in the established religions were not meeting the basic needs of the people that Jesus could provide.

*We only see a little of the ocean  
As we stand on the sandy shore.  
But out there beyond the horizon  
There’s more, there’s more.*

*We can only see a little of God’s  
loving:  
A few rich treasures from this  
mighty store,  
But out there beyond the horizon,  
There’s more, there’s more.*

“They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:23. Every day with Jesus is an experience. Every day is new. Let us praise Him.

What did Jesus do? What does Jesus do every minute of every day to those who trust in Him and follow in His steps? “But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.” (Phil. 4:18)

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.” (John 21:25)

Brother Lynn H. Miller  
Mohler’s Congregation

## “BREAKING DORMANCY”

Renewed excitement comes as the first flowers of spring break through the crust of earth. After sleeping for the winter, they break dormancy and once again bring life and color to our world! The spring air becomes filled with their fragrances and you can almost feel your spirits lifted as you breathe in the fresh rejuvenation of spring.

We too go through periods of dormancy in our spiritual life. These are periods of our life when we stop growing spiritually and enter a complacent sleep. This is typically frustrating to the Christian and causes us to be greatly discouraged and disappointed in ourselves. We recollect how we once were on fire for God and thriving spiritually.

So, how do we, like the plants, break dormancy? How do we arrive at the place where we are alive again and experiencing growth? Psalm one tells us, *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his*

*law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”* This passage teaches us that for spiritual growth to happen we need to separate ourselves from the world and those who tempt us to do wrong. Further, we must delve into the Word of God diligently and there keep our focus. It is then that we will break dormancy and begin to grow and become fruitful as the tree that is mentioned in this scripture. If we stay in this place, we will not wither, but continue to grow and prosper.

Like a plant, when we stop growing we begin dying. As mentioned, we must diligently and continually be studying and practicing the Word of God to stay alive. Christianity is a growing experience. II Peter 1:5-9 teaches us that we are to continually add to our faith and grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ, *“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance*

*patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”* When this scripture is fulfilled in our

lives we will never be dormant or “unfruitful”.

It is imperative that we take heed to the scriptures that teach us how to continually be growing, else we find ourselves in dormant slumber. But, don’t be disheartened faithful pilgrim, for we like the plants of spring can wake from that slumber, begin to grow again, and break dormancy!

Brother Marlin Carpenter

## OBTAINING THE PRIZE

Schoolteachers sometimes have their students run races at recess. All the students line up at the starting line with their faces toward the finish line. The teacher says, “One, two, three, go!” and the runners are off. There is a spiritual race for each one of us, as Christians, to run as well. This begins at our conversion and ends when God calls us through death or at Christ’s second coming. When running the race, there are prizes for the winners.

When one of my grandsons was little, he would say, “Grandma! I’ll beat you to the house!” or “Grandma, I’ll race you around the house.”

I would reply with, “OK, GO!” Away we would run and Grandma would always win. I would see that little fellow running towards me and I’d gather him up and give him a big hug! My grandson would say, “Grandma, one of these days I’ll win.” Now he is becoming a blossoming youth and he no longer wants to run a race with Grandma. I’m trusting God that he is looking for that better prize.

Now picture with me a playground race where the pupils start out right, but they run in all directions, some running in circles, some going out of the boundaries that are set up, some going backwards and



even crossing the starting line. What confusion that would be! Now the schoolteacher is really concerned. "Don't they want to win?" But, what about us? Can an aimless runner, in the Christian race, expect a prize in the end? The Apostle Paul wrote "So run," – undistracted by the sights and sounds of this world and unconfused by all the different and mixed-up directions that others may be running – "that ye may obtain." (I Corinthians 9:24)

Jesus Christ is our teacher and He runs with each of us every day if we invite Him. He is always beside us to help us get a good start, to help us in keeping our minds focused and

to persevere onward and upward without stopping. He is there to give us a prize after we cross the finish line. Thankfully, with Christ and the Holy Spirit's aid, we all can reach the goal and win the prize as we run today.

What is the prize for all the winners? Well, it is certainly HEAVEN! The Bible also speaks of crowns: "of righteousness," "of glory," "of life," and "an incorruptible (crown)." Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Revelation 3:11) **Run with the Son till the prize is won.**

Shirley Frick  
Greenville, OH

## PHIL'S PONDERINGS

*As we "study to shew ourselves approved unto God"*

November 2018 Study Questions

### **November 4 – I Pet. 4:12-19**

Why shouldn't you think that your suffering for Christ is something strange?

Can you imagine rejoicing in your suffering?

How have you felt or how might you feel if someone ridiculed you for your faith in Christ?

What are some of your first thoughts when you experience suffering?

How do you connect suffering for Christ, the revealing of Christ, and rejoicing in Christ?

Do you think that those who have suffered the most for Christ will rejoice

the most in His glorious revealing?

Why does judgment begin with the people of God?

**Commentary:** Normal is a moving target. What seems normal to one person is very abnormal for someone else. We sometimes console ourselves by saying, “When things get back to normal...” More often than not a new normal takes its place. Suffering for Christ is something we read about in the Bible or hear about those who are experiencing persecution. But for most of us it seems very abnormal. It wasn’t for Peter and the Christians he wrote to. Suffering was going to be the new normal. Suffering is not something we think of as a blessing or as something to rejoice in. But Peter tells us that is exactly what we must do. But how? The sufficiency of Christ in revealing to our hearts the depths of His love and mercy for us is often only experienced in the cauldron of fiery trials. Only in Christ can suffering and joy be known as steadfast companions to the glory of God.

### **November 11 – I Pet. 5:1-14**

How broad is Peter’s experience that authenticates his exhortation?

What three attitudes define an elder’s character?

What goal motivates an elder or overseer?

Why does Peter single out the young people?

What are the benefits of submitting to one another?

What makes casting all your care upon God so difficult?

How does God’s grace perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you in the aftermath of suffering?

**Commentary:** “...all of you be submissive (subject) to one another and be clothed with humility.” This seems to sum up Peter’s words to us in chapter 5 as he closes this epistle. His exhortation to the elders is really a call to submit to his exhortation and to be clothed with humility in their serving. Otherwise they will be exactly what Peter exhorts them to not be: full of themselves, irritated with the demands placed upon them, using their influence for material gain, and looking for ways to gain more power for themselves. True shepherds know whom they serve and learn to serve willingly, eagerly, always hoping to be an example of the one true Shepherd

from whom they will receive the reward that lasts for all eternity. We all are to share the selflessness of Christ that overcomes life's obstacles, including suffering, that we may be restored, established, strengthened, and settled in Christ.

### **November 18 – I Chr. 16:17-36**

Is giving God thanks a common occurrence?

When you consider God's deeds do you focus on experiences in your life or prior to your life?

What do you need most to remember?

As you hear these words of David and through David from God what touches your heart most?

Who do you want to hear your song of praise?

How are you giving God the glory He is due?

**Commentary:** Often we speak of the mechanics associated with our worship services. When do we sing and what songs, pray, preach and anything else that is a part of our usual routine. But worship is not a to-do list that can simply be scratched off. Genuine worship engages both our hearts and minds. Our affections and emotions are touched as well our intellects. Worship is an integral part of our knowing God and not just about God. Let your heart soar as well as your voice as you sing. Don't just kneel in prayer but humble yourself before the Lord. Don't just listen to the message but listen to the One who sent the message. Say, "Amen!" and praise the LORD.

### **November 25 – II Pet. 1:1-11**

How do we obtain the "like, precious faith?"

What sort of math most pleases God?

What have we received from the Lord and how?

How do we become partakers of the divine nature?

What is being referenced at the beginning of verse 5 by, "And beside this"? NKJ/ESV say, "For this very reason."

What sort of vision is necessary in order to obtain this fruitfulness in your life?

What do the early polling numbers say about your calling and election? Are we satisfied with just barely making it into the kingdom? What does Peter recommend?

**Commentary:** Do you want an abundant Christian life? Peter tells us that God is most willing to fill up our lives with His life so that we can live abundantly through Him. But we must want this life and dedicate ourselves to receiving what God says He wants to give us. It is easy to become slack, for our vision tends to become short sighted, to be preoccupied with what pleases our momentary needs. May our eyes see God's abundant blessings from afar. May we persevere until we have obtained. May we want more of all that God offers to us in Christ Jesus. And then abundance unimaginable.

Brother Phil Franklin  
Modesto, CA

## GREATER BARNs

Rudy Cover  
Luke 12:16-21

Would you like to have a million dollars? Most people would.

One time Jesus told about a certain rich man. This man's farm had produced so much his barns couldn't hold it all. The man said to himself, "What shall I do because I have no room to bestow my fruits?" After thinking it over he decided what to do and said, "I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul you have much goods laid up for many years;

take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.'"

This man was very selfish. He wasn't thinking how much good he could do by helping somebody else. He was only thinking of himself. God had blessed him with riches, land and bountiful crops. It would have been easy for him to have given some of the riches to help others. If he would have sold his surplus, he wouldn't have needed to build greater barns. Maybe he wanted to keep his crops till he could have received a better price. We don't know

what all he had in mind but we do know he was only thinking about himself.

He didn't care or have any concern for his neighbors or those around him. He was like some people are today. His fortune was made – enough for many years. He had what he always wanted. Now he could retire – take it easy – live it up.

What do you think of a man like that? I don't know what you think but I know what God said, "But God said unto him, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee: then whose shall these things be, which you have provided?'" Jesus said, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

The only way to be rich toward God is to help somebody in need. Jesus said, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me." "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

When God blesses us with the good things of life He wants us to help others too. We don't know how long we will live here. When God calls us we will have to go and we won't be able to take anything with us. Like the rich man who would build greater barns, we will have to leave it all.

Selected from the  
September 15, 1979  
issue of the Bible Monitor

## IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS

Maxine E. Surbey  
I Thessalonians 5:18

"May I go play with Jane and Keith?" asked Brenda of her mother, who was quietly sewing in her favorite rocker.

"Yes, dear, only be sure to be back in time for supper," replied Mother.

Brenda skipped happily on her way. She was soon tripping up the steps of the neighbor's

porch. "Hi, Brenda," called Jane, who was sitting on the porch dressing her latest doll, which she had gotten on her birthday. "See how nicely this little coat and bonnet fits her? My Aunt just gave me these doll clothes for watching baby Phil while she went shopping for Thanksgiving dinner."

“Are you having a big dinner tomorrow?” asked Brenda as she held the treasured doll while Jane slipped on her shoes.

“Yes, and I’m so disgusted! My favorite cousin can’t come. She has the chicken pox!”

“That is a shame!” agreed Brenda. “I don’t suppose she has much to be thankful for now.”

“Oh, yes, she says she is thankful she has the chicken pox instead of a broken leg, which would take several more weeks of recovery. Then too, she would have the discomfort of getting about on crutches. But, I’m not thankful she can’t come and be with us tomorrow.”

The little girls played and talked till time for Brenda to return home. Brenda told her Mother at the supper table about Jane’s cousin, who had the chicken pox and couldn’t attend the family Thanksgiving meal, but was still thankful she didn’t have a broken leg. “Jane feels that her day will be spoiled because she can’t come,” replied Brenda.

Mother smiled at her little girl as she said, “It is good for us to have some disappointment in life. If we always had everything we wanted we would grow up to

be very selfish and unfeeling. We wouldn’t know how to be sympathetic with others and would take every good thing that came our way for granted. I’m sure Jane has much to be thankful for. After the dishes are washed, call Jane and tell her to come over. Each of you make a list of all the things you are thankful for and see who can come up with the biggest list.” The girls found they had so many things to be thankful for that they needed another sheet of paper to write more.

“I suppose,” Jane said with a smile, “I can be glad I have a cousin I like so well, even though she has the chicken pox and can’t come to our Thanksgiving dinner. We can be together at Christmas and I must think of something extra nice to give her so she will realize how much I missed her.”

“That is a good thought!” said Mother. “It is good to show our appreciation for the many things we are thankful for. All our blessings come from God and we need to give thanks to Him continually.”

Here are some verses to memorize:

“O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good; for his mercy

endureth forever." Psalm 136:1

"While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being." Psalm 146:2

"I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:

marvelous are thy works..." Psalm 139:14

Would you like to find more praise verses? There are many more to be found in the Bible.

Selected by Shirley Frick

## THANKSGIVING

Howard Surbey

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations." Psa. 100:1-5

Our foremost duty in life is to praise, thank and worship God our Creator. No one is so ungrateful as the one who is not thankful for great favors. In all our life, we cannot hope to properly thank and adore our Maker. He not only has done so much for us, but He is continually showering us with

blessings which we cannot even enumerate. What efforts are we willing to put forth to show our thankfulness? How much of each and every day are we trying to please our Creator?

As we are so indebted to God Almighty, why should we want to make other than "a joyful noise unto Him"? Any attitude, any expression, any act which is not according to His Holy Word cannot be a joyful noise unto Him. Do we really serve the Lord, not just appear to serve Him, but wholeheartedly devote our lives unto Him? Gladness and joy should always be the attitude when serving our Maker. Yes, it is a privilege that we are able and are permitted to serve Him. Do we all receive blessings from God? If so why should we not all give thanks to Him?

If we receive blessings from

God, why should we not serve Him with gladness? Perhaps some of our service to man is not with gladness, on this earth. This may be true because of the unfair treatment we receive, because we are required to do things which we do not like and because of man's shortcomings that we are not treated with mercy. However, God's treatment towards us is so far superior to man's, that we cannot compare it. We should be so glad to serve our Lord that we always long to sing to Him. Even on this earth we like to sing when we are happy, so why not always want to sing when in the presence of God?

We should be thankful that a church exists, in which we each have the opportunity to sing, regardless of our ability. Our love and union with God should be so near and dear to each of us that we feel as His people, who feed upon His holy Word. A place where we can meet Him should be so sacred and hallowed to us, that we always enter with a feeling of thanksgiving and praise. Perhaps some individuals do not see the need of thanking Him or perhaps some will even

curse His holy name. But such a haughty spirit should never enter our lives. The Lord is so good to us, so merciful to each of us and so able to perform all that He has promised, that we should always be thankful unto Him and bless His holy name.

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that it, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Heb. 13:12, 15. What a wonderful blessing we can enjoy, that Jesus sanctified us, (set us apart from sin) through His own precious blood. Can we realize how much he suffered unjustly, that we each could have our sins forgiven? How much of our weak, carnal desires do we sacrifice, that we might praise and serve our Lord and Savior? Just what percent of a week's, fruit of our lips, goes toward honoring and praising our Lord? Does any of it go to curse Him or hinder the full obedience of those who would serve Him?

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly



places in Christ.” Eph. 1:3. Is there any better time to praise and honor our Lord and Savior, than at this time of the year when we have finished reaping the earthly blessings, which

God has brought forth upon the earth?

Selected from the  
November 15, 1958  
issue of the Bible Monitor

## OBITUARIES

### MARLA EBY

Marla J. Eby, 63, of Ephrata, Pennsylvania passed away September 14, 2018 at Wellspan Ephrata Community Hospital.

She was born in Williams County, Ohio to Dean and Nancy (Carlin) St. John, with whom she resided, and was the wife of the late George William “Bill” Eby, who died in November of 1987. They had married on August 4, 1979.

She was a member of Millbach Conservative Brethren Church in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania.

Marla worked as a secretary/receptionist for Hurst Electric in Lititz for the past ten years.

In addition to her parents, Marla is survived by two sisters, Laranda, wife of Lloyd Eby of Wauseon, Ohio, and LuAnn, wife of Randy Dennis of Richland, Pennsylvania. She is also survived by several aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Funeral services were held September 19, 2018 at the Lititz Dunkard Brethren Church, Lititz, Pennsylvania with Brothers Rudy Shaffer and David Dennis officiating.

Interment was in the Smith Cemetery, Fulton, County, Ohio, on September 21, 2018 with Brother Dennis St. John officiating.

### THELMA UPLINGER

Sister Thelma (Myers) Uplinger, 93, of Mount Crawford, Virginia passed way September 25, 2018, at her residence. A daughter of the late William C. and Beulah Belle (Snyder) Myers, she was born on February 10, 1925 in Twinsburg, Ohio.

Thelma was a member of the Dunkard Brethren Church and had been employed at Walker Manufacturing for over twenty five years.

On November 11, 1941, she married Wilbur Leroy Uplinger, Sr., who preceded her in death on January 15, 1998.

Surviving are three daughters, Jane Lickey, C. Kay White and Jackie Carr; eleven grandchildren, seventeen great-grandchildren and eight great-great-grandchildren.

She was the last surviving member of her immediate family.

In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by sons, Leroy "Lee" Uplinger, Richard Uplinger and David Uplinger; and sisters, Dorothy Sprankle, Ruth Kriner, Laura Anderegg and Eva Frame.

Funeral services were held September 28, 2018 at People's Baptist Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia with Pastor Richard Forsythe officiating. Burial was in the Eastlawn Memorial Gardens.

## **NEWS ITEMS**

### **2018 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

The 2018 Leadership Conference is scheduled for November 9 – 11, 2018 at Dallas Center, Iowa. The sessions for Dunkard Brethren officials will begin at 8:00 A.M., Friday morning, continuing through Saturday, with the closing public session on Sunday morning at 9:30 A.M. There will also be public sessions on Friday and Saturday evenings. Supper will be served for all who wish to partake on both Friday and Saturday evenings as well as Sunday noon.

There will be organized activities for the Sisters during the day on Friday and Saturday. There will also be Young People's activities in the evenings.

Those planning to attend from a distance are reminded to contact Sister Mary Sue Moss for reservations and lodging.

2475 240<sup>th</sup> Street

Dallas Center, IA 50063

(Call or text) 515-979-7086

(Email) [mossjms@gmail.com](mailto:mossjms@gmail.com)

Even if you arrange lodging on your own, please contact Sister Mary Sue so those preparing the meals will have an accurate count.

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The Dallas Center church house is located at 23209 Quinlan Avenue, which is three-fourths of a mile north of the junction of Quinlan Avenue with Highway 44 on the west edge of the Dallas Center business district. Dallas Center is located on route 44, which can be accessed from I-80 by route 169 (Adel exit) or from I-80/I-35 by route 141 to the (Grimes exit).

The Dallas Center Congregation looks forward to this opportunity of serving you during this time of Spiritual growth and fellowship.

### STANDING COMMITTEE SPECIAL SESSION

A special meeting of the 2018 Standing Committee has been called by the Moderator to convene at 8:30 am on November 8, 2018 at the Meeting House of the Dallas Center, Iowa Congregation. This will be the day before the beginning of the 2018 Leadership Conference. The all-day session will be concerned with the headship covering issue. All Elders are urged to attend and participate in this special session. Elders who did not attend 2018 General Conference should be prepared to appear before the Credentials Committee. It is expected that this session will last until 4:00 pm. Any other business for Standing Committee will be taken up at that time or on Saturday afternoon, if more time is needed.

### BROTHERHOOD PRAYER REQUEST

The Officers of 2018 Standing Committee and General Conference request the prayers of the entire Brotherhood as Standing Committee gathers for a special meeting on November 8, 2018 at Dallas Center, Iowa. The focus of that meeting will be to discuss the varying views concerning the style of the headship covering. Those who participate in this meeting are seeking prayer on their behalf that they might have wisdom, candor, empathy, and love as the subject is discussed. This meeting will be seeking the best, spiritual course to follow while dealing with this issue. There will be no legislation considered or imposed through this body's day of discussion. Please pray for those involved and for the Brotherhood as this issue is examined.

**DALLAS CENTER, IOWA**

The Dallas Center Dunkard Brethren Church is sharing live sermon audio through a conference call. We invite you to join any-time you can and to share this information with others.

Scheduled Sunday morning preaching services are at 10:30 A.M. CST. Sunday evenings at 6:00 P.M. CST. There is a thirty minute song service followed by the sermon. (There are no services the first and last Sunday evenings of the month.)

The call-in number is: 1 605-475-2875 Access code: 902 7327

Or save the number as (1 605-475-2875,,9027327#) for a one click call.

You may also listen online at:

<https://hello.freeconference.com/conf/call/9027327>

Brother Nick Yutzzy

**BEREAN, INDIANA**

The Berean Congregation in Peru, Indiana, will be having a Revival/Lovefeast weekend on November 2-4, 2018, with evangelist Brother Phil Gish. Friday evening service starts at 7:30 P.M. Saturday self-examination starts at 3:00 P.M., supper at 4:30 P.M. and communion service at 6:30 P.M. Sunday morning worship starts at 8:00 A.M., breakfast at 8:30 A.M., and regular service at 10:00 A.M. with lunch following.

All are invited to come and worship and fellowship with us. We would love to have you!

Sister Becky Hirt, Cor.

**THANK YOU**

I want to thank each of you who sent me cards and messages for my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Each one was an encouragement. God bless you all.

In Christian Love  
Sister Dorothy Nell

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## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR DECEMBER 2018

### **Dec. 2 – A More Sure Word of Prophecy – II Peter 1:12-21**

1. Do believers need to be reminded of foundational Biblical truths?

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2. What is the hope of a Christian leader for his people after he dies?

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3. How did Peter know he wasn't sharing "cunningly devised fables"?

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### **Dec. 9 – God's Judgment in the Past – II Peter 2:1-11**

1. How do false prophets gain acceptance among believers?

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2. How had God dealt with sinful angels, the world and cities in the past? How will He deal with them in the future?

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### **Dec. 16 – God's Judgment in the Future – II Peter 2:12-22**

1. How did the false prophets resemble wells without water? What did they lack?

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2. Why is it so dangerous to turn away from the way of righteousness?

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**Dec. 23 – Birth of Christ – John 1:1-15**

1. What was the purpose of the virgin birth?

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2. Did Jesus exist before the virgin birth?

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**Dec. 30 – God’s Longsuffering for Men’s Sakes – II Peter 3:1-18**

1. Who did Peter predict would appear in the last days?

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2. How does God count time differently than men do?

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3. How will His Second Coming be?

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