

THE

LIVING

CHURCH NEWS

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March–April 2011

Our Surrender to Jesus Christ

Dear Brethren and Friends,

At the Passover time, we correctly focus on Jesus Christ's sacrifice and His shed blood to pay for our sins. As I have said a number of times in sermons, brethren, we are the "Church of the Forgiven."

We should always be profoundly aware of the *tremendous debt* we owe Christ—and God the Father, who "gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). We should be eternally grateful that we were made in God's *own image*, and that our Father *planned* for us to be His full sons and share eternity with Him, with Jesus Christ, and with the "spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23). We should certainly focus on the profound love and selflessness which Christ demonstrated in being willing to "empty" Himself of His divine glory and come into this human flesh and then die an agonizing death to reconcile us to the Father and so make possible our *full Sonship* in the Kingdom and Family of God.

We must never forget what Jesus did!

Again, the ultimate **purpose** of His supreme sacrifice was to make it possible for true Christians to eventually become *full sons of God*. Thus, many scriptures referring at least partially to the Passover and Christ's death also emphasize that we must not merely believe in this and be thankful for what Jesus did, but that we must let the risen Christ actually *live* within us through His Spirit. And that we must spiritually "eat" of Christ, and truly "feed" on Him. Jesus said, "Whoever

eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 6:54–57).

Brethren, at this Passover time, it is of profound importance that we examine ourselves **seriously** and ask ourselves individually, "Am I actually **doing** what God expects of me?"

Later in this powerful passage in John 6, Jesus explained, "It is the Spirit [that] gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (v. 63).

Obviously, one of the primary ways we must prepare to become full sons of God is to "feed" on Christ by genuinely *studying* and *saturating ourselves* with the very word that He inspired. Many of us in the Church do "a little Bible reading" every day—or at least most days. But how many of us consciously try to carefully read, meditate on and "drink in" the very mind and heart of God and "feed" on Christ by profoundly studying the Bible with heartfelt intensity and accompanying prayer? How many of us cry out to God as we study, "Teach me your ways, O God, and lead me in Your paths"? How many of us try to regularly *meditate* on God's word, on His law—and on His Plan—and try to truly have the very *mind of Christ* in this way and to *reflect* Christ's mind in everything we think, say and do? Remember, Jesus inspired the Apostle Paul to



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Volume 13, No. 2



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write, “Let this **mind** be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

As many of us so sadly observe, **hundreds of millions** of professing Christians and even *thousands* of scattered Church of God brethren in various groups say that they “intend” to follow Christ’s direction. Yet, it is obvious in so many cases that they go *exactly the opposite way* in some of their doctrines and practices! A number of Church of God groups are now struggling to maintain themselves because of people’s deep-seated desire to be totally “independent.” Their idea that, “I won’t let any man tell me what to do,” has *helped cause their problems!* For this rebellious attitude against God’s clearly taught pattern of government has been a part of carnal human reasoning almost from the very beginning of human existence!

Carnal human beings out in this deceived world—*cut off from God*, and *cut off from the understanding* that His word really is inspired—develop the attitude, “I want to do it *my way!*” In their deceived condition, millions convince themselves that it is more “loving” to ignore God’s word and instead to allow men to marry men, and to allow mothers to murder their unborn babies right in their own womb! They condone and promote all sorts of practices that God’s word condemns again and again. But *they are blinded!* They have that excuse. And we know that God will later bring these blinded people to genuine understanding and repentance. But we in God’s Church should know better!

So, we in the *Living Church of God* must really “feed” on Christ and have His mind in the way we approach every single facet of human existence—and *mean it*.

God tells us in His inspired word, “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17). Virtually all Church of God members have read this verse. Yet, we sometimes find even baptized members *fiercely resisting* the instruction and direction of

God’s true ministers regarding the qualities they should seek in the person they will marry, as well as the proper procedure in dating and courtship—and even the way brethren ought to conduct themselves at Church functions. No, God’s ministers are not to be “dictators”—they are to be “helpers of your joy” (2 Corinthians 1:24, KJV)—but we should all rejoice when things are done decently and in order, and we should not seek to “get our own way” against the clear commands of Scripture (1 Corinthians 14:40).

If we are to continue to have the wonderful atmosphere of *unity* and *loyalty* we have experienced in the Living Church of God for so many years, we *all* need to meditate on these scriptures and sincerely try to “align” ourselves with the mind of God! As we do this, our fruits should make it plain to anyone who cares to examine this Work: (1) *Where* the full Truth of God is most thoroughly taught and practiced; (2) *Where* the Work of

preaching the Gospel to “all the nations” is most effectively being accomplished; and (3) *Where* the *biblical* form of Church government is more fully understood and practiced.

At this “time of the **end**,” especially, we should truly focus on preparing for the **reality** of our service in Christ’s soon-coming world government. He wants us to learn to humbly practice and submit to *His* loving government in the Church today. As the Apostle Paul was inspired to write, “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:2–3). So we must *all* “get involved” in learning and practicing *Christ’s* form of government *right now!*

As the Apostle John wrote, Christ is indeed preparing a “place,” a **position** as king and priest in the coming Kingdom—for each one of us (John 14:2). Christ is *right now* “checking us out,” working with us and “testing” each of us

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The *Living Church News* is published bimonthly by the Living Church of God, 2301 Crown Centre Drive, Charlotte, NC 28227. Subscriptions are sent without charge to all members of the Living Church of God.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to

The Living Church News • P.O. Box 3810 Charlotte, NC 28227

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EDITORIAL

True Christianity: A Way of Life!

By Roderick C. Meredith

Most of you “old timers” in the Church will remember that, back in the 1950s and 1960s, Mr. Herbert Armstrong taught us that true Christianity is an entire “way of life.” It is *not* just a belief in the Person of Jesus. It is also sincerely and consciously following Jesus’ instruction: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Luke 4:4). In *principle*—though not necessarily always in the letter—we should follow even the Old Testament instructions given in the “statutes” of God. For we know that, as magnified by Christ’s personal teachings and the entire New Testament, the *entire Bible* reveals the “mind of God.”

The Old Testament gives instruction about *washing regularly*, about *burying* human refuse under the ground so that it would not spread disease, about putting a railing around the flat roof of your house so that people would not fall off, about *not* eating animal fat and eating only the animals the Bible designates “clean.” All of this—and much more—is part of a way of life which acknowledges that “God knows best” even in the smallest details of life. Following carefully this entire way of life certainly does *not* “earn” salvation, but it demonstrates that we are *truly* trying to “live by every word of God.” As we grow in understanding, and in our humble yieldedness to God’s word, this certainly helps us qualify for greater responsibility in the coming Kingdom of God. For God will see that we are earnestly putting into practice His way in our lives, and that we will therefore be far more yielded and experienced in implementing this “way” in the five or ten cities we may be put in charge of in Christ’s soon-coming world government (Luke 19:19; Revelation

2:26–27). God’s inspired word indicates that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14). It instructs us to “glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:20). So, if we really believe these and other clear scriptures, we should assume that every part of our body is put there for a purpose. We should assume that every organ of our body is there for a good reason and should not be abused, nor cut out and thrown away without a very good reason! As a corollary, we should carefully acquaint ourselves with the fact that the very top doctors and medical researchers now realize that many of the operations and procedures doctors have traditionally practiced are often completely unnecessary and sometimes even dangerous! For instance, consider the opinion of a practicing physician as quoted in our booklet, *Does God Heal Today?*, revealing her disillusionment with the almost worshipful approach that millions take toward medicine. “A decade ago, I stood alongside my 99 fellow freshmen as we were welcomed into the ranks of medicine in a ‘white coat ceremony.’ Here, on our first day of med school, we were presented with the short white coats that proclaimed us part of the mystery and the discipline of medicine. During that ceremony, the dean said something that was repeated throughout my education: half of what we teach you here is wrong—*unfortunately, we don’t know which half*” (p. 2).

Dr. Sanders goes on to describe how drastic changes are sometimes made every few years in how certain conditions are treated. The doctors themselves tell us that they are “practicing” medicine. Does this mean that we should completely avoid

doctors? Of course not! If you are hit by a truck, you had probably better get to a hospital and see a trained physician immediately! Medical doctors, dentists, osteopaths, chiropractors and other health professionals often render an invaluable service to their fellow man. They are often deeply sincere and dedicated men and women doing “the best they can” with their present knowledge and with the resources available to them. So this should be deeply appreciated!

On the other hand, if you read their own writings, you will find warning after warning about the dangers of using drugs, with their many conflicting side-effects—and about carelessness and even malpractice in certain hospitals. So this should help us think very carefully before submitting to any medical procedure. And it should encourage us to be conscientious in doing all we can to prevent sickness and injury to our bodies. I subscribe to a few health newsletters written by top health professionals. These letters all warn, in principle, that we should remember the old adage: “There is a cause for every effect!” These health care experts, many of them doctors, all encourage their readers to follow more carefully the laws of health and therefore not get sick in the first place! They are simply describing, from their professional perspective, the principle that we should glorify God in our bodies. This is a vital part of the “way of life” of a true Christian.

God tells us: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). Our professing-Christian nations used to have millions of respectful and obedient youth. But, several decades ago, along came the

“child psychologists.” As a whole, they were trained by God-rejecting, secular humanist professors who paid no attention whatever to the teachings of the Bible. Then came Dr. Benjamin Spock, and others like him, who gave us a totally different approach to teaching, training and disciplining our children. As many have observed, this led to an entire generation of selfish, undisciplined and unruly children who grew up with “Spock marks” all over them!

Within a decade or so after the Americans and the British began to allow these “educated fools” to tell us how to rear our children, the statistics for juvenile delinquency began to skyrocket, young people started turning to illegal drugs, and other social ills began to multiply. As they say, “You know the rest of the story.”

In the realm of marriage and family, God’s word very clearly tells us: “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself” (Ephesians 5:22–28).

But along came “feminism” and the modern “pick and choose” approach to the Bible—even adopted by many professing Christians. The leaders of these movements either totally reject the Bible as a genuine authority, or reinterpret even plain and clear scriptures to suit themselves. Because of the entirely wrong approach to marriage and family taken by most of today’s so-called experts, marriages in our Western,

professing “Christian” nations have been breaking up with increasing frequency, and young people by the millions just decide to “live together” without the benefit of marriage!

Many of you have read—as I have—the horrifying results of people not following God’s teaching regarding marriage and the home. The real picture of life for the millions of miserable married couples—and those just cohabiting—is indeed very sad. Young



people today have not been taught how to establish a stable and happy home. They have not been taught to totally commit themselves to each other, before God, to establish a home and family “till death do us part.” They have not been taught to give and give, and to forgive each other continually in the marriage relationship. So they become absolutely miserable, and live lives of untold agony and sorrow. Then their children—by the millions—become confused, disoriented and resentful because their parents “split.” In self-pity and anger, many of these children turn to drugs, to crime and often even to violence in their frustration. It is well documented that children from broken homes have a far higher rate of suicide. They simply try to “solve” the problem by killing themselves.

“The wages of sin is death,” says your Bible (Romans 6:23). Even physical death is often the result for those who break God’s laws of health, of marriage or of child-rearing.

There is a cause for every effect. Even though we live in a confused and increasingly God-rejecting society, we as the Church of God need to get

back to the right way of life taught and practiced by the early Christians.

In the late 1940s, and for many years afterward, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong tried to recapture and impart this way of life to God’s people—and especially to the students of Ambassador College. In fact, he set the motto of Ambassador College as: “Recapture True Values.” Through much study, prayer and God’s guidance, he tried to teach the early Ambassador College students how to properly date and conduct a truly Christian courtship, how to love and serve our mate in marriage and how to “train up a child in the way he should go” (Proverbs 22:6).

Of course, we were not “perfect” by any means. We were all learning as we went along. But to the degree that we followed this way of life, our marriages were blessed, we were in better health, and our families as a whole were in better shape than most families in the society around us. Even the neighbors often remarked about how the Ambassador students “radiated” an inner joy and expressed unusual kindness and courtesy.

In fact, in the early years of Ambassador College, not a single divorce occurred! And when the first one took place, many of us were in shock because we had never experienced such a thing in our midst.

Also, significantly, to the best of my knowledge even after investigating and checking up for years, I know of not one single rape perpetrated by a student while attending Ambassador College—even though, over time, thousands of young people attended.

We were also taught: “Get your happiness from your work!” We were constantly encouraged to live lives of productivity and accomplishment. We were often reminded of Ecclesiastes 9:10: “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.”

Mr. Armstrong regularly exhorted us to set high standards and seek for

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Unity: Christ's Final Passover Lesson

By Scott D. Winnail

The very special and intimate Passover evening with His disciples was drawing to a close. Jesus Christ had just shared a wonderful meal with His friends and students—the apostles. They feasted on succulent, sweet lamb, seasoned with the wonderfully contrasting flavors of bitter herbs.

Jesus Christ finished kneeling and washing the beautiful feet of each of His disciples—feet that He and the Father had designed and made to carry them every day of their lives, and to roam throughout the world to preach the Gospel (Romans 10:15). As He broke and shared unleavened bread with them, He taught them about the healing power of His soon-to-be broken body. He shared wine with them—teaching them about the sin-forgiving power of His soon-to-be-spilt blood—the blood that would make the New Covenant possible (Luke 22:20).

As He came to the end of the evening, Christ was saddened to leave these companions He loved—and in whom He had invested so much time and effort teaching God's profound truth. He had spent three-and-a-half years as their teacher, yet these men recognized Christ not just as their teacher or beloved friend, but as their Lord.

Christ had begun working with these men when they were spiritually weak, immature, and even arrogant. He had witnessed their unbridled enthusiasm. He enjoyed their excitement when God used them to do miracles. He saw their confused looks when He spoke in parables. He had experienced the joy of watching them mature into the instruments that He and His Father would soon use to carry on a Work even greater than had yet been done (John 14:12). But now it was nearly time for Christ to part company with these students and friends in whom He had invested so much in His final years on the earth. As He prepared for the final events of His physical life, He prayed powerfully to the Father on their behalf, and on *ours*:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son that Your Son also may glorify You... I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word... I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them... I do not pray for these

alone, but also for those who *will believe in Me* through their word; that they all may be **one**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be **one** in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be **one** just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in **one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me” (John 17: 1, 6, 9, 10, 20–23).

Christ's final words of this Passover ended with a prayer for godly **unity** in His future Church. His desire was for the disciples, including all who “will believe” in the truth—which *includes today's true Christians!*—to be unified, together under Him and the Father, as Christ and the Father are unified together.

Christ was well aware of the destructive power of discord and division. As the Word, He watched for several thousand years while the “author of confusion” worked to divide the families of the patriarchs, the kingdom of Israel, and even His own disciples. The name “Satan” comes from the Hebrew word for “adversary”—and Christ knew that

the “divide and conquer” tactics of this adversary would be powerfully used in the future to divide His called-out ones. So, Christ was praying for the Father's protection for the future Church. He was also warning His disciples—including *us today!*—about the spiritual dangers to come. This warning is of utmost importance, and in their writings His followers were also inspired again and again to warn God's Church to remain humble (Romans 12:16), avoid divisive words (1 Timothy 6:4–5), and strive for the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). Christ clearly taught that when a house or kingdom is divided against itself, it cannot remain standing (Matthew 12:25). Although factions or divisions would be ever-present at the end of the age, even among God's people (1 Corinthians 11:18–19), those who would truly *walk worthy of their calling* would be unified in the same baptism, Spirit, hope and faith (Ephesians 4:1–6).

EXAMINING THE SELF

As we approach the Passover, we are all well aware that we should be examining ourselves in the mirror of Scripture

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(1 Corinthians 11:27–32). In fact, in this very passage, Christ revealed through the Apostle Paul that “if we would judge ourselves,” we would not need to be judged by Him (v. 31). God mercifully gave us, through His Spirit, the powerful and life-changing tools of self-examination and repentance. If we use these tools well and make changes based on what we learn, there need not be a penalty for shortcomings that we are able to change.

Satan wants nothing more than for Christ’s very own Church to see destruction! Although Satan has *not* been given power to destroy God’s Church, he *can* freely attempt to influence God’s saints to face off against each other and bring about terrible trials. He can even insert false brethren among us to incite dissension (Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43). These are tactics Satan has mastered, which he uses powerfully and in stealth. If we do not look at ourselves and our attitudes very closely, controlling and bringing “every thought into captivity” (2 Corinthians 10:5), we can easily begin to function according to the divisive impulses Satan so craftily broadcasts at us, as “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). But through effective use of the tools of self-examination and repentance, we can truly combat Satan’s divisive ways, and God can then use us powerfully as His tools of righteousness (Romans 6:13) to promote godly unity in His Church.

All of us, as we deeply examine ourselves and seek to more fully put on the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5), should be able to clearly discern when our actions and perspectives have been motivated by God’s Holy Spirit—and when they have been motivated by our adversary. The fruits will *always* demonstrate the source of our motivation.

WORLDLY FRUITS

We understand that we live in a world held captive by the “god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan wants desperately to destroy what God is building through His Church. It is far too easy today to pick up Satan’s worldly ways and attitudes and transport them into our homes and local congregations. They are broadcast into our homes through our televisions, video games and computers. They are shared with us by our classmates, friends, colleagues and even family—and we often, unawares, bring them into our homes and even to Sabbath services. We need to clearly understand that many of the attitudes, catch phrases, perspectives and even terminology that the world teaches us are Satan-inspired to cause division and destruction. As the “accuser of our brethren” (Revelation 12:10), Satan has devised terms and concepts that on the surface can

sound convincing, but upon deeper examination are not only divisive and down-putting, but also contrary to godly teaching. So, how can we know which concepts are of God and which are not? After all, the world is a cleverly mixed bag of “good” and “evil.”

THE FRUITS OF UNITY

Yes, society is a mixture of good and evil, but determining which ideas, concepts and perspectives are of God, and which *are not*, is easier than you might think. Jesus Christ taught a powerful and essential key to determining whether works and perspectives are directed by God or the god of this age. “You will know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16–20) is a *clear* direction Christ gave His disciples twice in just a few short verses in Matthew. Our fruits, our attitudes, our desires and our actions can be easily traced to their source—God or Satan—with some simple and honest self-examination.

Paul taught that actions and thoughts that are truly motivated *by God* always reflect and radiate love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). A concept, idea, or person truly motivated by God will consistently bear these fruits, in word and deed. Christ noted that “a good tree cannot bear bad fruit” (Matthew 7:18). Conversely, if actions, thoughts or notions are of Satan—*not* of God—they will reflect the following characteristics: lewdness, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, revelries and the like (Galatians 5:19–21).

What can we discern from the attitudes of those who display anger and impatience in trying to prove a point? Scripture reminds us, “Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath” (Ephesians 4:26). Also: “Be angry and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah” (Psalm 4:4). Most of us have dealt with people who have given in to uncontrolled anger—who have become “consumed” with the idea that they are right and others are wrong. When confronted with the truth of a matter, they may even have a “visceral” physical reaction—such as the hot, flushed feeling in the face and neck that can accompany unbridled anger.

More subtly, however, this attitude of being consumed with one’s self-righteousness may manifest in other dangerous ways. Proving their own point will be a primary motivation in their Bible study, their prayer, and even their efforts to fast (Isaiah 58:3). And their attitude spreads easily to others whom they convince of their ungodly ideas, who may acquire a spirit of anger, or may display a spirit of self-



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righteousness or self-justification—or both. Satan’s way predictably leads to actions or *feelings* of impatience, wrath, anxiety, frustration, distrust and division. By contrast, God’s way and His truth foster in true Christians the attitudes of peace, harmony, gentleness, self-control and patience.

God’s desire is for us to become His instruments of righteousness—tools He can use to spread true unity as part of His Gospel. Whereas Satan’s desire is for us to become his instruments of unrighteousness to sin—tools he can use to spread discord and division (Romans 6:12–13). God warned about those who use powerful language to stir people up, yet leave them with little more than emptiness and upset (2 Peter 2:18–22; Jude 16–19). Yet God contrasted this perspective with those whose minds are filled with thoughts that are noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report and bring peace (Philippians 4:8–9). Truly godly individuals speak words that bring health to the bones (Proverbs 16:24) and that are truly uplifting—like “apples of gold in settings of silver” (Proverbs 25:11). What types of words do you speak? How do you approach the truth, doctrine and even God’s leaders? Are you “easily entreated” and teachable, or do you powerfully resist admonition, instruction and correction? When others highlight a weakness in you, how do you respond? Do you complain, “I am being treated wrongfully,” or do you immediately seek God’s counsel, asking Him to show you your weakness and help you change? Not every accusation against us may be correct—people do make mistakes. However, one of the powerful lessons we learn from the book of Job is that regardless of accusations, God cannot work with us **until** and **unless** we are willing to examine ourselves. If God allows us to be corrected, He intends that we learn from that correction. If we resist the correction, we cannot learn what God intends. We need to remember that God is in charge and He will fight our battles for us. If we are treated incorrectly, *God* must vindicate us in His time. Our reactions to correction and accusation will bear out either the fruits of God’s Spirit or the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19–23).

HUMILITY IS KEY

It is impossible for true, godly humility and satanic divisiveness to co-exist in unity. The two are opposing principles. Division and disunity occur because personal perspectives or desires are placed before the needs of someone else. It is that simple! If we **know** that we are in line with God’s truth—if we know that God is working through His Church and ministry, if we know that the people we associate with in His truth are truly His—then true godly humility will bring us to be happy when “submitting to one another” (Ephesians 5:21) and when we “through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13).

The arrogant knee-jerk attitudes of “You are always wrong and I am always right,” or “My perspective is always

right and yours is always wrong,” are not present in people with whom God is truly working. Additionally, if we are clearly exercising God’s Holy Spirit, we are keenly aware that the nature of our very own heart without God’s Spirit is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). We should be willing to submit our will to God’s will, and to use Scripture as our guide. God’s word is the standard by which we can determine right from wrong, and when we are wrong we should be humble and quick to admit it.

Godly humility also fosters a desire to see our brethren succeed spiritually. It results in a motivation to show patience and mercy toward those with whom we interact. We should pour mercy out abundantly on those around us, just as God Himself is merciful with us. Notice how often David refers to God’s mercy in Psalm 136. Godly humility and His Spirit should motivate us to yearn for our brethren to succeed and overcome. Just as God has the patience to work with those He has called, we too must have the patience to allow Him the time He needs in order to help them overcome. A true desire for unity results in a consistent display of these godly fruits.

We all desire that God’s unity will permeate His Church. Such unity is wonderful and uplifting, “good” and “pleasant” for all to experience (see Psalm 133). It creates an inviting and welcoming atmosphere that we all want to be a part of. But we must remember that true, godly unity—within our homes and in God’s Church—is a consequence of how we think and act *individually*.

As the Passover approaches and we look deeply into the word of God, seeking how we may overcome even more profoundly, we must remember to look closely at our perspectives, actions and feelings. We should ask God to show us where we may have mistakenly adopted worldly notions—or ways that actually conflict with God’s way. We must pay special attention to the words and terms that we use. Do they foster peace, purity, mercy and respect? Do they stir others up to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24), or do they “rile” others up, leaving them angry and frustrated? How easily and willingly do we receive correction and instruction? Do our conversations (face-to-face, or even via e-mail and Facebook) uplift and encourage others, or do they promote division and frustration?

On the night of Christ’s final Passover on the earth, He prayed that we would be unified as He and the Father are. Jesus Christ wants unity in His Church and in our families—and He wants us to enjoy the benefits of that unity. But we now live in Satan’s world, where unity comes only through a great deal of work, continual effort and struggle. We all need to keep working diligently to examine ourselves and become more powerful “tools of righteousness” that God can use to increase unity within His Church and within our families. Let us make every effort to help Christ’s final Passover lesson work powerfully in our lives and in God’s Church! ■

Recipes for the Days of Unleavened Bread

Why not try your hand at making some unleavened bread and treats at home this year during the Days of Unleavened Bread? It can be enjoyable and easy to make some very basic and delicious baked goods. I have included several of our family's favorite unleavened recipes we have used and enjoyed through the years.

Children can especially help in making basic unleavened flatbread. Children and grandchildren always delight in rolling and cutting out dough. It's time well spent in spite of the cleanup required! The recipe I have included below is wonderful with butter and honey even while still warm. One year on the First Day of Unleavened Bread in Montana we had a catered meal between morning and afternoon services. We instructed the caterer we would be eating only unleavened bread or crackers such as Ry-Krisp or matzos with the meal. He was curious and asked about making some unleavened bread for us if we could give him a recipe. So I gave him mine and he made unleavened bread

for us. It was very much appreciated and we enjoyed homemade unleavened bread that Holy Day for lunch.

Also listed are several recipes that have been favorites of ours for many years. I obtained the recipe and learned how to make Scotch Shortbread from an elderly lady in the St. Louis congregation many years ago. She would make a batch and send it with us as we left services—with 5 children it was gone long before we arrived home that evening. The recipe for Almond Bread has also been a regular with us during these special days.

Since our children and grandchildren live long distances away, I make granola and send it to them for a special treat and a way to keep in touch. They love it and have their favorite varieties. In fact, I receive

e-mails when their supply is getting low! Several years ago, I came up with the idea to make chocolate granola and it was an instant success. The best part (after it has cooled) is adding the chocolate chips! Chocolate granola might be a specialty to try this year for your family or as gifts to others. The Almond Bread and Scotch Shortbread also make very nice gifts to give to others during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

One additional recipe I have included is a Nut Pie Crust for any type of cheesecake or recipe calling for a crust of graham cracker or cookie crumbs. It works very well and is delicious. This recipe I also discovered and obtained many years ago when it was served at a Holy Day covered-dish meal. Getting together for covered-dish meals and sharing meals and recipes together is a special way for us to get acquainted and develop lifelong friendships.

—Dorothy McNair



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UNLEAVENED BREAD

2½ cups unbleached flour
2½ cups wholewheat flour
(or 5 cups wholewheat flour)
1 cup cornmeal
1 teaspoon salt
4 egg yolks
5 tablespoons butter
½ cup oil
1 cup water
1 cup milk

Mix flours, corn meal and salt. Cut in butter. Add egg yolks and remaining ingredients. Mix well. Roll out and cut in squares and bake on a lightly greased cookie sheet at 350 degrees, for approximately 15 minutes. The

length of time to bake depends on how thick you prefer to roll out the dough.

SCOTCH SHORTBREAD

4 cups flour
1 cup sugar
1 pound soft butter

Mix flour and sugar together. Cut butter into flour/sugar mixture. Work and knead with floured hands until dough is smooth. Divide into 2 parts and press into two 8" x 8" baking dishes. Bake at 325 degrees for 60 to 70 minutes. Watch carefully and perhaps lower the oven temperature toward the end of the hour because it burns easily.

ALMOND BREAD

4 eggs
1 cup sugar
¾ cup butter or oil
3 cups flour
½ teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 small bag of slivered almonds

Combine sugar, eggs and 1 cup of flour. Mix well and add oil or butter. Add remaining ingredients. Pour into 2 greased bread pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Remove from pans to cool. Apples, cinnamon and walnuts may be substituted for the almonds and almond extract.

CHOCOLATE GRANOLA

15 cups oats
 2 cups wheat germ
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 cups chopped walnuts
 ¾ cup cocoa
 ½ cup ground flax seeds
 2 cups honey
 2/3 cup oil
 1/3 cup water
 1 tablespoon vanilla
 Chocolate chips
 (as many as you want!)
 added later when cooled



Combine dry ingredients. Mix liquid ingredients in a saucepan and heat until warm. Add to dry ingredients and mix well. Spread on a cookie sheet about ¾ inch deep. Bake at 250 degrees for about 2 hours, or until it's the desired dryness. Check during baking time and with a spatula lightly stir once or twice so it bakes more evenly. When totally cooled keep sealed in a glass gallon jar in a dry place. Serve to all children and adults who like CHOCOLATE!

NUT PIE CRUST

1 stick melted butter
 1 cup flour
 3 tablespoons sugar
 ½ cup chopped nuts

Mix well and press in pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes—if recipe does not call for baking the pie. If recipe calls for baking the pie, pour the pie ingredients into the unbaked nut crust and bake the recommended time for the pie.

CINNAMON HONEY GRANOLA

14 cups oats
 3 cups any variety chopped nuts
 1 cup wheat bran
 1 cup wheat germ
 1 cup sunflower seeds
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 tablespoons cinnamon

½ cup oil
 1½ to 2 cups honey
 1 cup water
 4 teaspoons vanilla
 Optional: Add dried fruit when done.

Combine dry ingredients. Mix liquid ingredients in a saucepan and heat until warm. Add to dry ingredients and mix well. Spread on a cookie sheet about ¾ inch deep. Bake at 250

degrees for about 2 hours, or until it is the desired dryness. Check during baking time and with a spatula lightly stir once or twice so it bakes more evenly. When totally cooled keep sealed in a glass gallon jar in a dry place.

TOFFEE SQUARES

1 cup butter
 1 cup brown sugar
 2 cups flour
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1 cup of pecans or walnuts
 Giant size (9¾ ounce) Hershey milk chocolate bar

Mix butter, sugar, flour and vanilla well, and press (may use your fingers!) into a 9" x 13" baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. Melt chocolate bar and spread on dough while it is still warm. Sprinkle chopped pecans or walnuts on top.

NO BAKE CHOCOLATE COOKIES

2 cups sugar
 ½ cup milk
 1 stick butter
 3 to 4 tablespoons cocoa
 ½ cup peanut butter
 2½ to 3 cups oatmeal (uncooked)
 2 teaspoons vanilla
 1 cup chopped nuts
 1 cup coconut

Boil sugar, milk, butter and cocoa for 1 to 1½ minutes (time after it starts to boil.) Remove from heat and quickly add other ingredients. Beat until blended, and immediately drop by teaspoonful on wax paper. Allow to set and cool.

PECAN PIE SQUARES

Crust: 2 cups flour
 1 cup butter
 2/3 cup brown sugar

Filling:
 1½ cups corn syrup (light or dark)
 2/3 cup brown sugar
 6 tablespoons flour
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 teaspoons vanilla
 4 eggs

Blend crust ingredients and put in 9" x 13" pan and bake for 20 minutes at 350 degrees. Blend filling ingredients together and put on top of baked crust. Then cover top with chopped pecans (the more the better). Bake an additional 30 to 40 minutes or until done.

FAVORITE CHEESE CAKE

Crust: Follow directions for the Nut Pie Crust.

Filling:
 3 8-ounce packages of cream cheese
 ½ cup sugar
 2 eggs
 1 tablespoon vanilla

Beat cream cheese, sugar, eggs and vanilla together until mixed well. Pour into 10" pie pan lined with Nut Crust. Bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Take out of oven and cool about 10 minutes. Then top with the following mixture and bake in 350 degree oven for an additional 10 minutes.

Topping: 1 pint of sour cream, ½ cup sugar, 1 tablespoon vanilla.

The First Passover

By John H. Ogwyn (1949–2005)

The events of the last two and a half centuries had been incredible! It all began about 1704^{BC} when Joseph, the 17-year-old son of Jacob and Rachel, was sold into slavery by his older brothers. Motivated by resentment and jealousy, his brothers sold Joseph to Midianite slave traders who transported him to Egypt. Over the course of the next 20 years, events took an astounding turn. Young Joseph rose from being a slave to being the number two ruler of Egypt, right under Pharaoh himself.

The Pharaoh under whom Joseph achieved such prominence was from the newly arrived Hyksos dynasty. The Hyksos were Semites, a similar people to the family of Jacob. When a famine gripped all of the surrounding countries, Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy grain and came face to face with the brother whom they believed was probably dead. By 1682^{BC}, Jacob and his entire 70-member family came into Egypt (Genesis 46:26–27). The Hyksos rulers, also known as the Shepherd Kings, showed Jacob's family of Hebrew shepherds great favor and provided them with land in Goshen, near the delta, to live and to raise their flocks.

For the next century or so things went very well for the family of Jacob. Their numbers multiplied and they were treated well. Just over 40 years after Joseph's death in 1611^{BC}, the Hyksos were overthrown and expelled from Egypt by Dynasty XVIII of Thebes. The incoming ruler, Amose, is described as a Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph." He began systematically to oppress the burgeoning Israelite nation. By the time of Moses' birth, 44 years after the Hyksos expulsion, Israel had been reduced to the status of slaves. In fact, for a period of time, Pharaoh even ordered all of the Israelite boy babies killed at birth in order to slow down their rapid population growth.

It was in this context that his parents, to protect him from death, hid the baby Moses. Pharaoh's daughter, Hatshepsut, discovered him in a basket in the edge of the Nile. Reared as a prince of Egypt in the court of Thutmose I and Thutmose II, Moses achieved prominence. All the while, the condition of the people of Israel worsened further.

By age 40, Moses had made a decision to reject his Egyptian identity and to acknowledge his kinship with the people of God (Hebrews 11:24–26). Forced to flee Egypt, he remained in the Sinai desert for the next 40 years, most of that time watching the sheep of his father-in-law, Jethro. Then, when Moses was 80 years old, the LORD manifested Himself

through a burning bush, and sent Moses back to Egypt to begin his real life's work (Exodus 3:1–10).

When Moses arrived back in Egypt, Thutmose III, who had sought to kill him, was dead—and his successor Amenhotep II was on the throne. The people of Israel had been ground down through several generations of slavery and had lost all hope. It was in this context, with a people who were in despair on the one hand, and an Egyptian ruler filled with pride on the other, that Moses was expected to accomplish a great work.

The subsequent events, which marked the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery and their journey toward Sinai to enter into a special covenant relationship with God, are the events of the first Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. These festivals, introduced when Israel was still in Egypt, mark the introduction of God's great plan of redemption and salvation. Contained in the circumstances surrounding the first Passover observance by Israel are many lessons for the people of God today. We will examine seven of those lessons.



WE CANNOT SAVE OURSELVES

Life was overwhelming and it appeared that nothing could be done. Egypt was at its height as a major power and Israel was a disarmed, dispirited slave people. These were the circumstances in which God sent Moses to Pharaoh with the message of "Let My people go!" Pharaoh saw no reason why he should do such a thing—so God began to show him why he should! Plague after plague was visited upon the land of Egypt, striking at everything in which they felt pride and confidence.

The tenth and final plague promised to be the most devastating of all. The LORD decreed that in one night He would pass through the entire land of Egypt and every firstborn male in the land, both of people and animals, would be struck dead (Exodus 11:4–5). Death was coming surely and inexorably. There was only one way of escape. That way was for the people of Israel to take yearling lambs and at dusk, when the fourteenth day of the first month began, each household was to slay its lamb. The father in each home was to put the blood on the doorposts and the lamb was to be roasted and eaten during the evening (Exodus 12:1–8).

Only those who were dwelling under the blood of the lamb would be "passed over" by the LORD and spared from

death. The people could not protect themselves. Only the blood of the lamb, shed in their stead, could save them.

Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 5:7 that Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). The first lesson we learn from the Passover is the impossibility of protecting ourselves from death, which is the consequence of sin. God took the initiative by providing the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Only by His blood can we be justified—made innocent—before God.

RESIST COMPROMISE

God did not spare His people from death so they could remain in Egypt as slaves. He wanted them to leave Egypt behind and come to serve Him. When Moses first went to Pharaoh with the request to let the Israelites go, he flatly refused. However, after several plagues, Pharaoh tried to strike a compromise.

First, Pharaoh suggested that the Israelites simply sacrifice to their God in their present surroundings, instead of leaving Egypt (Exodus 8:25). This would never do, Moses replied, because God's commands were contrary to the customs and practices of the Egyptians. God's people would need to come all the way out of Egypt, in order to serve God properly. Here is a vital lesson for all of God's people: the realization that God has called us to leave this world, with its ways and customs, behind us.

After still more plagues, Pharaoh finally agreed to let the Israelites leave Egypt. However, at first he insisted that only the adults could go. The children would have to stay behind. But Moses flatly refused to compromise; Israel was not prepared to sacrifice its children to Pharaoh. As with Moses, God's people today must not abandon their children to the world around them.

Finally, after three days of darkness throughout the land, Pharaoh once again called for Moses. All of your people can go, he told them, but leave the herds behind. "Not a hoof shall be left behind," Moses declared (Exodus 10:26). There is never room to compromise regarding our response to God's calling. We simply cannot serve God on the devil's terms (Matthew 4:10)!

HAVE A SENSE OF URGENCY

When the time finally came for God to deliver Israel, the people were told to eat of the Passover in a sense of readiness. They were to have their "loins girded" and their shoes on their feet. The Passover was to be eaten with unleavened bread, the bread of haste. God's people were to have a sense of urgency about their calling.

What about us? Do we take our calling for granted? Do we respond to God in a slow or casual manner? As the LORD passed through Egypt on the night of the first Passover, the people realized that it was a matter of life and death. They were eager and they were urgent (Exodus 12:11).

When we come to grips with sin in our lives and truly see our need for a Savior, we also will have a sense of urgency. David likened his intense desire for God to a deep thirst (Psalm 42:1–2). Do we have an intense longing for a deeper relationship with the Father, and with our Savior Jesus Christ? That intense desire will be accompanied by an earnest eagerness on our part. We need that sense of urgency in our own lives.

RESIST DISCOURAGEMENT

During the daylight portion of Abib 14, the people gathered quickly together for their journey. Many of the treasures of Egypt were thrust upon them (Exodus 12:35–36). Finally, about sunset at the beginning of the fifteenth (Numbers 33:3; cf. Deuteronomy 16:1), the Israelites began their long march. They could scarcely contain their excitement as they came out "with an high hand" (Numbers 33:3, KJV).

However, their excitement was short-lived. Within a matter of days, Israel was encamped next to the Red Sea, partly hemmed in by mountains.

Suddenly, the dust of Pharaoh's chariots appeared on the horizon. When the Israelites saw evidence of the advancing Egyptian army, they were frightened and deeply discouraged. "We would be better off to go back and be slaves than to die in the wilderness," they cried (cf. Exodus 14:10–12).

After we surrender our lives to God, one of the great battles we must fight is that of discouragement. Overwhelming obstacles can loom before us, along with frightening adversaries who rise against us. God allows us to find ourselves in situations that remind us of our utter powerlessness. He wants us to be operating under no illusions of self-sufficiency. As Christians, we must learn to trust God—and to depend upon Him in **everything**—if we are to complete our spiritual journey successfully. When we find ourselves at our "Red Sea," rather than being ready to give up and quit, we need to remember Moses' admonition to the people, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (Exodus 14:13).

BE THANKFUL

Ingratitude is perhaps the most prevalent of sins. It is very easy to take blessings for granted and wonder

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why we do not have more. As the Israelites progressed in their journey out of Egyptian slavery, one might have expected them to be overwhelmed with thankfulness and appreciation for God's deliverance. That, however, is not what happened.

Shortly after crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites found themselves in a desolate wilderness area. Food and water were not available in the area to sustain them (Exodus 15:22–25). Yet, clearly, God was working out a purpose in their lives. He had worked miracles to cause Pharaoh to let them leave Egypt. He had delivered their firstborn on the night of the Passover. Additionally, God had performed a tremendous miracle at the Red Sea to protect Israel from the Egyptian army and to ensure their freedom. In spite of all of this evidence of God's watchful providence, they began to grumble and complain when they found themselves in the desert. They accused Moses of bringing them out there to kill them with hunger and thirst. They complained about how much better the living conditions had been in Egypt and how they always had plenty of food there (Exodus 16:3).

God met the needs of His people again and again throughout their journey, yet they remained unthankful and ungrateful most of the time. What about us? God has called us out of this world to enter into a special relationship with Him. Yet, there are obstacles along the way—problems and difficulties that we must face in trying to live a life of obedience to the Creator. What, then, is our attitude? Do we grumble and complain about problems, or are we thankful and appreciative for God's calling and mercy? One of the best ways to resist discouragement and to walk with God in faith is to focus on counting our blessings. Continually thank and praise God for what He does (Ephesians 5:19–20).

Do Not Look Back

In Hebrews 11 we are told that Moses, when he reached maturity, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. We are told, in fact, that he *forsook* Egypt. While the whole Israelite nation left the land of Egypt, very few really *forsook* Egypt. To forsake means to turn away from and to reject.

When we look at the story of Israel's journey, we see that the people looked back longingly, time after time. When confronted by trials and difficulties along the pathway God had chosen for them, they often talked about "the good old days." In truth, of course, those days had not been very good—but memory can sometimes be very selective.

Israel's greatest problem, after leaving Egypt, was expressed by Stephen in Acts 7:39. Even though the

Israelites' feet left the land behind, in their hearts they turned back again! The Israelites had not ever truly forsaken Egypt in their hearts—and this was reflected in a variety of incidents.

What about Christians today? The essence of the meaning of the Festival of Unleavened Bread is that God has called us to forsake the ways and values of this ungodly world. We are supposed to be engaged in a journey. Do we look back at the world that we have ostensibly forsaken and desire to hold on to it? The true answer to this question is reflected in the way we live. As men, does materialism govern your lives, or are you centered on the Work of God and on building godly lives and families? As women, do you reflect the modesty and true femininity that God values, or the decadent ways of a sensual and God-rejecting society? In order to fulfill our calling and reach our destination, we must forsake Egypt in our hearts—and not look back!

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THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH

Why does the Feast of Unleavened Bread include two Holy Days—one at the beginning and one at the end? We know that the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles includes only one Holy Day, which is at the beginning. The eighth day—the Last Great Day—is a completely separate festival.

The answer is perhaps most clearly stated in Hebrews 12, where we are told that Jesus Christ is both the *Author* and the *Finisher* of our faith. It took a miracle of God to start the Israelites on their journey out of Egypt, and it took another miracle, that of the Red Sea, to bring them completely out of Egypt.

Similarly, our successful completion of the journey out of sin—spiritual Egypt—will be accomplished **only** through the power of our Savior. We need His help not only to start our journey, but also to sustain and finish it. The Passover season reminds us of our need for salvation and deliverance. It also reminds us that these are not objectives that we can accomplish by our own strength or might. We have One who goes before us in order to guarantee our success. (Hebrews 2:9–11).

Redemption and deliverance are themes of the Passover season. God takes the initiative, and we must respond. However, our human efforts will never be enough, which God knows before we even start. From ancient Israel's example, we should learn lessons in how to respond properly to God's incredible love and mercy. The most important of these lessons is that we must not ever forget to look to the Author and Finisher of our faith. We must put our total confidence in Him, if we are to succeed in leaving Egypt behind and coming to the mountain of God. ■



In Memoriam... Dibar Apartian

(1916–2010)

I first met Mr. Apartian in August 1955. Richard David Armstrong had just hired him as the professor of French at Ambassador College in Pasadena, California. The story of how Mr. Apartian was hired to work at Ambassador College is nothing short of miraculous. Mr. Apartian had come to California, having just completed a lengthy manuscript that he had sent off to the Doubleday publishing firm. He was hoping to have his novel published and to dedicate himself to writing. Though he had worked as a French tutor in the past, he did not really want to be a French teacher anymore, but after mailing his manuscript he decided to register with a downtown Los Angeles employment agency for teachers. The woman who took his application at the agency was very discouraging, telling Mr. Apartian that they had never had a request for a French teacher. But he filed his application anyway, and she reluctantly accepted. He then went to see a movie.

Amazingly, just 15 minutes or so after Mr. Apartian had filed his application, Mr. Richard David Armstrong contacted the agency and said he was looking for a French teacher!

Before Mr. Apartian was offered the position, he was interviewed by the college president, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Mr. Apartian often recalled that he was powerfully impressed with the understanding and sincerity he saw in Mr. Armstrong. He told me a number of times, “Rod, all I was doing was applying for a position on the college faculty to teach French. But Mr. Armstrong seemed to want me to understand what the college and the Work were *really* all about. So, he spent two-and-one-half hours telling me about the whole purpose of human existence! At the time, I didn’t fully understand any of this [he was not yet converted], though I was mightily impressed and was glad to become

part of an institution headed by such an understanding man as Herbert W. Armstrong.”

Through the following decades, Mr. Apartian and his wife, Shirley, became good friends of *both* Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong. For they both reflected a degree of culture and grace that Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong appreciated. As a couple, they hosted scores of elegant dinners for many members of the faculty and friends in the Church. A few times, Mr. Apartian traveled with Mr. Armstrong to see various dignitaries, and was always a kind and interesting companion to any of us who interacted with him. God blessed him with a wonderful wife, two sons, and, finally, one grandson who is deeply loved.

Dibar Apartian lived a most unusual and eventful life. He was born of Armenian parents in Turkey just as a series of the infamous “Armenian genocide” massacres began. Friends of his parents warned them of what was coming, and they were able to send him overseas on a ship to save his life. As a young boy of only four to six years old, he was sent by way of Marseille, in southern France, to stay with relatives in Switzerland. They eventually put him in an orphanage where he spent the next several years of his life and received much of his education. Later, he was able to get a very good education in Switzerland, and he excelled in many studies. During World War II, he ended up working for the United States Embassy in Bern, Switzerland. Because of his intelligence, his diplomacy and his graciousness, he became the highest-ranking non-Swiss employee of the United States Embassy in Bern.

Mr. Apartian found favor in the sight of a leading American diplomat who visited the Embassy and helped him—right after World War II—to immigrate to the United States. At first, he worked

in New York as a French language tutor. After leaving New York for Los Angeles, with the hope of tutoring Hollywood “stars” in the French language, he eventually decided to apply for a position as a college instructor in French. This is how he met Richard David Armstrong and came to Ambassador College. At that point, he became my friend and ended up being my oldest and longest personal friend for the next 55 years!

Dibar Apartian, Richard David Armstrong, Benjamin Rea (formerly head of the Spanish Department and Dean of Ambassador College at Bricket Wood) and I were—for a few years—the “four bachelors” on the Ambassador College faculty. We shared many meals, mountain hikes and interesting trips together. Though Mr. Apartian was the oldest, he outlived all except me, the youngest of the four. He traveled all over the Western Hemisphere, throughout much of Europe and elsewhere—especially in the service of God. His dedication to teaching *and practicing* the way of God became a hallmark of his life.

His warmth, his loving personality and his enthusiasm for building the French Work—and for serving *all* of God’s people—will be greatly missed. I will personally miss the advice and the encouragement of one of my best friends on this earth.

Yes, a “mighty oak” has fallen. But although we will greatly miss him, we truly should *rejoice* that God gave his servant, Dibar Apartian, 94 years of eventful and productive life. And we can rejoice that it was such an *interesting* life in the service of the great God. We look forward with enthusiasm to seeing our friend, Dibar, in the soon-coming resurrection. We have every assurance that he *will* be there and greet us, once again, with his warm smile. *God speed that day!*

—Roderick C. Meredith

THE CHERISHED CHRISTIAN WOMAN: DUTY AND DESTINY

By Wyatt Ciesielka

Throughout history, women have often been oppressed and even abused. But what does the Bible say about how men should treat women? What does the Bible teach about the very special *role* of women within the family and the Church? What is a woman's *purpose* within the plan of God?

God called Sarai “*Sarah*”—meaning “princess,” yet Sarah called Abraham “*lord*”—meaning “master.” Eve was created to be Adam's *helper* (Genesis 2:18). Many of us are most comfortable with women in those familiar roles. Yet Scripture is also full of important women who were *leaders* without compromising their roles as women. The Bible provides powerful, clear and inspiring guidelines for women's role within the family and the Church.

Dr. Meredith wrote, years ago, “To be truly happy, a real woman should bear in mind the *purpose* for which she was created—and set herself definite goals to fulfill in the accomplishment of that purpose” (The *Plain Truth*, “True Womanhood—Is it a ‘Lost Cause?’”, November 1965). Whether man or woman, whether married or single, whether young or old, it is the hallmark of a truly converted Christian to align **our will** and **our goals** with God's purpose for us, reflecting the mind of Christ (Luke 22:42). To understand our duty is to understand our purpose within the great plan of God.

AN HONORABLE DUTY

To begin to understand the relationship between man and woman, and between man and woman and God, it is helpful to begin in the Garden of Eden. First, God created Adam from “the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7). Then, from “the rib which the LORD God had taken from [Adam]” He made Eve (Genesis 2:22). Notice that **both** Adam and Eve were created in God's image and His likeness. “So God created man in His own

image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27).

Scripture proclaims God's promise: “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:18). Yet, to most professing Christians today, this clear statement seems too magnificent to take at its word. Billions have been deceived into accepting the idea that, when they die, they will go to heaven for a while as disembodied spirits, before becoming embodied as something like “angels” at the resurrection. God's Church, however, understands the literal truth of this verse—that both physical men and physical women will become spiritual sons of God—full members of the God Family.

A CHERISHED HELPER

The *King James Version* describes the first woman as a *help meet* for the man. More modern translations render Eve as a *helper* (Genesis 2:18). Some assume that to be a “helper” or a “help meet” is necessarily an inferior or even a pejorative term. But what is the Hebrew really conveying here?

The Hebrew word rendered “helper” or “help meet” in Genesis 2:18 is *‘ezer*, and *‘ezer* is often used to describe God helping people or nations. In Deuteronomy 33:29 *‘ezer* portrays the Eternal overcoming Israel's enemies. He is “the shield of your help” and “the sword of your majesty.” Likewise, *‘ezer* is used in Psalm 70:5 where God is called upon to be a powerful “deliverer.” In these passages and others, the “helper” (*‘ezer*) is the Eternal God! The fact is that the Hebrew language in Genesis 2:18 indicates a difference in role, but does not necessarily indicate inferiority in any way.

To begin to understand the role of men and women within the family and the Church, it is important to understand that both were created in God's image, that both have the same potential, and that both are working toward the same reward!



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God cherishes His maidservants and expects them to be trusted helpers and wise counselors. However, He chastens the foolish woman as being “loud and brash” and “ignorant” without even knowing it (Proverbs 9:13, *NLT*). Eve is a tragic example of a woman who made a terribly foolish mistake. She was “foolish” to engage with the serpent in the first place and she was doubly foolish to then push something onto her husband that she knew was contrary to God’s will. However, Eve was “deceived” (1 Timothy 2:14). Adam was not deceived. Adam was guilty of being led astray by his wife. Adam willfully sinned. He allowed his wife to lead him into rebellion against God. Indeed, the foolish woman can destroy her own house and her own family (Proverbs 14:1)!

However, women are also capable of great wisdom. In fact, in Scripture “wisdom” is often presented in the feminine form (Proverbs 1:20; 9:1). And God has outlined clear roles for the cherished *‘ezer*. For example, women have a tremendous responsibility to teach and train their children—both boys and girls—in God’s laws (Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; 10:1; 31:26). Whether male or female, all of us should ask God for wisdom and He will give it liberally (James 1:5). Indeed, the good Christian wife is a trusted confidante and invaluable counselor to her husband (Genesis 2:18).

There are numerous examples of esteemed women used in important spiritual functions in ancient Israel. Miriam and Deborah are famous examples who held national leadership positions (Exodus 15:20–21; Judges 4–5) and Miriam’s leadership under Moses is recorded as a special gift to Israel (Micah 6:4). Huldah, the scholar-prophetess, helped lead Israel to national repentance (2 Kings 22:8–20) and prophetesses and wise women functioned throughout the history of ancient Israel (1 Chronicles 25:5–6; Luke 2:36–37).

Jael slew Sisera, and Esther saved the Jewish nation from Haman. Isaiah’s wife was a “prophetess” (Isaiah 8:3), and Philip had four daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9). In Old Testament times, women taken captive in war were strictly protected under God’s law (Deuteronomy 21:10–14) and widows were provided special protection (Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 14:29; 27:19). Women are special and beloved by God and the Fifth Commandment instructs that mothers as well as fathers are to be honored (Exodus 20:12).

Peter quotes Joel predicting that in the time of the end both men and women will prophesy (Joel 2:28). Paul considered Priscilla and Aquila as both “my fellow workers in Christ Jesus” (Romans 16:3–4); he paid special honor to Tryphaena and Tryphosa, women “who have labored in the Lord” (v. 12), and also lauded the women who “labored with him” in the gospel in Philippians 4:2–3. Lois (Timothy’s maternal

grandmother) and Eunice (his mother) had “genuine faith” (2 Timothy 1:5). Priscilla was a co-worker with her husband (Acts 18:1–4; 2 Timothy 4:19). And, women are recorded as being deaconesses in the New Testament Church (Romans 16:1, 15; 1 Timothy 3:11).

Mary and Martha were among Jesus’ closest friends, and Paul expressed that salvation is equally available to Jew or Gentile, bond or free, man or woman (Galatians 3:28). Women were present in the upper chamber when Matthias was chosen as an Apostle (Acts 1:13–14) and the Holy Spirit fell upon men and women both on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16–18). However, women were never to be ordained as ministers, and are not to hold positions of spiritual authority or teaching over men (1 Corinthians 14:34–35; 1 Timothy 2:11–12). In the Old Testament, women were not admitted into the priesthood, and this distinction is continued in the New Testament.

Women have had roles of difference from the beginning, but it was not until scattered Jews came into contact with Greek society that Jewish women began to be oppressed within Jewish society. By the intertestamental years (after the last Old Testament book was written, but before the New Testament), women’s status in the Jewish community had sunk to where they were often not permitted to study Scripture, and were generally seen as second-rate citizens. But misogyny was never God’s intent, nor is it ever taught in the Old or New Testaments. It is a historical fact that when the ancient Israelites were following God’s instructions, they showed far greater respect and equity toward women than any other world culture. And this legacy continues to our day. Even today, we find that the modern nations descended from ancient Israel tend to treat women with greater respect and dignity than do Gentile nations.

MEN AND WOMEN

There are clear differences in roles, and there are beautiful differences in attributes, between men and women—beyond the obviously physical. For example, Paul records that God gave women long hair for their glory (1 Corinthians 11:15), and that for a woman to wear her hair unnaturally short is dishonorable to her and to God (vv. 4–6). But true Christian femininity goes beyond outward appearances.

Christian men and women are joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17; 1 Peter 3:7) and as such a woman’s role includes following Christ in all ways (John 10:27). True Christian men honor older women as mothers and cherish younger women as spiritual sisters, “with all purity” (1 Timothy 5:2). True Christians; *whether men or women*, are



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developing the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5) and seek their Father’s will (Luke 22:42). The mind of Christ is *never* sinful and is *not* limited by gender.

Older women of good reputation who have developed the mind of Christ are not only to be respected, but are expected to be spiritually mature enough to *teach* and *encourage* younger women in the Church “to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed” (Titus 2:3–5). The Christian woman has many roles, including the vitally important role of being a wife and a mother, rearing godly children, and teaching her children in God’s laws (Genesis 1:28; Proverbs 1:8; 6:20; 22:6; 23:22).

Whether man or woman, whether wealthy or poor, whether young or old, a real Christian is *thankful* for who he or she is, the role he or she has, and the destiny to which he or she has been called. A real Christian does not “covet” another role or another reality. Eve coveted what God said she was not to have and was deceived. Adam then willingly followed his wife into sin. But, a real Christian does not covet a *thing*, a *position*, a *role*, or a *reality* more than what God has made possible (2 Corinthians 10:5). It is a question of *priority*. “Seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). God is a “jealous God.” He made us. He called us. He gave us instructions to live by. To put *anything* before Him is idolatry (Exodus 20:5; 34:14).

Just like the many examples from the Bible, many women today in God’s Church are very capable and are involved in activities beyond the home and family. If time, Christian obligations, abilities and energy make such service possible, then it may be not only acceptable, but beneficial. But if not, then to “covet” a *thing*, a *position*, a *role*, or a *reality* beyond what God has ordained for any of us is to *not* seek His will, but is to seek our own (Luke 22:42). This is to break His commandments (Deuteronomy 5:21; Romans 13:9). To not be “content” with our roles and with our God is lustfulness and covetousness, which is sin (Romans 7:7; Hebrews 13:5).

Society continually teaches us to want more *things*, to yearn for a lavish *lifestyle*, to covet *prestige* and *fun* at the cost of bending and breaking God’s laws. Men and women both are equally victims of this Satanic, end-time influence (2 Timothy 3:2). In the last few decades, society’s continual focus on material wealth has been a key factor influencing many women to become “freed” from their status as homemakers and to accept jobs in the corporate world. However, very sadly, often after many years of pursuing “things” many women have learned that they were not really “freed” at all—but instead they had become victims of Satan’s society at the

expense of living in harmony with God’s instructions. God did not intend women to be “freed” from their role of being loving mothers, caring wives, zealous Christians and devoted bondservants of Christ.

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

The virtuous woman’s worth is immeasurable! She is a blessing from God and her worth is “far above rubies” (Proverbs 18:22; 31:10). A godly wife is a strong and capable woman. She is wise and she is righteous. She is invaluable to her husband and to her family (Proverbs 31:10). Her husband trusts her implicitly (Proverbs 31:11). She is a *special blessing* from the Lord (Proverbs 18:22).

A virtuous wife is foremost a Christian. She is growing within the body of Christ, which is the Church, to the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). As such, her focus is first on her Lord God (Exodus 20:3), then on her husband (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18), and her family (Proverbs 31:1; Ephesians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:7).

If a Christian is married to an “unbeliever,” the unbelieving mate and the children are *sanctified* by the believing spouse (1 Corinthians 7:14). Christian wives or husbands in this situation sometimes confront especially hard trials, and must frequently put into practice Acts 5:29, “to obey God rather than men” if they are being pressured to violate God’s clear commandments. These situations can be incredibly difficult. This is one reason that God’s Church reminds those who are dating that God commands us *not* to be “unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Some have been called into God’s Church ahead of their mate. Others are married to mates who have fallen away from the Truth. In either case, the believing mate should love and pray for the unbelieving mate, being kind and faithful. God will reward Christian mates with strength and wisdom *if* they are faithful (Luke 11:13; Hebrews 4:16; 11:6). He will not allow His *friends* and His *bondservants* to be tested beyond what they can endure (John 15:15; 1 Corinthians 10:13). But, if one *willfully* disregards God’s instructions in this matter, the consequences are often more painful (Hebrews 10:16; 12:6).

1 Peter 3:7 teaches that men should give “honor” to their wives as “the weaker vessel”. It is true that physically and emotionally women are in ways “weaker” than men, and God demands that men honor, love and cherish women for this. To denigrate or dishonor wives or any women transgresses Scripture and is terribly unbecoming of any truly Christian



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man. To emotionally or physically oppress or abuse wives or women in any way is cowardly and sinful. Husbands are to love their wives and give themselves for their wives, as Christ gave Himself for the Church. Husbands are to love, protect and provide for their wives even much more than they love or provide for their own bodies (Ephesians 5:28).

Christian husbands are kind, patient and gentle with their wives as Christ is with the Church (Ephesians 5:25). *If they are not, God will not hear or respect their prayers* (1 Peter 3:7). A true Christian husband is never cruel or bitter to his wife, but is kind and gentle (Colossians 3:19). He is the “head” but he leads in love (Ephesians 5:23). A true Christian husband cherishes his wife as much as he loves himself (Ephesians 5:33). If a man violates these principles, he dishonors God.

Mothers have a powerful role and a vital responsibility in teaching, training and nurturing their children to develop not only future leaders, but also *future kings and priests* for tomorrow’s world! Not only is the mother who properly fulfills this God-ordained privilege and responsibility performing one of the most important functions possible; she is displaying the very attributes needed to run not just a family, but also a city or a nation in the coming Kingdom of God! Tragically, in today’s society, such a poor value is placed on the family that this seems an unimportant obligation to some. But this is entirely wrong thinking! What an awesome responsibility and what an awesome privilege God has given to “the helper.”

While it is clear that women have comparable qualities and strengths as men, and while men and women share the same ultimate destiny, God has ordained that wives should submit to their husbands “as is fitting in the Lord” (Colossians 3:18), and that “...the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man” (1 Corinthians 11:3). Wives are to “submit to your own husbands as to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22), but husbands must understand that our Lord “took the form of a servant” (John 13:3–17; Philippians 2:5–7) and *gave Himself* for the Church.

A husband’s obligation is to “imitate Christ” in all ways, including in His love, patience, righteousness and service to the Church. Within marriage, this tightly connected unit is “knit together in love” *within the body*, which is the Church of God (Colossians 2:2; 2:19). *Together* the Christian husband and Christian wife grow into spiritual maturity within the Church, under the direction and care of Jesus Christ and the ministry (Ephesians 4:11–16).

ELOHIM

God looks on each Christian woman as an esteemed *princess* and a cherished and capable *helper*. True Christians understand the *purpose* for which they were created and

set their minds to *fulfill* that purpose. True Christians eagerly anticipate the resurrection from the dead and being changed into “sons of God” at Christ’s return (Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:52; Revelation 20:5). Today’s faithful Christians, regardless of gender, are “predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:29). Thus, at the last trumpet (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17), whether man or woman, a true saint becomes *elohim*—an actual member of the God Family!

As Genesis 1:26, 2 Corinthians 6:18 and elsewhere make clear, God is creating a spiritual family—*elohim* in the Hebrew (Psalm 82:6) or *theos* in the Greek (Matthew 22:30; John 10:34). Each resurrected saint will be placed within this Family under the Father and Christ. David will be king over all Israel, the Apostles will be kings over the twelve tribes and the patriarchs and matriarchs will receive very high positions as well (Ezekiel 37:24; Luke 22:30; Hebrews 11). Then, Scripture reveals that we will be glorified children of God (1 John 3:2)—and our spiritual condition will be *far beyond* gender, ethnicity or nationality.

There will **not** be “male” *elohim* or “female” *elohim*. God the Father is **not** our Father/Mother, and no gender differences are imputed to His sons. We must resist the temptation to impute human cultural ideas of “masculinity” vs. “femininity” in our understanding of God’s attributes. God is in fact *beyond* physical human categorizations of male or female. God’s status as Father is not challenged by His statement that He would act “as a hen gathers **her** chicks under **her** wings” (Matthew 23:37), or by His use of the female protagonist in the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8–10). Ultimately, today’s Christian woman will “be like Him” in all of His glory and majesty—which is well beyond nationality, ethnicity, age or gender (Galatians 3:28).

God’s purpose for the true Christian woman is the same as His purpose for the true Christian man. In our present age, He has chosen a few select individuals—typically “the weak” of the world (1 Corinthians 1:27)—to become His firstfruits, Christ’s bride. Christ is Master and Lord, who *loved* and *gave Himself* for His bride (Ephesians 5:25). The reward for today’s faithful Christian women (and men) will come when God’s Church marries Christ, and today’s Christians have qualified to serve under Him as *priests* and *kings* in the Kingdom of God!

The resurrected saints, ruling under Jesus Christ, will then establish righteousness, peace and happiness throughout the earth. It will not be a reign of “man” or of “woman.” It will be a reign of *full members* of the God Family (Isaiah 2:3; Jeremiah 23:5; Revelation 1:6). This is the duty and destiny of the Christian woman—and the Christian man! ■



True Holiness: What Is It?

By James Ginn

What is true holiness? Is it following the law? Is it a saintly countenance? Perhaps it is a righteousness people can see or a set of good deeds? Is it just being super-nice to everyone? Or is it a warm and fuzzy term for expressing religious devotion? As Christians, do we need to know what holiness is? Is it important for us to understand and attain today? “Holiness” is a term we often hear from people who want to sound religious—but this vital subject is not widely understood.

According to a study conducted by the Barna Group titled *The Concept of Holiness Baffles Most Americans*, barely one-third of participants “contend that ‘God expects you to become holy.’” This is despite the clear instruction from the Bible stating, “As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:15–16). The study further reveals that few understand what holiness is, even among those who do believe we should become holy. In fact, a summary of the study states, “When pressed to describe what it means to be holy, adults gave a wide range of answers. The most common reply was ‘I don’t know,’ offered by one out of every five adults (21 percent).”

Some of the other ideas concerning holiness that participants offered included, “being Christ-like (19 percent), making faith your top priority in life (18 percent), living a pure or sinless lifestyle (12 percent), and having a good attitude about people and life (10 percent).” Some suggested that it is “focusing completely on God (9 percent), being guided by the Holy Spirit (9 percent), being baptized (8 percent), reflecting the character of God (7 percent), exhibiting a moral lifestyle (5 percent), and accepting and practicing biblical truth (5 percent).” Amazingly, the answers of baptized and non-baptized adults “were virtually identical.” From that study, it is quite apparent that there is much confusion about this concept. But just how important is it that God’s people understand holiness?

IMPORTANCE OF HOLINESS

After the establishment of the Levitical priesthood, Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu became the object of a tough lesson about how God looks at the subject of holiness. Along with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu went through a period of ceremonial cleansing in order to become consecrated, or

sanctified, before God. This meant that they were set apart or pronounced clean (ceremonially or morally). The original Hebrew word for consecrate in this sense essentially means to hallow, or to make holy. So, in essence, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu went through a cleansing process that set them apart as holy to God so they could serve in His tabernacle.

Regrettably, Aaron’s sons did not grasp the importance of presenting oneself to God as holy, or undefiled. They “offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them” (Leviticus 10:1). The result was that “fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD” (v. 2). Why did this tragedy occur? God’s answer to this question is found in the next verse. “By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified” (v. 3). God later told Aaron that he and his sons had been set apart that they might “distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean” (Leviticus 10:10). Had Nadab and Abihu understood this, they might have lived on to serve God for many years.

Despite God’s specific instructions to the contrary, Nadab and Abihu believed that they could come before God the way that **they chose**. As we see from the Barna Group’s survey, many today believe that they can come to God however they would like—without regard to God’s holiness. People choose their own ideas about holiness—or disregard it altogether, believing in a dangerous “come as you are” philosophy. God rejects such a notion. Issues of holiness were so important to God that He **took lives** over it, while emphasizing that we must distinguish between holy and unholy.

What does this mean for us today? Is this concept still important? Does God expect us to be holy? Are we holy? If not, can we become holy? The Apostle Peter seemed to think so. Under inspiration from God, he wrote to New Testament Christians, explaining: “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a **holy nation**, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Just like Aaron and his sons, God tells New Testament Christians that we have been chosen to be set apart as holy in order to worship before Him and to proclaim His praises. “But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:15–16). We are called to be holy (1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:7).

As Christians, do we need to know what holiness is? Is it important for us to understand and attain today? “Holiness” is a term we often hear from people who want to sound religious—but this vital subject is not widely understood.

In Revelation 20:6, we find another reason that holiness is important. In context of the resurrected saints becoming immortal and serving under Jesus Christ in the Millennium—Christ’s soon-coming thousand-year reign on earth—we are told, “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection.” We often fail to notice the condition placed in this verse when we read it, but it plainly states that those who are in the resurrection will be holy. This should definitely make us want to pay attention to the concept. This verse indicates that we must be holy to be in the first resurrection.

Does this create a dilemma for us, because we are told elsewhere in the Bible that God alone is holy (Revelation 15:4)? This sentiment is echoed in the book of Job, which reveals mankind’s inability to be holy of itself, as we read: “What is man that he could be pure” (Job 15:14–16)? Yet, Scripture informs us that holiness is a priority, considering it is a life-or-death matter. It also reveals that by divine command we are to become holy as God is holy. Furthermore, those mentioned in the first resurrection are identified as holy. So if only God is holy, what are we to do?



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GOD IMPARTS HOLINESS

A key to understanding this seeming discrepancy lies in Exodus 3:5. In this passage, God tells Moses he is standing on holy ground. What was so special about that ground? Was it fertile soil? Was it full of gold and rubies? Of course not! It was not holy because of its mineral value, but because God was present there. God designates certain things holy by His presence. In the same way, we become “partakers of the divine nature” through the Holy Spirit, God’s divine power (2 Peter 1:3–4). As explained in Dr. Roderick C. Meredith’s booklet *Christian Baptism: Its Real Meaning*: “Having God’s Spirit in us is what makes us a holy people, or what the Bible terms ‘saints.’ We cannot make ourselves (or anything else for that matter!) holy. **God is holy and only He can impart holiness.**”

Dr. Meredith continues, “If we truly repent and turn to God in faith, He promises not only to forgive us our past, but also to impart His Holy Spirit to us. God’s Spirit, given us as a gift, is intended to transform our lives by renewing our minds (Titus 3:5; Romans 12:2). We become a new creation because God is changing us by writing His laws in our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:10).” This requires action on our part. In order to become a new creation with the indwelling of God’s Holy Spirit, which makes us holy, we must learn and follow God’s pattern or instructions for becoming holy. As Dr. Meredith states, “Upon faith and repentance, we are justified, made innocent and brought into right standing before God,

through the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:9). Next, since we have now turned to God, **He sanctifies us—makes us holy—by placing His Holy Spirit within us**” (*Christian Baptism: Its Real Meaning*, pp. 14–15).

Although only God is holy, His holiness is imparted to us through His Spirit. In ancient Israel, the priests were purified through sacrifice and ceremony, as was the case for Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu. Today, we are set apart and purified through the blood of Christ setting the stage for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which helps us to continue in the faith (Colossians 1:19–23; Acts 2:38). When we speak of the “Holy Spirit,” we are saying that the Spirit is holy. If we are filled with the Spirit, then God’s holiness is in us.

What exactly is holiness? How can we know that we are conducting ourselves in holiness? How do we know that we are set apart and that God is truly present in us through His Spirit? If we are to walk in newness of life, what does that mean from a perspective of holiness? How can we avoid making the same mistake as Nadab and Abihu? The answer to these questions is simple: we must let God define and establish the pattern for obtaining holiness, since He alone is holy and is the only One who can set things apart as holy through His presence. “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8).

DEFINING HOLINESS

In 2 Timothy 3:15, we are told that the Scriptures are “holy” and “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” God’s word sets us apart. It is holy, inspired by God, revealing His holy character to us in such a way that is “profitable... for instruction in righteousness” (v. 16). God’s holy word defines what is holy and what is not; it helps us distinguish between holy and unholy.

The Bible reveals the keys to our becoming holy. When we look into God’s word, we find that God has left us clear indications for how we are to become holy. For example, we are told that, “the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good” (Romans 7:12). The Bible reveals that God’s laws and commandments set us apart. Upon repentance and baptism, when we receive the Holy Spirit, we begin to become partakers of God’s own divine nature as we observe His holy law and holy commandments. As we do so, we become holy—set apart to God.

We see the contrast in our world today. Anyone who routinely obeys God’s commandments sticks out like the proverbial sore thumb. When true Christians stand up for what is right, we stand out. When we refuse to have sex before marriage or to cohabit, we are going against the grain of the modern world. When we refuse to accept the notion that murdering babies in the name of “choice” is okay, we defy popular sentiment. When we speak out against

homosexuality, we are considered intolerant by a world that has turned its back on God and refuses to keep His commands. Those who keep His commandments become set apart from an unclean and abominable world, because they are partaking of His holiness.

A HOLY DIET?

Do you realize that the instruction to be holy as God is holy is even given regarding our diet? While many in the world try to abolish God's dietary laws, the Bible is clear that our diet is a way in which He sets His people apart. After all, our bodies are temples where God dwells in us through His Holy Spirit. We are told that there are very serious consequences for defiling that temple (1 Corinthians 3:16–17). So, we must take care of our bodies utilizing the diet prescribed by our Creator.

This point is made clear in Leviticus. We are told to consecrate, or set apart, ourselves and be holy (Leviticus 20:7). However, we cannot of ourselves become holy. We must follow God's pattern. In Leviticus 20:8, God makes it clear that He sets us apart as holy, and that we become set apart through obeying His statutes. Later in the same chapter, God reiterates this point saying, "I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples" (v. 24). He then goes on to say, "You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine" (v. 25–26).

God is clear that eating proper food is a matter of holiness, and that eating unclean foods is a matter of defiling the temple of His Holy Spirit. In the context of God's dietary laws we read, "For I am the LORD your God. **You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy.** Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. **You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.** This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten" (Leviticus 11:44–47). As Christians, God's Holy Scripture teaches us that one way to become set apart as holy to God is by following His statutes concerning clean, or pure, foods.



CAN DAYS BE HOLY?

Another way we become set apart as holy to God is by observing the days and festivals that He has declared holy.

We have already seen that only God is holy and can impart holiness to something, so we must observe the days that He set apart and made holy. After all, no man can make anything holy. Since it is God's presence that makes something holy, anyone who would observe days other than those sanctified by God should realize that they are "going it alone" without God's presence. Again, God's Holy Scriptures point the way to discovering His holiness.

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations [commanded assemblies set apart by God's presence], these are **My feasts**. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings'" (Leviticus 23:1–3). In this chapter we find the days that God ordained as holy—days on which He will be present with us in a special way when we obey His command to come before Him. He includes the seventh day of the week, as well as the "annual Sabbaths"—or Holy Days—also listed in the chapter. Observance of these days will set us apart from the world as holy before God.

This becomes even more clear when we read God's remarks to the children of Israel, who did not take seriously their opportunity to be set apart as a holy nation to God (Exodus 19:6; Ezekiel 20:13). "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: "Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a **sign between Me and you** [it sets God's people apart] throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you [sets you apart or makes you holy]. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people'" (Exodus 31:12–14). We must take God's Sabbaths and Holy Days seriously, because not only do we become set apart from the world when we observe them, but we also bring ourselves before His presence to learn how to become holy as He is holy.

THE CHURCH

In observance of God's Sabbaths, we must also deal with the question of the convocation, or assembly. With whom should we assemble? Can we assemble just anywhere with whomever we please? The Apostle Paul explained to the

brethren at Ephesus that, “There is **one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:4–6). In this passage, Paul makes it clear that in referring to “one body” he is talking about God’s Church (Ephesians 4:15–16; Colossians 1:18, 24). So, we can plainly see that there is only one Church set apart by God’s Spirit. That Church will be observing God’s Sabbaths.

Furthermore, God’s Church will be set apart and cleansed, or made holy, by God’s word (Ephesians 5:25–27). Put another way, God’s Church will be easily identified as holy, because it will be observing and adhering to the truth taught in His Holy Scriptures rather than the traditions and religions of men. By doing so, the Church becomes cleansed and identified as holy, because it is following God’s pattern of holiness. It worships on the days He set apart and is therefore guided and directed by the presence of His Holy Spirit. This, in turn, enables the Church to distinguish between unholy and holy according to His statutes and to bring the body of believers to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Colossians 2:16–17; Ephesians 4:11–13). As God’s Church and its members follow God’s pattern of holiness, it becomes pure and makes itself ready for marriage to Christ (Matthew 25:10; Revelation 19:7–8).



CLEARING THE CONFUSION

Many people today are confused about the true meaning of holiness, and even whether it is important or not. However, Scripture is clear about the subject. God is holy, He takes holiness very seriously, and He expects us to be holy. We become holy by repenting of our former ways and accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our past sins, making us right with God. He then imparts His own holiness into us through His Spirit following baptism and the laying on of hands. We then strive to live a holy life by observing His holy law, His holy statutes, His holy days, and by submitting to His holy word. As part of God’s holy Church, let us strive to be set apart as examples of holiness to the world in all our conduct.

In Romans 12:2, the Apostle Paul sums things up nicely. “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Holiness is a responsibility and a way of life. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, **holy, acceptable to God**, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). Let us strive to imitate God in all our conduct, following His pattern for holiness in all that we do. Let us be set apart as His own special people. Let us be holy! ■

True Christianity: A Way of Life!

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genuine quality in things we read, the music we listened to, the food we ate and the way we treated one another. We were taught that God always does things “right” and that we should seek for the proper type of culture and quality in every area of life.

So I would like to encourage all of you brethren—young and old alike—to think again about the “way of life” of a true Christian. Like Mr. Armstrong, we will not be able to perfectly restore every phase and facet of this way in the Living Church of God. But we can try. We can make substantial progress if we zealously seek to honor God in all these ways—and if we start now, today!

When our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ returns to this earth, we will joyfully experience “the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). The fullness of this way of life will permeate the entire world under Christ’s rulership. But as “pioneers”—as participants in the first resurrection with the wonderful opportunity to teach this “way”—we need to learn and to practice this way in our lives now. May God guide and inspire all of us to do that! ■

Our Surrender to Jesus Christ

Continued from page 2

to see if each of us will be a surrendered and cooperative “team player” in His coming *world government*.

May God help us *all* to surrender to Him in *every facet* of our lives so that He may tell us at His coming, “Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17).

Dear brethren, as we approach the Passover, we must in *many ways* “examine” ourselves and try to draw much closer to Christ and to have His mind. Church government is only one of these—but is an important one, which is vital in preparing us for our *real* future. For, if we are to be in Christ’s Kingdom, we must not only *believe* in Him, we must *do as He said* and “live as He lived.” Then, we will honor Him not merely by belief, but by *action* and by fulfilling the *supreme purpose* for which He and the Father have placed us on this earth and have given us life and breath.

With Christian love,

LOCAL

CHURCH NEWS

Anniversaries

Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Mary Collins, long-time Church members, celebrated their 40th anniversary on July 19, 2010. On the Sabbath of July 17, the Baltimore congregation rejoiced with them at a reception after services.

Mr. and Mrs. John and Marion Pearce celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on October 14, 2010. The Pearces were baptized February 13, 1970 and have served as deacon and deaconess since 1982 and 1983 respectively. The Lafayette, Louisiana, brethren honored them during a congregational meal with a special reception, anniversary cake and gift. Area Pastor Rod Reynolds acknowledged their wonderful example of a long, happy marriage and also thanked them for their dedicated service to the Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald and Jennie Engle observed their 68th anniversary on November 1, 2010. The Baltimore congregation surprised them with a reception on Sabbath, October 30. Mr. and Mrs. Engle had been married seven years when they first heard Mr. Herbert Armstrong on the radio in 1949. They were baptized in 1971 and have been examples of faithfulness these many years.

Mr. and Mrs. Claude and Judy Cook were married on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 1960. Their children surprised them with a party to celebrate their 50th anniversary. Mr. and Mrs. Cook have five children, twelve grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. The Statesville congregation also surprised them after Sabbath services on November 27, 2010, presenting them with a cake and a gift. Mrs. Cook is a deaconess serving the Statesville congregation.

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Mason and Lindsey Smith of the Walterboro, South Carolina, congregation are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, *Halie Aidan Marie*, born September 29, 2010. She weighed 7 pounds, 1 ounce and was 20 inches long. Halie was welcomed by her grandparents, Steve and Maureen Smith, also of Walterboro, and David and Margie Crockett of Hawkins, Texas; great-grandparents Mr. Harry Smith, Frank and Ella Frye, Charlie and Jeanette Crockett and Dean and Sherry Burns; and many loving aunts and uncles.

Mr. and Mrs. Jorge Schaubek of Costa Rica are happy to announce the birth of their granddaughter, *Elena Armijo Schaubek*, born on December 29, 2010, weighing 6.9 pounds.

Ordinations

Mr. Elesio Catamco, *Mr. Bienvenido Redoble* and *Mr. Feliciano Rivera* were ordained as elders on September 24, 2010, during the Feast of Tabernacles, by Pastors Mr. Dayrell Tanner and Mr. Gideon Benitez, and elder Mr. Freddie Benitez. Mr. Catamco serves the brethren in the San Fernando congregation, Mr. Redoble in the Mauswagon congregation, and Mr. Rivera in the Sindangan congregation, in the Philippines.

Mr. Moreno Bayal and *Mr. Herminio Camilotes* were ordained deacons on September 24, 2010, during the Feast of Tabernacles, by Pastors Mr. Dayrell Tanner and Mr. Gideon Benitez, and elder Mr. Freddie Benitez. Mr. Camilotes serves the brethren in the Cagayan congregation and Mr. Bayal serves the brethren in the Kiara congregation, in the Philippines.

We want to hear more about the happy milestones in the lives of our brethren. If your family has had a birth, marriage or major anniversary, please ask your local pastor to send word to the *Living Church News*, PO Box 3810, Charlotte, NC 28227-8010 (or to send e-mail to lcn@lcn.org).

In Loving Memory

Mrs. Fairy Edith Knisley, a long-time faithful member of the Peoria, Illinois congregation, died on September 27, 2010, age 93. Edith, as she was known to her friends, grew up in a Sabbath-keeping home and was baptized into God's Church in 1964.

Lory Summers Dillbeck of the Albuquerque, New Mexico, congregation died October 5, 2010 after a long battle with cancer. She was 48 years old. She was baptized into God's Church in 1988. She is survived by her husband, Kevin, and by her parents, Larry and Pat Summers of the Indianapolis, Indiana, congregation. A memorial service was conducted by Area Pastor Mr. Rodger Bardo on October 9. Kevin Dillbeck would like to thank everyone for their many prayers, cards, and letters of support and encouragement throughout this difficult time.

Mr. Steve Dove of Grand Ledge, Michigan, died October 6, 2010 at age 59. Mr. Dove was a long-time member of the Church and was a member of LCG for over a decade.

Although he was blind, Mr. Dove set an example of activity and participation, even singing in the Festival Choir at the Wisconsin Dells this year. Mr. Daniel Friz officiated at a memorial service for Mr. Dove on October 17.

Evangelist *Dibar Krikor Apartian* died on December 9, 2010. He was assumed to be 94 years old, though his year of birth is unknown because records were lost in the wake of the Armenian genocide. For more than 55 years, he served God's Church, first as a French instructor at Ambassador College, and later as the head of the French Work for the Worldwide Church of God. He directed the International Work for the Living Church of God, and will be missed by the many brethren around the world whose lives he touched with his dignity, kindness and wisdom. He is survived by his wife Shirley, and his son Daniel (Renea) Apartian and grandson Andrew Apartian. He was predeceased by a son, Philip. Dr. Roderick C. Meredith conducted his memorial service in Matthews, North Carolina on December 19, 2010.

Upcoming *Tomorrow's World* Telecasts

DISCOVERY CHANNEL: Sunday, 6:33 a.m. ET/PT

GOD TV: Sunday, 9:30 a.m. ET/UTC

VISION (Canada): Sunday, 5:30 p.m. ET; Monday–Friday, 3:00 a.m. ET

WGN: Sunday, 6:00 a.m. ET

WORD: Sunday, 7:30 p.m. ET

WGN

Air Date **Broadcast Title**

March 6	How To Know When Christ Will Return
March 13	The Decline of Nations
March 20	Questions Evolution Cannot Answer
March 27	How To Watch World Events
April 3	Reaping the Whirlwind
April 10	Overcoming Stress
April 17	A World Held Captive

For additional stations and times, check the Television and Radio Log on page 31 of your *Tomorrow's World* magazine.

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COMMENTARY

Forgotten Heroes

The constant barrage of negative, depressing examples of the moral decline in our country, and in many other countries around the world, can cause us to become jaded, calloused and cynical about almost every facet of our society. Who can you trust? Where are the good examples? Where are the heroes? There are some, to be sure, but not as many as one could hope for.

Other generations have shared this concern, including two prominent figures in American history who decided to do something about it. Theodore Roosevelt, who later became the 26th President of the United States and his good friend Henry Cabot Lodge, a long-time Senator from Massachusetts, were both scholarly men who were avid readers and prolific writers. They spent many hours discussing important characters and heroes in American history. In 1894, these two close friends embarked on a joint project to write short stories featuring some of these heroes. Lodge wrote twelve accounts, and Roosevelt wrote 14 stories. They were published in 1895 as *Hero Tales*. More than a century later, these “tales” still make very interesting reading, retelling details about American heroes in a very interesting and absorbing manner.

Happily, we who read the Bible know that there is an inspiring set of “hero tales” of the faith, in the New Testament book of Hebrews. There, we find an inspiring summary of these heroes of the faith in chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament. We read of righteous Abel, Enoch, and

Noah. We also find mention of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. Later, the prophets and David are mentioned. Heroic women are not left out—Sara and Rahab are included as important biblical figures. In the summation of the account, we read of them, “who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.... And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 11:33–40; 12:1).

Why are these accounts important? The Apostle Paul explained: “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

These heroes of the faith are **not** forgotten, and they should inspire us to carry on until Christ returns. As we consider this “cloud of witnesses,” we can be certain that the failings of politicians and officials will not thwart God’s plan to bring His Kingdom to this earth for all mankind.

—J. Davy Crockett, III