

GOD'S

REVIVALIST

and Bible Advocate

105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.



GOT DIRECTIONS?

double-clicking on God's Word



I TIMOTHY 4

11 These things command and teach.
12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.
13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doc-



special
edition
for
youth

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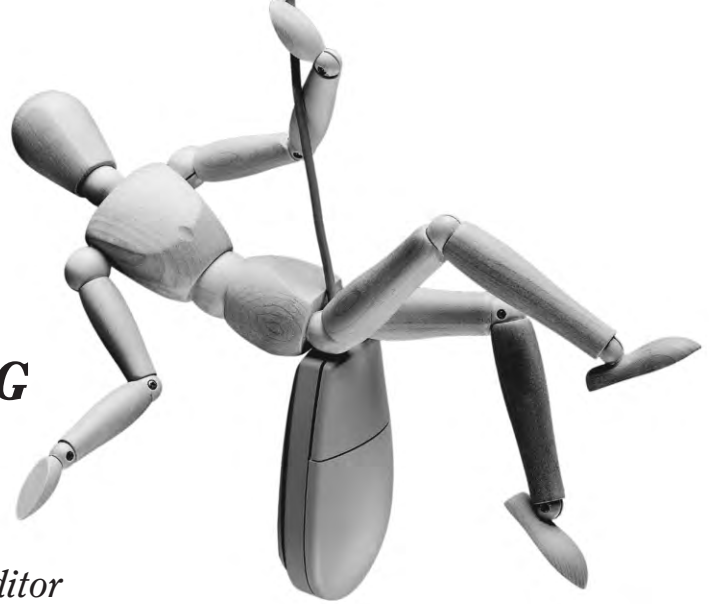
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INTRODUCING A SPECIAL ISSUE

by Larry D. Smith, editor

“Got Directions?...Double-Clicking on God’s Word.” This special edition of *God’s Revivalist* is for all our readers, but especially for young men and women serious about God’s purpose for their lives.

God’s Bible School and College was founded in 1900, and from the beginning, “Back to the Bible” has been its motto and its purpose. For this reason, thousands of searching youth have found the Bible’s answers for vibrant, victorious living during their experience on the Hilltop. This collection of thoughtful articles is in that continuing tradition.

In the language of modern technology, “double-clicking” is what we do to open a computer file, allowing us to examine more carefully the information previously saved there. Long ago, God laid down the essential principles of Christian

living in His Word; and to find those principles, we must “double-click” on its sacred pages. These principles are not difficult to understand or to follow. They flow from His holy character and loving purpose; and in following them, we find meaning, joy, and satisfaction.

Every article in this issue applies these principles to the real issues young people now confront—such issues as *how to approach the Bible; how to keep a clear conscience; how to live in a sinful world; how to develop wholesome relationships with the opposite sex; how to handle such matters as entertainment, music, and dress from God’s perspective; and how to “grow in grace” and become mature in Christ.*

Teenagers and young adults, we hope you’ll find that this special *Revivalist* has a significant message for your life—and we hope that your parents and grandparents will agree! It’s time to begin “double-clicking on God’s Word”! ■

GOT QUESTIONS? GOD HAS ANSWERS!



Principles of Biblical Interpretation

By Allan P. Brown

It seems amazing! The Bible tells us that we can have an intimate relationship with God. Can this really happen? The answer is an exciting “yes,” if you are willing to put forth the effort. However, it will require you to become a diligent student of the Bible with the goal of conforming your life to its teachings (2 Tim. 2:15).

You can know God better! God reveals Himself to us primarily through the Bible. Although the Bible is a divinely inspired library of 66 books, its unity is found in the fact that each book—and everything in each book—is designed to teach us something specific about God—how He thinks, what He values, what He says is sin, what pleases Him, what is wise or unwise. The secret to knowing God better is to study the Bible with the specific intent of learning what God thinks and what He values. Without this focus, you will miss the main purpose of Scripture. We must adopt His standard of right and wrong, rather than “lean on [our] own understanding” (Prov. 3:5-6). God does not say, “Just do the best you know how,” when it comes to living our lives. He wants to teach us how to evaluate everything in life using His thought processes and His value system.

The Bible is designed to teach you to think like God thinks. The Bible isn’t just a compilation of interesting stories. God has carefully selected specific people, places,

and events to teach us about ourselves, the choices we make, and how they affect our relationships with others and with Him. How would you answer questions like “Is it okay to lie to protect myself or someone else?” “If I don’t feel bad about what I am doing, is it okay with God?” “Does God really want to be bothered about the little decisions I make in life?” Your answers will depend on your knowledge of God’s Word and the people in the Bible who asked the same questions. Remember Abraham? He felt he needed to protect himself with a lie and ended up disgracing God’s name and his own testimony (Gen. 12:10-20). How about Balaam? He thought he could badger God into letting him help the King of Moab while avoiding spiritual fallout (Num. 22-24). Do you know that God may give you the desires of your heart—if you push and push for them—but the backlash of getting your own way may destroy you (Ps. 106:15). As to bothering God with little decisions, do you remember why Joshua and the leaders of Israel made the wrong decision about the Gibeonites? Do you remember God’s comment? They “asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD” (Josh. 9:14). These are just a few examples of how relevant God’s Word can be to our everyday lives. God intends for us to use the information in Scripture to guide the choices we make and to learn to see life from His point of view.

Learn to ask the right questions. One of the keys for learning to think as God thinks is knowing how to ask the right kinds of questions when you read the Bible. Ask yourself, "Why did God choose to include this information in Scripture?" Nothing He included is irrelevant! "Does it teach me that He cares about details and He means exactly what He says (reason for including genealogies and detailed descriptions)? Does it teach me something He hates or something He loves? Does it tell me what someone did that pleased Him or that displeased Him?" As you read, ask yourself: (1) "Is there a command for me to follow?" (2) "Is there a principle being illustrated? What is it? How should it change my thinking and behavior?" (3) "What is the passage telling me about God's view on the subject matter?" (4) "What attitude do I need to change as a result of this study?" or "What do I need to start doing or stop doing?" (5) "What things do I need to believe or stop believing?" (6) "What relationships do I need to work on?"

The Bible is meant to change my life (Rom. 12:2). We are to measure ourselves by what we read. Ask yourself, "Am I obeying the commands and principles that I am reading about? Am I in line with God's way of thinking?" If not, you should repent and prayerfully make whatever changes are indicated by Scripture. All of our efforts in Bible study are valueless, if in the final analysis we do not change and become more like Jesus. We must not simply learn what it says; *we are to do what it says* (James 1:22). The real problem for most of us is not the interpretation of difficult passages; it is our failure to obey fully all the passages we do understand. When we align our lives to what God has shown us from the Bible, we qualify for His special help in interpreting the more difficult passages (John 17:3).

Why don't I get more out of my Bible reading? Most Christians want to get truth from the Bible, but they don't know how. Let me say emphatically, "You will not get much from the Bible if you don't take notes!" In addition to answering the above questions, write down what you observe and discover as you read. You cannot study the Bible without writing something down. That is the difference between Bible reading and Bible study. If you don't put your thoughts and observations down on paper, you haven't really thought about them.

How often should I read my Bible? The common denominator of every great man and woman of God is that he or she knew the Scriptures and spent consistent, regular time with the Lord in His Word. It is only as you learn God's truth and then allow that truth to become part of your daily life that you will develop in the Christian life (John 8:31; 2 Pet. 3:18). When you know the Word of God well, allowing it to dwell in you richly, you are going to know the will of God for your life (Col. 3:16).

The Bible likens study and meditation on its teachings to eating food. God wants to teach us to treasure His Words more than our necessary physical

food (Job 23:12). Healthy people eat because they are hungry. Hunger is a sign of health. When we neglect the Bible, it is because we are not as hungry for the things of God as we should be. *A lack of hunger for God's Word indicates a spiritual problem.* We need to ask God to heal us spiritually and give us a hunger for His Word. The response of a person who is spiritually healthy is this: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps. 119:103). Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart (Jer. 15:16a). If you don't have a hunger for God's Word, confess it to Him and ask Him to give you one. Until you develop such a hunger, faithfully read the Bible every day as a means of training yourself to be godly (1 Tim. 4:7).

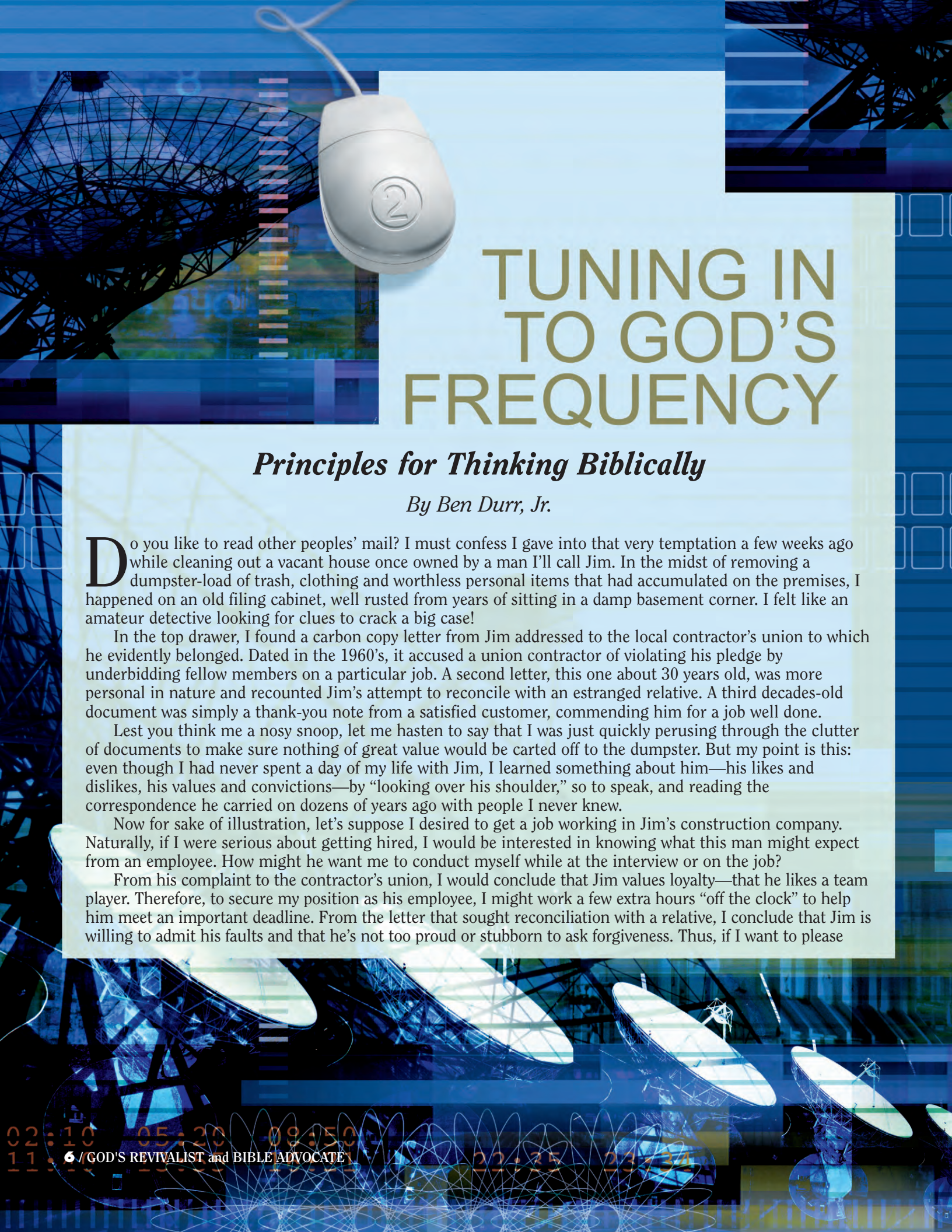
When I read the Old Testament, how am I to know what applies to my life? "Aren't some of the teachings in the Old Testament done away with?" Paul helps us to answer this question by reminding us that "the law is good, if a man use it lawfully" (1 Tim. 1:8). In order to understand what changed between the Old Testament and the New Testament and why it changed, we need to remember that all Scripture is designed to teach us about God, what he like or dislikes; and it is still profitable for doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

"How do I determine which teachings in the Old Testament are no longer binding on Christians? To answer this question, let me first point out two methods that I believe are wrong:

Wrong Method One: "The pick and choose method." This method uses the Old Testament for its own purposes. If you like a verse and think it's appropriate, use it. Passages in the Psalms, Isaiah, and Proverbs fit into this category. If you don't like a verse or don't understand it, this method either ignores it or discards it as irrelevant for us today.

Wrong Method Two: "The three category method." This method divides the Old Testament into three categories: 1) ceremonial law, 2) civil law, and 3) moral law. The ceremonial law is said to include sacrifice and other aspects of worship and was fulfilled in Christ's ministry. The ceremonial laws, therefore, do not apply to New Testament believers. The civil law is said to apply only to the Israelites while they lived in the land of Palestine. Therefore, the civil law is not binding on New Testament believers. The moral law, however, is said to be a reflection of the unchanging moral nature of God and is still binding upon all persons.

Problems with these two methods: Who gives a person authority to pick and choose which verses to follow? If a person can legitimately "throw out" one verse, why cannot someone else throw out other verses? And concerning the "three category method," how can a person know which verse fits into which category? For example, "What would you classify as the moral (p26) ➡



TUNING IN TO GOD'S FREQUENCY

Principles for Thinking Biblically

By Ben Durr, Jr.

Do you like to read other peoples' mail? I must confess I gave into that very temptation a few weeks ago while cleaning out a vacant house once owned by a man I'll call Jim. In the midst of removing a dumpster-load of trash, clothing and worthless personal items that had accumulated on the premises, I happened on an old filing cabinet, well rusted from years of sitting in a damp basement corner. I felt like an amateur detective looking for clues to crack a big case!

In the top drawer, I found a carbon copy letter from Jim addressed to the local contractor's union to which he evidently belonged. Dated in the 1960's, it accused a union contractor of violating his pledge by underbidding fellow members on a particular job. A second letter, this one about 30 years old, was more personal in nature and recounted Jim's attempt to reconcile with an estranged relative. A third decades-old document was simply a thank-you note from a satisfied customer, commending him for a job well done.

Lest you think me a nosy snoop, let me hasten to say that I was just quickly perusing through the clutter of documents to make sure nothing of great value would be carted off to the dumpster. But my point is this: even though I had never spent a day of my life with Jim, I learned something about him—his likes and dislikes, his values and convictions—by “looking over his shoulder,” so to speak, and reading the correspondence he carried on dozens of years ago with people I never knew.

Now for sake of illustration, let's suppose I desired to get a job working in Jim's construction company. Naturally, if I were serious about getting hired, I would be interested in knowing what this man might expect from an employee. How might he want me to conduct myself while at the interview or on the job?

From his complaint to the contractor's union, I would conclude that Jim values loyalty—that he likes a team player. Therefore, to secure my position as his employee, I might work a few extra hours “off the clock” to help him meet an important deadline. From the letter that sought reconciliation with a relative, I conclude that Jim is willing to admit his faults and that he's not too proud or stubborn to ask forgiveness. Thus, if I want to please

Jim, I might quickly own up to a miscalculation on a job order, rather than make excuses or blame others. From the thank-you note, I judge that Jim doesn't cut corners on a job—that he values quality workmanship. Therefore, if a job calls for $\frac{3}{4}$ inch plywood, but I know I could get by with $\frac{1}{2}$ inch plywood, I will install the sturdier material, because through the indirect means of reading an old thank-you note, I have deduced what Jim would approve of in this new situation.

Of course, there are a few important criteria that must be met in order for me to achieve the goal of pleasing Jim. First, I must carefully read the old letters and understand exactly *what was written*. Second, I must carefully ponder the *implication of these documents*. I must grasp the underlying conviction that compelled Jim to write what he did so many years ago. Third, I must learn to recognize *specific situations* in my daily work where Jim's convictions might shape my current decisions. (There will probably be many decisions about a wide variety of issues that Jim's values will influence.) Finally, I must have a *strong inward desire* to please my new boss. This devotion must motivate me earnestly, honestly and consistently to find ways to express his values and convictions through my daily decisions as his employee.

Most of my readers have anticipated that the analogy of reading Jim's mail approximates the method used to apply Scripture to the many moral and ethical decisions we face each day. Of course, with Scripture, we have the element of divine inspiration which lifts it to a much higher level of authority than an old carbon copy letter or a forgotten thank-you note. But the basic method of interpretation and application is the same.

You see, while God's Word speaks very plainly to some contemporary lifestyle issues, it does not directly address many of the deci-

sions that we are confronted with daily. For example, the Bible is silent on the question of the use of technology. It does not overtly speak of the appropriateness of "PG-13" and "R" rated films. Dancing, the use of cosmetics, style and content of music, a Christian's involvement in politics, theater or professional sports are all matters not directly and specifically spelled out in book-chapter-verse fashion. Likewise abortion, human cloning, surrogate parenting and stem-cell research are not discussed in the Bible.

But what we do have in the 66 ancient documents that comprise the Old and New Testaments is a "filing cabinet" full of clues—clues that if read carefully and studied thoroughly will reveal the mind, the attitude, and character of God. In a sense, when we read the Bible, we're "reading someone else's mail." But as we "read over the shoulder" of Moses, Isaiah and Peter, as they write to long-departed people of a foreign culture about specific lifestyle issues that we may never face, the writers' basic convictions and values begin to emerge. And we understand these to be, ultimately, the values and convictions of the God who inspired their writings.

My friend and mentor, Rev. Edsel Trouten, smiles when he recalls a classroom of inquisitive Bible school students putting tough questions to the late Dr. Leslie Wilcox. When presented with a difficult ethical question, Dr. Wilcox would first pause and think. Then he would often respond, "Well, I think the apostle Paul would say..." and proffer an opinion on the matter. Though Brother Trouten didn't understand or even accept Wilcox's answer at the time, he eventually came to understand that Dr. Wilcox had spent so much time with Paul's letters that over the years he developed a "Pauline mindset." He had so deeply immersed himself in Paul's writings that he acquired the values and thought patterns of the apostle himself.

I've often wondered why God didn't just spell out every detail of every lifestyle decision we would ever face. Granted, that would amount to an incredible volume of information. But it would have made the decision-making process a lot easier than the current system of having to think and pray through 66 second-hand documents that spell out appropriate responses to seemingly irrelevant decisions, such as what to do if we find our enemy's ox, or what to do if we suspect our food may have been "blessed" by a false god.

I have never faced either one of these specific decisions, but I have found that the challenging process of prying beneath the words of Scripture to discover the *underlying principle* has both tested and deepened my commitment to know who God really is. And the exacting process of translating the underlying principle into a specific, personal situation has both challenged and deepened my commitment to surrender fully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And the inner sense that accompanies this process—the sense that I am fulfilling and not just keeping the Law—is an intensely satisfying and joyful experience.

What I have presented in this essay is a brief method that might be used *in order to understand the mind and will of God in specific lifestyle decisions that are not clearly spelled out in Scripture*. Let me close by reminding the reader that unless someone has a heart for God and a deep hunger for God's way—unless there is a fully surrendered life that is committed actually to doing the will of God, this—or any other formula—will not work. But this is a method that will work for the surrendered Christian who possesses a heart of full devotion to God—at least, that's what I think Paul would say! ■

—Ben Durr, Jr., is a member of the faculty, Division of Ministerial Education, God's Bible School and College.



Biblical Principles for Keeping a Clear Conscience

By Dan Glick

Nothing is quite so liberating in life as gaining and maintaining a good conscience. St Augustine once said, “A good conscience is the palace of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the paradise of delight, the standing Sabbath of the saints.” By this he meant that a good conscience brings continual joy and rest to the soul.

For those interested in living in this “paradise of delight,” there are several truths that must be kept in mind:

First, it is important that the conscience be shaped by the Word of God. This leads to a properly educated conscience. It is possible to have a conscience that is overly sensitive. Paul wrote of those who have scruples about matters which are due to an uneducated conscience (Rom. 14; I Cor 8:7).

But it is also possible to have a conscience that is not sensitive enough. This may happen when a believer does not heed the internal voice, and the voice begins to recede into the background. The Chinese have a proverb that says, “Sin a sin more than once, and to you it will no longer be a sin.” It is possible for the mind to rationalize behavior that the conscience and the spirit will not accept. While the mind is satisfied and the voice of conscience grows dim, guilt registers on the spirit and the burden of the transgression is borne within.

The balance comes when the believer saturates himself or herself in the Word of God. God’s Word has the power to enlighten the conscience and shape it into what the Apostle Paul calls a “good conscience”—condemning the wrong and commending the right.

Second, a good conscience must be maintained. Again the Apostle said, “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). This exercise will be life-

long. Because we are living in a fallen world and in an imperfect body, mistakes will be made and confessions and apologies will be in order both to God and to others. It is crucial that we have a reverse gear and that we use it as often as necessary. To do so will keep our conscience clear and preserved in a state of health.

To ignore the voice of conscience in these matters can be devastating to our spiritual life. When driving an automobile on the highway and the oil light suddenly appears, the driver has two options. He may ignore the light and even place some masking tape over the light because it irritates him. Or he may temporarily inconvenience himself, stop the vehicle and add a quart of oil. To choose the first option is to insure that a major breakdown is coming.

Within us all is a red flashing light that is illuminated on the dashboard of our heart and mind when our behavior is less than Christlike. To ignore this warning and fail to address the problem is to insure a spiritual breakdown.

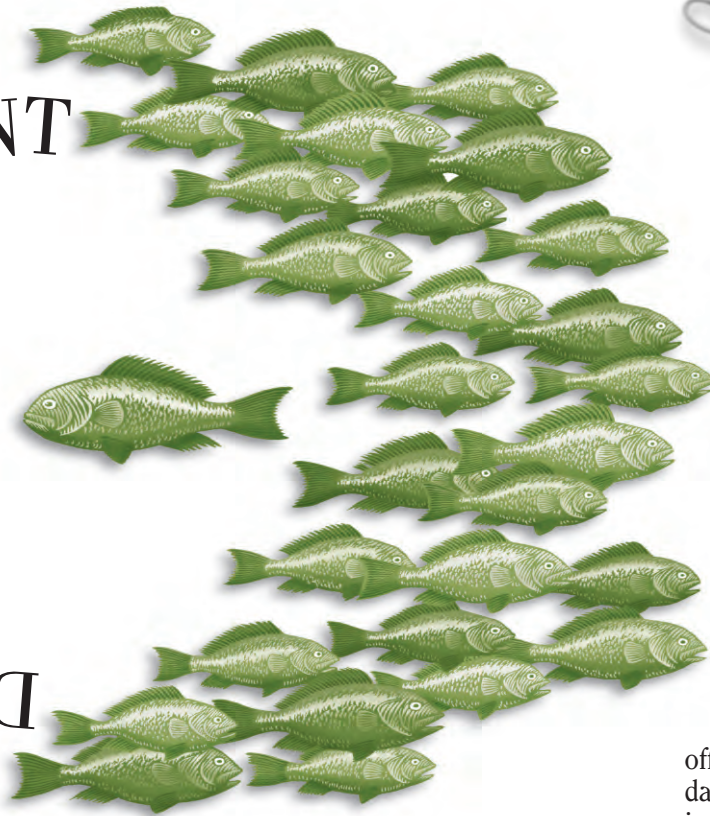
When the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, he admonished the young man to wage a good warfare and fight with the weapons of faith and a good conscience. He reminded him that Hymenaeus and Alexander put these away and made shipwreck of their faith (I Timothy 1:18-20). In the Christian life, these are indispensable. *What two good legs are to a walking man, faith and a good conscience are to the Christian.* Eliminate either one and walking ceases. *What two wings are to an airplane, faith and a good conscience are to the believer.* Eliminate one and the plane spirals to earth. With both we can soar to the heavens.

It is possible to cast away our faith, and no amount of effort towards righteous living will soothe our doubts and calm our fears. On the other hand, trying to exercise faith in God while living contrary to the dictates of our conscience will cause us to live in the land of self-deception.

When we place our faith in a faithful God and gain and maintain a good conscience, our spiritual progress will be evident to all. We then will enjoy the “paradise of delight, and the standing Sabbath of the saints.” ■

—*Dan Glick is chair of the Division of Intercultural Studies and World Missions, God’s Bible School and College.*

DARE TO BE DIFFERENT



Biblical Principles for Separation

By Dan Glick

The subject of separation has long been a hotly disputed topic among Christian believers. In this brief article, I understand that I will not be able to address all the questions on the topic (or even most of them), but at least I hope to state a principle by which we can make some God-honoring decisions related to Christian living in an environment that is often not very hospitable to Christian values.

I have lived for many years alongside the Amish in northeastern Ohio. My grandfather belonged to an Amish sect before 1948. These good people argue for a very strict form of separation from society: no electricity, no automobiles, nothing but plain clothes, and houses without shutters—to name just a few of their beliefs. Separation from modern conveniences is part of what they believe to be involved in Biblical separation from the world.

After the early church lost much of its spiritual intensity and purity,

there was a movement among early monastics to withdraw from the world, build monasteries and live a life separated from the world. They believed in order to live a godly life, one must separate one's self physically from the world. Somehow godliness was believed to be developed better in isolation than in society.

Among evangelicals in the 21st century, not many of us are given to these extremes in our ideas or practices. In fact, it would appear that we are in danger of going too far to the other side. We are not sure if separation means much of anything anymore.

That the Bible does call for us to be separate from this world, however, is clear from such passages as this: *"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you"* (2 Cor. 6:17-18a). Now we might respectfully disagree with our Amish and Catholic friends that this separation includes cutting

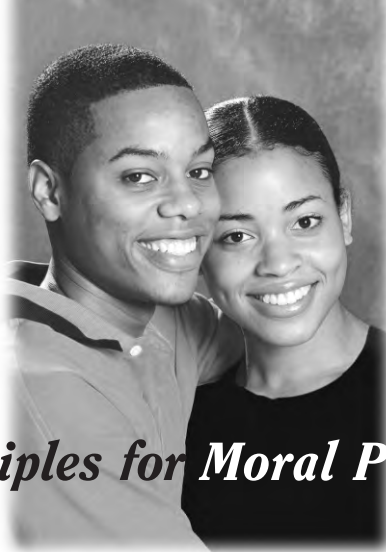
off modern conveniences, wearing dark clothes, and living life in isolation. But I would suggest that the Apostle did mean something by what he was saying.

I suggest that the key phrase in these verses is the statement, *"Touch not the unclean thing"* (1 Cor. 6:17b). Here is where the point of separation becomes so critical for the child of God. *Anything that contaminates me spiritually and morally has the power to break my connection with God.* Paul makes it clear that God's reception of me is based upon my refusal to touch what is unclean or morally contaminating. This may involve the literature I read, the music to which I listen, the way that I dress, or the manner in which I conduct myself among members of the opposite sex. That which is morally degrading can be found in much of our modern world. Even advertisements are saturated with sensuality.

Recently I was discussing with a young person the problem of professing Christians entertaining themselves with the music and lyrics of the unregenerate world. It was baffling to me to discover that some people think it acceptable to listen to lyrics that glorify alcoholism and immorality. The Bible says that the adulterers, fornicators, and (p25)➡



*Kiss
Purity
Hello!*



Biblical Principles for Moral Purity

By Jack Hooker

On September 11, our nation was reminded that we have enemies. Terrorists who have targeted our land for destruction still plot against us. As Christians, we also have an enemy—an enemy who through the ages has schemed to destroy God’s children. One of his favorite and most effective methods has been temptation to moral impurity, and so it remains the same today. His weapons are numerous, his helpers are many, and his success rate is great. We live in a world saturated with suggestions to be impure. We must remember that we do not battle against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of evil (see Eph. 6:12). To live clean in such a corrupt world, there are some principles that must guide our lives.

First, moral purity is vital to our relationship with God. Purity is not an option but is absolutely essential if we desire to have fellowship with God. Moral purity is a reflection of the very character of God, and it is His will for our life. *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”* (Matt. 5:8). *“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication”* (I Thess. 5:3). Our motive to be pure is our desire to be like Christ and please Him in everything we do.

Second, your body belongs to God. When you came to Christ, you surrendered your entire being to Him as Lord, and this includes your body. *“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”* (I Cor. 6:20). Christ purchased your body with the ultimate price. You are His by virtue of both creation and redemption. Since ownership of our bodies has been transferred to God, we should always strive to honor Him with them.

Third, we all face temptation to impurity. Throughout God’s Word we are given examples of godly men and women who faced temptation to be impure. No one will ever be so spiritual that he or she will never face this temptation. David, a man after God’s own heart, was tempted and failed. Joseph, a godly young man of character, faced temptation right inside Potiphar’s house. *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”* (I Cor. 10:12). Satan’s purpose is to detour

you from God’s plan and bind you in chains of sin.

Fourth, guard your mind against impure suggestion. *“Finally brethren... whatsoever things are pure... think on these things”* (Phil. 4:8). The main avenue to impurity is suggestion. The world has amassed an array of effective ways to invade your mind: movies, books, magazines, music, Internet sites, etc. Impure actions will always come from impure thoughts that are taken into our mind and contemplated.

Fifth, you can live clean in a corrupt world. *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world”* (Titus 2:11-12). God would never ask us to do something that is not possible through His grace and power. As Christians, God will give us power to exercise self-control. We can say “no” to impure suggestions and stand in the strength of Christ!

Sixth, there are always consequences to our actions. *“...for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”* (Gal. 6:7). The consequences of impure living can be devastating and lifelong. Anytime we break God’s commandments, we are broken as a result. Many young people have reaped a harvest of heartache for years after impure behavior took place.

Seventh, there is forgiveness and cleansing for impurity. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). To those who have yielded to the temptation of impurity, God desires to extend His grace of forgiveness and cleansing. A person can begin a new life of purity and obedience to God. It is never too late to begin a life honoring God and His Word.

God, the creator of life itself, has given us principles and patterns of purity. The rewards for living on the right side of God’s moral standard are not only received in our lifetime, but in eternity. You will experience God’s blessing today, tomorrow, and forever. ■

—**Jack Hooker** is Director of Development at God’s Bible School and College.

FROM DATE

TO MATE



Biblical Principles for Dating and Courtship

By Ken Farmer

Dating, as we generally know it, is largely an artifact of our industrialized culture. As we moved away from self-subsistence modes of existence to division of labor and ever-increasing levels of specialization, we ended up with the cultural luxuries of more leisure time, more expendable income, and better forms of transportation. By the time of the Roaring '20s, dating had drastically changed. Before this, courting had been a formal process that usually took place in homes under the watchful eyes of parents; and, moreover, it was an indication of some level of commitment.

With the emergence of the city culture came the new form of dating. It was informal, unchaperoned interaction with no specific commitment. Rules were no longer established by the community but by the peer group. Instead of spending time in the home, dating was "going out." With the increased ownership of cars and with young people being permitted to be alone for long hours, "public dating" became the accepted practice. So, here we are.

However, rather than allowing our culture to determine our dating behavior, we can look to the Bible for instruction as to what God thinks about such relationships and how He wants us to behave. Let us take a look at a few of the many questions that may be posed by young people grappling with dating issues. In so doing, we can get a glimpse of some of the proper principles for dating.

1. Do I have to date?

Instead of enjoying their teen years as a time for building skills and character, some young people feel pressured to date. Who said you have to date anyway? Over 50 percent of girls and over 40 percent of guys never date in high school. So understand that you are not "weird" if you are not dating. Don't get bogged down in relationships for which you are not emotionally and spiritually ready.

2. How involved are my parents to be in this process?

God clearly intends for our parents to give us direction concerning dating. Parents are commanded not to exacerbate their children, but instead to "bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). If parents are to play an essential role in the dating habits of their children, they will need to work at developing a deeper, more personal relationship with their teenage children during this crucial period in their lives. They should look for opportunities to spend leisure time with them, doing things they enjoy. Open communication channels will allow parents to pass along proper values in dating and relating to those of the opposite sex.

Initial discussions concerning dating, purity, and sex are good; but there needs to be follow-up discussions.

Particularly helpful for teenagers entering into the dating arena would be for parents to tell about their joys and pains in dating relationships, the infatuations they went through, temptations with which they struggled, and their failure and accomplishments in relating to the opposite sex.

3. Do I need parental approval to begin dating?

It is true that the Bible gives ample illustration of parents arranging marriages for their children. I am not suggesting that you need to follow that cultural practice.

However, you are commanded to "*Honor your father and your mother*" (Ex. 20:12). This means being submissive to

them as your God-given authority structure. Whether Christian or not, your parents need to be involved from the beginning. If your parents raise objections, it is a good indication that this may not be the right person or the right time. Pray until God gives you or your parents new instructions. This applies to both sets of parents.

4. Whom can I date?

Only date people with whom you are compatible. *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what*



do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14). The easy point here is that you should never date a person who is not a Christian. However, this applies to Christians as

well. One person may be committed to the Lord, while the other may be worldly. “Bad company corrupts good character” (1 Cor. 15:33). You should be careful to date only committed Christians and those who are a compliment to the mission God has given you.

5. How can I keep myself pure?

Be responsible for your own purity. *“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Therefore, honor God with your body”* (1 Cor. 6:15, 20). God expects you to keep yourself pure. Society has communicated the expectation that a boy is to look to the girl for indications as to when he may become unchaste in his advances toward her. True responsibility lies with each. In fact, we are admonished, “Treat younger men as brothers...and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity” (Tim. 5:1-2). Treat your date as your sibling? I think you get the point. You do not want anyone taking advantage of your brother or sister, either sexually or emotionally.

A basic guideline is that the more physically involved the dating relationship, the worse off it is. In marriage, sex is the most intimate expression of committed love that binds two people together. Outside marriage, it has the opposite effect. It becomes a hindrance to the development of mature love and the development of solid communication. The best way to keep from sexual immorality is to develop the conviction to have a pure relationship from the beginning. Establish your convictions and limits at the beginning and then maintain them throughout your dating relationship. You cannot “flee from sexual immorality” (1 Cor. 6:18) if you are tempting yourselves through carelessness. Choose to make yourself accountable to your parents and godly counselors. Encourage them to ask you the tough questions.

6. Is there only one person whom God has picked out for me?

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart” (Psalm 37:4). Instead of frantically searching for the right person through romantic dating, why not seek the Lord first and trust Him to bring that special person into your life? Instead of spending time looking for the “perfect” date, concentrate on becoming a better person yourself and being all that God wants you to be. If you let Him, God will lead you to a mate that is suited to you. This does not mean that you should sit at home and wait for God to send that person to your front door. He expects you to choose and to choose wisely. It is certainly appropriate to ask God to lead you to various places where there are other Christians like yourself.

7. Will I ever fall in love?

Some have actually taught that it is a sin to “fall in love.” Their logic goes like this: *when you fall, you don’t know where you are going to land.* God wants us to be more in control. “Listen, my son, and be wise; and keep your heart on the right path” (Prov. 23:19). We are to guide our emotions rather than be led by them.

There are cultures where romance is considered irrelevant to marriage. One author concludes that in such cultures, there seems to be less social disintegration stemming from divorce and even an enviable sort of peace and happiness based on the security of stable family relationships. Moreover, a sincere affection eventually is recognized in many of these arranged marriages.

Conventional wisdom today says that a person should marry the one he or she loves. *The Bible teaches us to love the one we marry!* Love is a choice—an act of the will. “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Phil. 4:4). But what if you don’t feel joyful? Rejoice anyway! As you obey the command from (p24) ➡



The MEASURE of Your TREASURE

Biblical Principles for Giving

By Randy Alcorn

John D. Rockefeller was one of the wealthiest men who ever lived. After he died someone asked his accountant, “How much did John D. leave?” The reply was classic: “He left...all of it.”

You can't take it with you. If that point is clear in your mind, you're ready to hear the secret of the *Treasure Principle*.

The Treasure Principle

Jesus takes that profound truth, “You can't take it with you” and adds a stunning qualification. By telling us to store up treasures for ourselves in heaven, He gives us a breathtaking corollary, which I call the Treasure Principle:

**You can't take it with you—
but you can send it on ahead.**

It's that simple. And if it doesn't take you breath away, you're not understanding it! Anything we try to hang on to here will be lost. But anything we put into God's hands will be ours for eternity (insured for infinitely more than \$100,000 by the real FDIC, the Father's Deposit Insurance Corporation).

If we give instead of keep, if we invest in the eternal instead of in the temporal, we store up treasures in heaven that will never stop paying dividends. Whatever treasures we store up on earth will be left behind when we leave. Whatever treasures we store up in heaven will be waiting for us when we arrive.

Financial planners tell us, “When it comes to your money, don't think just three months or three years ahead. Think thirty years ahead.” Christ, the ultimate investment counselor, takes it further. He says, “Don't ask how your investment will be paying off in just thirty years. Ask how it will be paying off in thirty million years.”

Suppose I offer you one thousand dollars today to spend however you want. Not a bad deal. But suppose I give you a choice—you can either have that one thousand dollars today or you can have ten million dollars five years from now. Only a fool

would take the thousand dollars today. Yet that's what we do whenever we grab onto something that will last for only a moment, forgoing something far more valuable that we could enjoy later for much longer.

The money God entrusts us here on earth is eternal investment capital. Every day is an opportunity to buy up more shares in His kingdom.

It's a revolutionary concept. If you embrace it, I guarantee it will change your life. As you store up heavenly treasures, you'll gain an everlasting version of what that man found in the treasure hidden in the field—**Joy.** ■



—Excerpted from *The Treasure Principle* by **Randy Alcorn** (*Eternal Perspective Ministries*, www.epm.org), Multnomah Publishers. Used by permission of author. This article submitted by the Rev. Jack Hooker, Vice President for Advancement, God's Bible School and College.

new release:

The Entertain

Biblical Principles for Entertainment

By Nathan Brown

Entertainment! So many images flash through our minds at the sight of that word. Movies, friends, sports, concerts, books, games, magazines—all these and more flow quickly across the silver screen of our memories. Some bring a smile and a chuckle, as we relive the fun and laughter. Others make us squirm uncomfortably, wishing with regret and embarrassment that they could be cut from the film of our lives.

As the scenes continue, it becomes clear that God has filled our world with good and wholesome pleasures—the fellowship of friends, the power of music, the fun of games, and the discovery of books. Truly, God has given us “richly all things to enjoy” (I Tim. 6:17). Knowing this, the enemy has scattered seeds of wickedness far and wide in the field of entertainment. If we’re not careful, the bad has a way of getting in with the good. That’s why it’s so important to know the principles in God’s Word that help us separate the chaff from the wheat.

Principle 1: Beware of anything that makes you calloused to sin or lessens your hatred of evil. Paul warns us several times in the New Testament to “hate what is evil” and “avoid every kind of evil” (Rom. 12:9; I Thess. 5:22). He repeats this command because the world surrounds us with all sorts of evil and perversion. As humans, our natural tendency is to “get used to” whatever we consistently encounter in our environment. The enemy knows this and tries to make us as calloused to sin as he can. As Alexander Pope said in his 1732 *Essay*

on Man, “Vice is a monster of so frightful mien, As to be hated needs but to be seen; Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face, We first endure, then pity, then embrace.” It is difficult to hate what you are used to.

Principle 2: Beware of anything that you feel troubled about in your spirit. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul urges him to hold on to “faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith” (I Tim. 1:18,19). Paul also told the Romans that “whatever is not from faith is sin” (Rom. 14:22,23). The main thrust of Paul’s message is that we should not do anything that we feel or believe is wrong. This principle clearly applies to those “gray areas” of life which are not specifically mentioned in Scripture. We need to be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and respond in obedience when we feel checked about a certain activity or form of entertainment. Keep your conscience clear!

Principle 3: Beware of anything that would make another believer stumble. Romans 14 is a thought-provoking chapter on the impact that our actions have on other brothers and sisters. Paul says, “Let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way” (Rom. 14:13). He also says, “It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles” (Rom. 14:21). This is an important factor that should always be taken into account when we



Entertainment Motive



participate in various kinds of entertainment. We need to be sensitive to the concerns and weaknesses of those around us. There are times when it is necessary to limit our own desires in deference to someone else. Don't be irritated or frustrated with them—be kind and remember that one day, it may be you.

Principle 4: Beware of anything that appeals to or affects your areas of weakness. We all have areas of weakness, and most of us know where they are. Unfortunately, the enemy knows them too; and the temptations we face are always tailored for a perfect fit. James, the Lord's brother, said, "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed" (James 1:14). Entertainment, probably more than anything else, has the ability to appeal to our areas of weakness. It's hard to keep your guard up during a party. Because of this, it is imperative that we filter our activities through the grid of what is spiritually healthy for us. Many things are not wrong in and of themselves, but they can leave us vulnerable to the attack of the enemy. Know your weaknesses and don't let the enemy trap you!

These principles are only a few of the many that can be mined from the pages of God's Word. As we make them a part of our lives, they will help us enjoy the many pleasures God has given us and avoid the corrupting influence of sin. Solomon said long ago that whoever learns from wisdom will "be secure, and without fear of evil" (Prov. 1:33). Remember, sin will keep you from the Word, or the Word will keep you from sin! ■

—*Nathan Brown is a mechanical engineer residing in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he is active in his local church.*

MUSIC



how does
it move
you?



Biblical Principles for Music

By Michael Avery and Rodney Sones

Music is one of the most powerful forces both in our culture and in our personal lives. Every kind of music that we choose to enjoy affects our lives in some way. Music has the power to inspire, encourage, and lift our souls to ecstasy. It can make us weep with sadness, passionate for romance or blind with anger. Such a powerful medium must be used with wisdom. Our choices regarding its use should be guided by good principles. *We should choose music because we know it is good.* For the Christian, the Bible is our guide and standard. What principles can a Christian use to discover good music?

Because music and the arts are inherently subjective, it is difficult at times to clearly identify what does or does not glorify God. But while the Bible does not describe the technical stylistic traits of good or bad music or give explicit rules on what music is acceptable, it does give us principles that we must apply to all of our lifestyle choices—choices such as the media we consume, the entertainment we enjoy, and the music we listen to.

In giving us principles, God has intentionally allowed a degree of freedom and variety in our musical expressions. This freedom gives us room to change and to grow. A wonderful variety of expression is seen between and within cultures. But with this freedom comes responsibility and opportunity.

Our responsibility is to honor the One who gave us these gifts and granted us these privileges of choice. It is to reflect His holiness in the choices we make. And the opportunity is to discover the joy that such choices bring, if we are willing to reach that level of living. This freedom allows us to grow as we orient our desires toward things that are of greatest value. The choice of our music reflects our inner values and mirrors our soul, just as the other outward expressions of our culture like clothing, language, and entertainment reflect our inner selves.

How, then, shall we discover and apply principles of godly living to our music? How shall we orient our lives toward pleasing God above all others? We must begin where God has spoken. We must saturate our soul with God's Word. This will produce what we call a "Biblically-

conditioned discernment"—a discernment that reflects God's viewpoint, because it springs from Biblical principle. There is no substitute for Biblically-conditioned discernment if we desire the clear leadership of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Without this discernment, Christians often make life choices that are harmful to them spiritually without sensing any wrong in doing so. Many feel free to choose whatever music they like, because the Bible doesn't directly identify a particular style as sinful. This approach to making lifestyle choices will lead to spiritual decay, because it naturally fills one's life with things of lesser value.

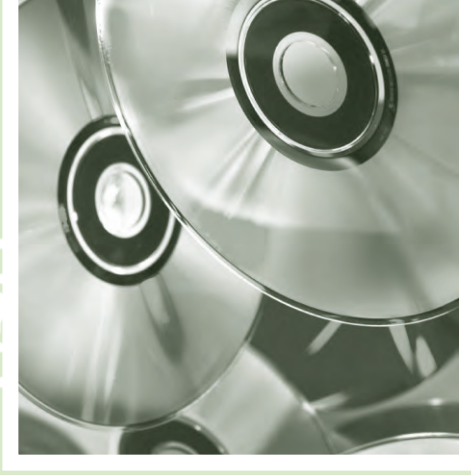
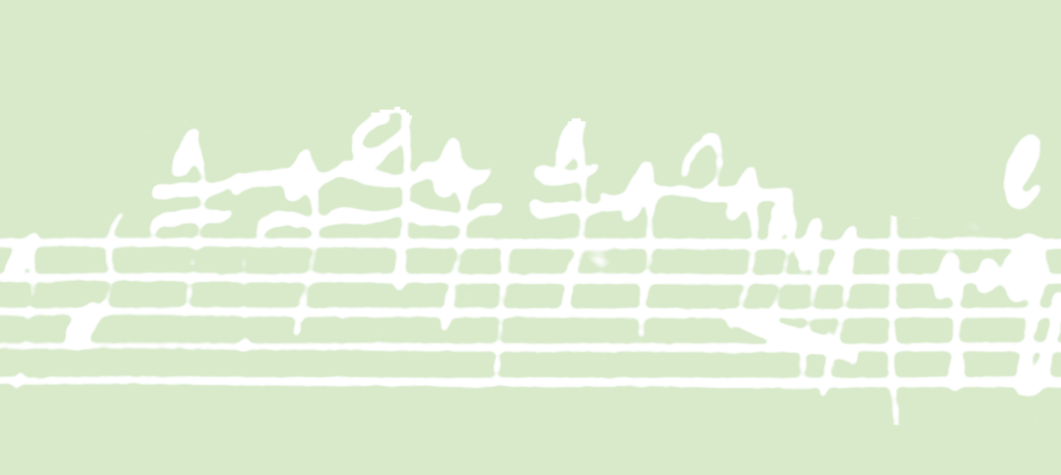
But while discipline in our lifestyle choices is necessary and foundational to a life of joy, the choice of a disciplined lifestyle does not relegate us to boredom and starch! One of the things that God has put into our very soul is the conviction that whatever is good should bring with it a deep sense of satisfaction. So making careful choices in music does not mean choosing distasteful music over what we like. Rather, it means choosing what satisfies us most deeply at the center of our being, while we reject illegitimate or less worthy music in favor of finding this deeper satisfaction. The music we choose should be godly, interesting, and enjoyable!

The Biblical principles that govern our freedom to choose, then, spring from two balancing concepts: *exaltation*, which is the need to make choices that honor God; and *edification*, which is the corresponding need to fill our lives with things that are inherently wholesome and good. Please examine the following brief list of principles we can reference when applying these concepts. You may be able to list more.

Principle 1: EXALTATION

If the music is Christian, do the music and lyrics exalt God? *We begin with God, because He is first. While not all music will be objectively focused on God Himself, the music should not glorify people, their talents, and experiences, etc, above God.*

If the music is secular, do the values expressed glorify God? Even music that is not about God or Christian living should be in harmony with what is right



and true. (I Cor. 10:31; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:19; Col.3:16.)

*Supporting Principle:
Harmonization*

Do the lyrics express truth I believe is in harmony with God's Word? (1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.)

Principle 2: EDIFICATION

Does the music edify me spiritually and mentally? We should choose value over immediate pleasure. *We get satisfaction from choices made to simply gratify our fleshly desires. But this kind of satisfaction is shallow. It pales when compared to the deeper joy one can find in things of enough worth to be accepted by our Father.* (Col. 3:1, Phil. 4:8, Col.3:16.)

*Supporting Principles:
Transformation, Separation, and Sanctification*

Can I take delight in this music and at the same time be conformed to the mind of Christ? Does the culture that surrounds this music conform to the mind of Christ? Does it reinforce the lifestyle that I believe best reflects principles of godly living?

The culture in which this music is born, packaged, and promoted should reflect Christian values and culture. (I Thess. 4:3, 7, 5:23; Col. 3:17; 2 Cor. 6:14-1; Psa.139:21; 1 John 2:15-16; Eph. 5:11-12; Rom.

12:1; Col. 3:10; Matt. 7:17-18; 2 Cor. 6:14-15.)

WHAT ABOUT CCM?

The very concept that anything is *contemporary* assumes that things have changed over time. All modes of culture are subject to change: styles of dress, styles of speech, and styles of musical and artistic expression. In each generation godly people must assess the new expressions of culture and apply the principles by which they live to the decisions these new expressions present.


Changes in musical style have often been a challenge for the Church. As a conservative institution, the Church is naturally wary of change, especially when new musical styles are influenced or created by those who are secular in their purposes or not trained Biblically or theologically. The danger is evident when changes are not driven by godly purposes but by the desire for innovation or personal pleasure.

Yet there is a natural need for refreshment in the expression of our worship to God. Development and change in music are good and wholesome, since our creativity reflects the image that God, our Creator, imprinted on us. Church

music has reflected these changes over the centuries. Musical styles have progressed from Gregorian chant through metrical psalms and Wesley's hymns to the amazing variety of choices at our disposal today. So there is a healthy tension between the need to preserve our heritage and the need to express ourselves in a new way.

Also the nature of music itself ensures there will be constant change in its forms and styles. Music is a cultural expression. Therefore it reflects the changes in values that are a part of its creators' culture. And music is creative, so it is constantly being transformed by its creators as they seek new ways of expression. These natural forces ensure that there will always be—as there always has been—contemporary (or new) Christian music (CCM). All of what we sing today was new music in its own day. So new is not necessarily bad! We must be careful, in our enthusiasm, not to consider all new music to be worldly! God is not stuck in history.

There are at least three major criticisms leveled toward CCM:
(1) *The evident influence of secular pop music in its musical style.*
(2) *The reflection of popular culture in the culture that surrounds the music (style of dress*



and speech, general atmosphere at concerts, etc.).

(3) The shallowness and theological emptiness of the lyrics in some CCM.

The first of these differences may be the one most evident to the uninitiated listener. The influence of secular popular music is evident in the restlessness of the musical style. This restlessness is produced by relentless rhythmic drive and harmonic stress. While there is great variety in pop musical styles, these traits are fairly consistent in the various styles we lump together as CCM. The question on which much philosophical debate hinges is *whether or not that musical structure can carry a cultural message that conflicts with the message of the Gospel and the values of holiness.* The definitive answer to that question is beyond the scope of this short article. But it is our opinion that all products of a culture reflect the values of that culture, and therefore carry its influence in some way.

The second of these criticisms—the reflection of popular culture in the culture that surrounds CCM—is of particular concern to people who have chosen careful disciplines of lifestyle.

The third of these criticisms is

perhaps the one we have the most difficulty applying with equal honesty to our favorite styles. It is unfortunate that much of the criticism of CCM has been based on dislike of the unfamiliar, rather than on application of principles!

While there are obvious differences between today's CCM and yesterday's new music, the criticisms we level against it could often be leveled equally against some of the music styles of the recent past. Examples of shallowness and trite musical style are found within all styles of music, including the camp meeting music of the early nineteenth century, Southern gospel, and the "inspiration and praise" music of today. Some styles, however seem to easily lend themselves to triteness.

Many people who are shocked by CCM readily accept other music marked by doctrinal carelessness, cheap grace, me-focused lyrics, and which is focused more on style or performance value than on godly values. It is hypocritical to apply a more severe standard to music we do not like than we apply to our favorite style.

What are some characteristics that may mark music as worldly?

(1) Music that seeks to conform me to this fallen world's values.
Music that expresses the attitudes

and values of this fallen world's music or that exhibits degenerate patterns, the rhythm and beat of a fallen world.

(2) Music that contains poor theology. *Popular Christian music often emphasizes cheap-grace theology and fails to encourage holy, victorious living.*

(3) Music that reflects packaging and marketing techniques that mirror a fallen secular music society. Today's CCM often glamorizes a lifestyle contrary to Christian values. It is marked by secular, sensual marketing techniques like that of the music produced by a fallen world.

Fortunately, time has proven that most of yesterday's froth and most of today's CCM will fade away and be forgotten. The church has a way of purging itself of all but the best. The great hymns and other solid gospel songs have survived the test of time. The best of the new songs will surely find their place alongside the old. ■

—*Michael Avery* is president of God's Bible School and College, where **Rodney Sones** is registrar and a member of the faculty of the Division of Music.

the clothes I wear—

Biblical Principles for Dress

By Michael Avery

What a Christian wears is not one of the greatest issues of a godly life, but it is very important. As Western culture has declined, it has abandoned time-honored values and morals, widening the gap between contemporary fashion and appropriate Christian dress. The message the fashion industry communicates is often in direct conflict with Christian values.

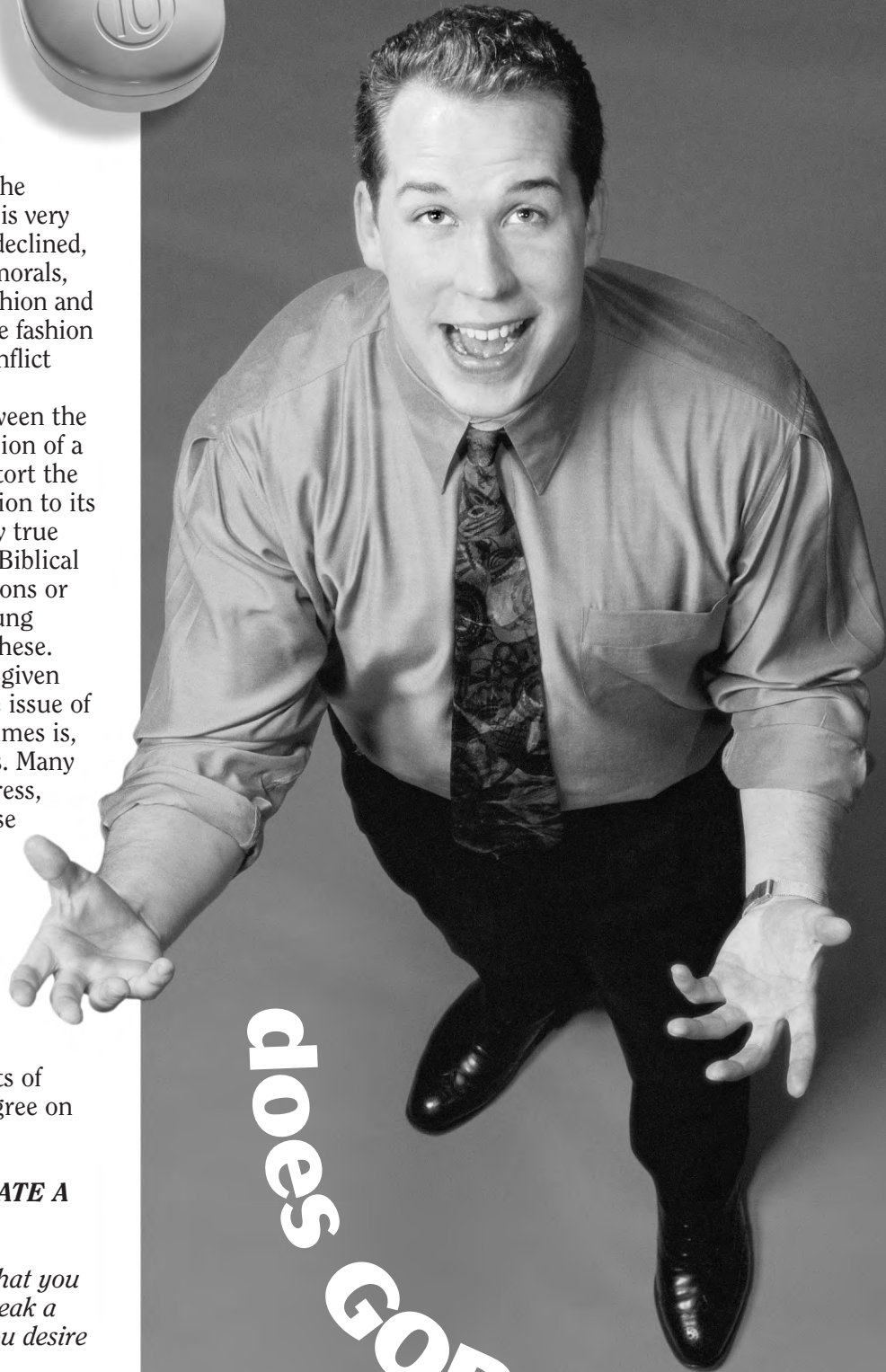
For young Christians, this conflict between the Word and the World may become the occasion of a temporary personal struggle which can distort the whole issue of dress entirely out of proportion to its true spiritual significance. This is especially true when the connection is not made between Biblical principles, on the one hand, and the traditions or convictions of the church on the other. Young people must know the difference between these.

Because church traditions are at times given the same weight as Biblical commands, the issue of appropriate dress appears to be, and sometimes is, simply an argument about man-made rules. Many have rejected the church's guidelines for dress, seeing them as irrelevant traditions, because they have not been shown the underlying Biblical principles for them. The difference between Biblical principle and the traditions or convictions of the church should be made plain. Knowing the difference will give greater freedom to accept both.

While it is true that God's Word and this present world present conflicting points of view about dress, it is also true that they agree on one thing:

THE CLOTHES YOU WEAR COMMUNICATE A MESSAGE!

Fashion expert John T. Molloy said, *"What you wear signals what you are. Your clothes speak a body language. You can elicit any effect you desire through the way you dress. You can look successful or impoverished, honest or sinister, sexy*



does
GOD
care?

or puritanical... all depending on what you wear." The business world uses this principle of dress to portray confidence, leadership, honesty and professionalism in its executives and sales staff. The fallen world uses styles crafted to portray a message of lust and rebellion. Scripture often portrays the character, attitude, or personality of an individual through a description of his or her clothing. The Bible encourages us to use this principle in a positive way.

In today's world, the message communicated is often a moral one. A person can convey the language of his soul through what he wears. He can make an outward statement about his inner-held values just by the way he adorns himself. This explains why opinions are often formed about people simply based on the way they dress. More seriously, moral judgments are often made about people based on how they dress. Clothing that overly accentuates or exposes the body can bring with it a moral judgment about a person's character. Teenagers with baggy, falling pants, heavy chains, studs in their ears and lips, brightly colored hair, with a cap perched on their head in the wrong direction, send out a message that often gives them a low rating in areas of honesty, industry and morality. Some styles of clothing are made deliberately to convey the sexual perversion of the wearer. Clothing styles that "push the edge" makes those in mainstream civilization to be nervous or uncomfortable around the wearer. Clothes do communicate a message!

THE WORLD HAS A MESSAGE TO COMMUNICATE

Designers must address the need for clothes that are useful, appealing and profitable. To insure that they succeed, they are guided by four principles. **First, the utility principle.** This principle addresses the need for various types of clothing—for example, uniforms,

athletic attire, and seasonal clothing, etc. **Second, the hierarchical principle.** This guides the designer to design clothing in such a way that appeals to human pride. Designers seek to create styles and options that enable the wearer to feel proud and haughty. **Third, the autonomy principle.** The point here is to design clothing that gives the wearer the ability to feel free from all inhibitions, giving him a sense of total self expression. This allows the wearer to rebel against societal and Biblical norms, shocking his observer with the clothes that he wears. **Fourth, the seduction principle.** Sex appeal is the strongest motive of all in designing clothing, particularly women's clothing. The point here is obvious. Create clothing that accentuates the sexuality of the wearer and allows for exposure of the body in areas that arouse sexual desire in the observer. These areas of exposure are called erotic zones. They are shifted from year to year to maintain sexual interest. Designers go from see-through clothes to a tight wrap around, to mini skirts, to long skirts with long slits, or to a dress with serious cleavage exposure. The last three of these principles are utilized to the extreme to communicate a message—the message of a fallen world.

GOD HAS A MESSAGE TO COMMUNICATE

God doesn't make the issue of what a Christian wears the greatest issue in the Bible. To elevate it to such a place is dangerous. But He does raise the issue and lays down principles to govern what is appropriate for a Christian to wear. To apply these principles in our lives is not legalism, but evidence of love for and obedience to God and His Word.

Before I offer this list of Biblical principles, let me preface them with some statements that are drawn from a logical study of God's viewpoint on the subject.

(1) God speaks through basic principles rather than rules when it comes to what we wear.

(2) These principles are given in the context of Christian growth rather than as evidence of conversion.

(3) Individuals and churches are responsible to take these principles and apply them to their lives through personal convictions (individual) or collective convictions (churches).

(4) The desire to look nice is legitimate and God-given. An attractive and neat appearance is glorifying to God and an asset in all walks of life.

(5) The love of colors and variety is a God-given part of a person's personality.

(6) Attention to current modes of dress is not necessarily wrong. (If so, we would have to adopt a uniform or settle on an antiquated style of dress.) *If current practices and Christian principle disagree, we must side with Christian principle.*

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR DRESS

(1) The principle of covering the body rather than exposing it (1 Tim. 2:9). Clothes should never be worn that expose (see through), or unduly accentuate body parts or fail to cover our nakedness (Biblically, we are naked when we expose the torso or thigh).

(2) The principle to dress so as to identify the sexes rather than confuse them (Deut. 22:5).

(3) The principle of stressing the inward rather than the outward (1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:3). The Bible tells us our beauty should not depend on outward dress, but should flow from within from our spirit. This is not to minimize what we wear, but rather to give it a very special place. The way we dress should be a servant to us, used to reflect the grace of God within.

(4) The principle of moderation and simplicity rather than (p25) ►

SECRETS OF THE JOURNEY



Biblical Principles for Spiritual Growth

By Larry D. Smith

For over 45 centuries, the Great Pyramid of Khufu has cast its shadow across the Egyptian desert. Consisting of over two million massive stones, rising to a height of 450 feet, and covering 13 acres, it has been called “mankind’s most ancient mystery.” Explorers have puzzled over its complex interior, mathematicians have marvelled at its geometric perfection, and archaeologists have debated its builders’ purpose.

But still there is no satisfying explanation for the strange mystique which broods over this great structure. The superstitious fear that curses lurk within its darkened chambers, while others think that it was made by alien intelligence from another planet. Some Christians even insist that God was its architect, designing it as a sort of key to Bible prophecy.

It’s fascinating to play detective and try to solve such riddles as the Great Pyramid of Khufu. But so far as ultimate values are concerned, it’s not essential if that magnificent building never gives up its secrets. *But what is essential—indeed, more essential than anything else—is your relationship with God.* And thankfully the only mysteries in that relationship are open secrets, plainly revealed in the Bible and in the experience of God’s people.

Relationship? Yes, this is the first secret which as a Christian you must learn; for it is basic to all the rest. *If you wish to become a happy, consistent, and victorious Christian, you must devote yourself to a faithful, growing, and lifelong relationship with God through Jesus Christ.* This means developing strong family ties with Him, since He is your Heavenly Father—ties that are reverent, loving, and vibrant and which are forged day after day as you open yourself to the Holy Spirit and to His direction. The Bible does not point to any easy “quick-fix” answers to Christian growth, but rather to a careful journey of faith and obedience toward spiritual fullness, health, and maturity. It is the exciting process of becoming more and more like Jesus—and thus more fully Christian—in all the areas of your life.

This process began in your conversion—that moment of spiritual rebirth when you became a “new creature” in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). No one is ever truly converted until he or she enters into a voluntary, binding, all-embracing covenant with God, for covenant is the foundation of all relationship with Him. In a sense, it’s like



saying the wedding vows to God, for you pledge solemn, absolute, and exclusive commitment to Him—"for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health." *"Whether You bless me with joyful feelings or leave me without them; whether You send pleasant times or permit trials and troubles; whether You comfort me with the support of Christian friends or let me go on alone except for Your presence, I will be Yours, Lord God; I will be Yours entirely; and I will be Yours forever!"* Spiritual breakdown will come if you do not make this vow so firmly that you never intend to break it. Breakdown will also occur "in the time of temptation," if you forget your vow and "fall away," or if you turn away from it, "choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life" (Lk. 8:13-14).

We never enter covenant with God as equals, of course; for He is by far the greater partner in this sacred compact. But if we will come to Him gladly and humbly, submitting to His terms, He will receive us, forgive our sins, and reshape us in His own likeness. *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matt. 11:28). *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (I John 1:9). *"And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Acts 2:21).

Steadfastly you must believe God's promises and rely fully upon them. For this certain confidence in

Him and His Word is the faith by which we are saved (John 3:36) and by which we live (Rom. 1:17). In every case, *"He is God, the faithful God, who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandment..."* (Deut. 7:9). Indeed, He will be faithful to us even when we are not faithful to Him. It is sin to break our vows to God, and sin is always tragic. But even in our worst failures, God is ready to forgive us and restore us; and that is why He invites us to return and renew the broken covenant.

As you "walk in the light, as He is in the light" (I John 1:7), submissive to the disciplines of holy purpose and holy habit, the covenant bonds which hold you to Him will become increasingly stronger. Victory over sin will be easier, and life in Jesus will become more steadfast. Your spiritual progress will lead through a

between you and God in dynamic relationship! Granted, the journey will demand discipline, purpose, and vigilance, but it is an exciting journey which will lead you home.

All this process in relationship is called *spiritual formation*, and it includes the means and methods God uses to turn us sinners into saints. For according to His purpose, we are all *"called to be saints"* (Rom. 1:7)—not sickly-looking mystics with painted-on halos, but earnest, robust, and consistent Christians of real value to His kingdom in this present world. Many scriptures speak of spiritual formation; but the whole process is summarized in 2 Co. 3:18: *"But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* Note the words in this verse that define our growth in spiritual development:



deepening experience of holiness to the defining moment of entire sanctification and then on into greater usefulness and service. Remember, too, that the Christian life is always the moment-by-moment life, for you must depend continually upon God's strength and continually obey God's Word. *For the focus is always NOW—what is going on now*

Authenticity. Paul says that Christians maintain an "open face" toward Christ in contrast to the "veil" of spiritual blindness and hardness of heart which is "taken away" in our conversion. To keep this "open face" with God, you must walk with Him in *utter honesty and with full transparency*. Never hide behind excuses or previous spiritual

attainments, but be “real” with Him and with others. If you fail, admit it; if you sin, confess it; if you need to make changes, make them. God is merciful, but He will not put up with deceit and double-dealing.

Focus. All the Christian life is one constant gaze upon the face of the Lord Jesus, “beholding as in a glass [mirror] the glory of the Lord.” He is revealed by the Spirit in the gospel, where we lovingly and deliberately focus upon His person, His character, and His mighty acts for us. *If you wish to grow spiritually, keep your eyes on Him.* Others will fail you, but He will not. Keep your eyes on Him, not on the world or even on other Christians. “...let us run with patience the race that is before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2).

Transformation. All the time we are “beholding...the glory of the Lord,” Paul promises, we are also being “changed into the same image”—that is, *we are being transformed into the likeness of the Lord Jesus!* Holiness is all about becoming like Jesus, and this only happens as we center our lives in Him. Only God’s grace can change sinful human nature, of course. But grace does require an active and positive response; and ordinarily He channels it to us only as we use the **means of grace** which He has appointed. If we use them lovingly, diligently, and confidently, we will grow in grace; if we do not, we will shrivel and die spiritually.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’

doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:41). This verse describes four of the means of grace which were especially important in the early church and which are still important to your daily life in Christ. They include

(1) **“The apostles’ doctrine.”** The apostles were Jesus’ representatives, sent to preach the gospel everywhere; and their teaching was the original Christian message, found in the New Testament. *You must immerse yourself in the Bible to know and follow this same message which God has given.*

(2) **“Fellowship.”** This is the common life of the church, which provides worship, encouragement, and accountability to believers. *If you are going to be a healthy, growing Christian, you must become an active part of a spiritually-alive congregation.*

(3) **The “breaking of bread.”** As most scholars agree, this was the Lord’s Supper, celebrated joyously and frequently by those early Christians. *This is still “food for the journey,” and you should gratefully receive it as often as you can.*

(4) **“Prayers.”** This refers to earnest entreaties to God, expressed in adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and supplication. *If you are to grow in grace and become more like Jesus, you must devote yourself to disciplined, earnest, and faithful prayer.*

There are other means of grace—such as witnessing and fasting—which God uses to give us His strength and

➡(p12) your will, even when you don’t feel joyful, the emotions of joy generally begin to appear unexplainably. The emotions follow you, rather than leading you. Similarly, you are exhorted to “Put on love” (Col. 3:14). But isn’t it hypocritical to act lovingly when I don’t feel love? Not if it is an act of sincere obedience!

8. How serious a matter is engagement?

God’s people are to avoid making promises they cannot or will not keep. The Psalmist gives us a list of attributes of those who may dwell in God’s presence. Among these is he “who keeps his oath, even when it hurts” (Ps. 15:4). Engagement is at least similar to betrothal in Bible times. In betrothals, it took legal divorce on scriptural ground to revoke the betrothal covenant. God’s message to us is that engagement should not be entered into lightly. It

is not a final trial period before making the truly binding vows.

Let’s take this a step further. Dating is not just “recreational romance” in which each party intentionally endeavors to cultivate the other’s desire, while recognizing the relationship is most likely temporary. Dating is a serious business! One writer warned against couples becoming romantically involved too soon by becoming *one heart* before they become “*one flesh*.” Such dating can involve “emotional promiscuity” which is more likely a preparation for divorce than for marriage!

In conclusion, don’t rush the process. Be patient! Your first priority is to know God. “*Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness*” (Matt. 6:33). From this relationship all of life falls into proper place.

Instead of dating, have fun experiencing the joy of spending

time with others in family and group gatherings. Clean friendships in group settings can replace the romantic pressures of a date. When young people develop friendships with the opposite sex, they can relax and be themselves without trying to impress another person. Group outings that provide a variety of activities allow teens and young adults to get to know each other under different circumstances. Churches should provide opportunities through activities like birthday parties, community service, Bible studies, prayer meetings, short-term missions, picnics, etc. During these years, young people should be able to relax and have the privilege of being friends with both boys and girls. ■

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favor, but these four are foundational. As you use them, He will transform you into Christ's likeness "from glory unto glory," or as J.B. Phillips translates the phrase, "with ever-increasing splendor."

Source: All this is "by the Spirit of the Lord." From the beginning to the end, our adventure with God is enabled and supported by the Holy Spirit, the living source of our sanctification. Christianity is not just a determined but failing effort at self-improvement. Rather it is abundant life in God, monitored and mentored by the Spirit, who "helpeth our infirmities" (Rom. 8:2), and who at last will bring us to glory.

There will be a day of final revelation when even the Great Pyramid of Khufu will give up its secrets. Even now, however, we know secrets far more important—

open secrets which determine not only present life, but also eternal destiny. Basic to them all is this: *If you want to become a happy, consistent, and victorious Christian, you must devote yourself to a faithful, growing and lifelong relationship with God through Jesus Christ His Son.* This is the exciting process of becoming more and more like Him, and thus more fully Christian, in all the areas of life. It is not a "quick-fix," but rather a careful journey which will lead you home. "Time and obedience are enough," wrote Frederick Faber, "and thou a saint shall be." ■

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➡(p9) drunkards cannot inherit the kingdom of God. What then would followers of Jesus Christ be doing entertaining themselves with the celebration of these vices?

Sometimes I fear that we are becoming so much like this world that we cannot do much to help it. *God will receive us and use us if we refuse the unclean thing.* But how can He use what needs to be purified first. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Keep yourself pure" (1 Tim. 5:22). Again he wrote, "If anyone cleanses himself, he will be a vessel of honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21), and, "Flee also youthful lusts, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace

with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart"(2 Tim. 2:22). Some of the stuff believers are flirting with today just doesn't seem like the righteousness, faith, and love that Paul indicated we all should be pursuing.

As believers, we are to be *separated from sin* (2 Cor 6:14-7:1) *separated by the Shekinah of God's glory* (Ex. 33:15,16), and *separated to the service of Jesus Christ* (Rom. 1:1). Children of God are to be distinguished by the attending presence of God and by fervent service to the Lord, but this all starts with the first step of separating one's self from all that God abhors.

If I were Satan, I would try to get Christians to withdraw from the

world, build monasteries, and go into seclusion. On the other hand, if I were ineffective here, I would seduce them to become like the very world they are endeavoring to transform. My devious strategy would involve the world transforming the believer rather than the believer transforming the world.

Vance Havner said something like this, "We are in the world, but not of the world; and Christ takes us out of the world to send us right back into the world to pull others out of the world—and that is all the business we have in this world." ■

—**Dan Glick** is chair of the Division of Intercultural Studies and World Missions, God's Bible School and College

➡(p21) **ostentation and showiness (1 Timothy 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 3:3-4).** Christians should seek to dress modestly and moderately. They should avoid an ostentatious display of riches, either to show off their social standing or to call attention to their person. *All extremes should be avoided.* In these two passages, the Bible clearly prohibits the ornamentation of the body. Christians should be careful that they do not invest an unreasonable amount in clothes.

(5) The principle to be transformed by the Word rather than to be conformed to the world (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:11-71). The Bible is quite clear about separation, and that call to separation will ultimately find its way into the way we dress.

(6) The principle of propriety (Rom. 14:16). As a matter of good culture, some forms of clothing should

not be worn in certain places and at certain times, yet they may be appropriate under other conditions.

As Christians, we are guided by the leadership of the Holy Spirit and a sincere desire to please God and obey His Word. *All earnest Christians want to reflect God's objectives and Biblical values in both their inner and outer person.* We should be motivated at all times to communicate the message of godliness and holiness in our walk, talk, and spirit.

In evaluating this matter of what we wear, we should ask ourselves these two questions: First, "*What do I want to say with my life?*" Second, "*Do the clothes I wear communicate the Biblical values by which I seek to live?*" ■

—**Michael Avery** is president of God's Bible School and College.

➡(p5) law?” The Ten Commandments? Have you ever noticed that there is nothing explicitly in the Ten Commandments about giving help to the poor? Yet most people would agree that helping the poor is a moral requirement.

What about the Sabbath? “Do the Sabbath laws fit in the ceremonial, civil or moral category?” A major problem with the three category method is the absence of an agreed upon method for knowing which verses to include in each category. Some verses seem to fit in more than one category.

Here is a suggested method for understanding and applying the Old Testament. The method I have found most helpful in knowing how to apply the Old Testament teachings to my life is what I call the **UP-SA method**. The abbreviation UP stands for a *universal principle* that reflects a truth based on God’s unchanging character. The abbreviation SA stands for a *specific application* which is derived from a universal principle. To understand this approach, we need to think a moment about God and return to the reason He gave us the Bible.

The Bible is God’s self-revelation to us. In it we learn: (1) *God is immutable*—He never changes. His counsel, purpose, and character are always the same (Mal. 3:6; James. 1:17; Heb. 6:17); (2) *God is the source of all truth* (Deut. 32:4; Is. 65:16); and (3) *Truth is a reflection of the unchanging character of God*. Because His character never changes, His truth never changes with the passing of time. He dwells in eternity and transcends time. All that He reveals about Himself, His attitudes, His feelings, His likes and dislikes remain the same throughout the ages.

When we read the Old Testament, we must remember that God is speaking to us (Heb 1:1). Since He never changes, everything He gives us in the Old Testament should be carefully studied to

discern what He wants us to learn about Himself. *Each verse reflects either a universal principle or a specific application of a universal principle.* When you encounter a verse that seems to have no relevance to you, because you live in a different country with a different culture, do not ignore or dismiss the verse. Ask yourself, “Is this verse teaching a *universal principle* or a *specific application* of a universal principle?” Universal principles are unchanging and transcend all cultures and time limitations. Specific applications, on the other hand, are not binding upon all cultures. Specific applications change when situations change. But remember, it is only *after* the universal principle is understood that one can evaluate whether the verse itself is a universal principle or a specific application of a universal principle. *Be sure you do not confuse a universal principle with a specific application.* There is a difference!

Let’s look at an example. In Exodus 22:18 we read, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” Question to ask: “Is this verse a universal principle or a specific application of a universal principle?” *Here is a suggested thought process for personal application:* the putting to death all those connected with the occult is prohibited in America by our civil laws. Romans 13:1-8 tells us to obey the civil authorities (cf. I Pet. 2:13-15). *This verse, therefore, looks like a specific application, not a universal principle.* To test our thesis, we must be able to derive the universal principle on which this specific application is based.

To derive the universal principle, we can deduce the following: since God told Israel to kill all practitioners of witchcraft, *God must hate anything associated with the occult.* This is God’s unchanging attitude toward the occult. This is the universal principle. The specific application during the period of time when God was in control of Israel

called for capital punishment for all occultic offenders. Since capital punishment is not permitted in our cultural situation, the specific application which would properly reflect God’s attitude toward the occult is for us to hate anything associated with the occult. As a New Testament believer, I am to adopt God’s attitude toward the occult. I should therefore have no participation in anything occultic (occultic computer games, occultic books, horoscopes, seances, palm reading, divination, invoking evil spirits, ouija boards, tarot cards, etc.) *I must carefully distinguish, however, between hating occultic practices and hating occultic practitioners.* I must love people even as God loves them.

Any time God says He hates something, or says something is an abomination to Him, or requires the death penalty for something, we should understand that if God, who never changes, feels that strongly about it, we should adopt His attitude toward the same things.

The UP-SA method of interpretation sees each verse of the Old Testament as important and relevant because each verse teaches us how God thinks and is to guide us in our thinking. The Bible is thus unified, and the reader of Scripture endeavors to adopt the mind of God by careful consideration and study of everything God has revealed.

Conclusion:

Every time you open your Bible to read and study, say to God, “Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law” (Ps. 119:18). The Bible is God’s ever-present gift to us. Our understanding and the use of His gifts always increase in direct measure to our wise use of them. “Light obeyed increases light; Light rejected brings the night.” ■

—Allan P. Brown is chair of the Division of Ministerial Education, God’s Bible School and College.

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New Date **May 17-26, 2002**

Evangelists: Albert Barr • Chris Cravens • Wingrove Taylor

Music: GBS Music Division under the direction of Garen L. Wolf I

Children's Services: GBS Students

Prayer Leader: Edsel Trouten

Daniel-Revelation Class: Allan Brown,
 1:00-5:00 pm

Baccalaureate: Sunday, May 19, 2:30 pm

Commencement: Saturday, May 25,
 10:00 am

Prayer and Healing	7:30 am
Breakfast	8:00 am
Heart Talks	9:00 am
Morning Worship	*10:30 am
Children's Meeting	10:30 am
Lunch	12:00 pm
Daniel-Revelation Class	1:00-5:00 pm
Supper	5:00 pm
Evening Service	*7:00 pm

*Nursery service provided during the main services



Albert Barr



Chris Cravens



Wingrove Taylor



Michael Avery
 President



Allan Brown
 Bible Teacher



Garen Wolf
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March 2002

Symphonic Wind & String Ensemble

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March 9 Saturday 6:00 PM
Eastview Community Church of the Nazarene
8100 Newburgh Rd. Evansville, IN
Rev. David Edwards
Rev. Michael Bell / Assoc. Pastor
812-474-9571, 812-490-3114 (evening)

March 10 Sunday 10:30 AM (combined)
Faith Mission Church, Bedford, IN
Dr. Leonard Sankey 812-275-2119 (O)
812-275-7820 (H)

March 10 Sunday 6:00 PM
Frankfort Bible Holiness Church, Frankfort, IN
Rev. Mark Mowery 765-654-7901 (or 8170)

March 22 Friday 7:00 PM
Greater Indianapolis GBS Rally
Calvary Bible Wesleyan Church
168 Lawndale Dr., Plainfield, IN
Rev. Marcus Dodrill 317-838-0646

March 23 Saturday 7:00 PM
GBS Area Rally, Bible Holiness Church
13th and Cottonwood, Independence, KS
Rev. Joe Davolt 620-331-4480

March 24 Palm Sunday 8:50 / 11:10
(Two AM services)
First Church of the Nazarene, Pittsburg, KS
Rev. Jim Sukraw 620-231-0658

March 24 Palm Sunday 6:00 PM
Bible Fellowship Center
4929 S. Waco, Tulsa, OK
Rev. William Cook 918-446-3209

March 25 Monday 7:30 PM
Greater Oklahoma City GBS Rally
Calvary Bible Fellowship, 6606 NW 16th
Oklahoma City, OK
Rev. Rodney Loper 405-789-6221 (or 948-3351)

March 26 Tuesday 7:30 PM
East Central KS GBS Rally, Pilgrim Bible Church
12th and Cedar Streets, Ottawa, KS
Rev. James A. Southerland, Sr. 785-242-1339

March 27 Wednesday 7:30 PM
Parkway Church of God (Holiness)
1111 State St., Ft. Scott, KS
Rev. Mark Stetler 620-223-6870 (or 2248)

