

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.
Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.
Psalm 25:14

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The Failure of Israel

By Allen Stump

In first Corinthians chapter 10 Paul describes the spiritual cloud that provided cover for the children of Israel and the spiritual Rock that provided water for them during their wanderings in the wilderness; however, many tempted Christ and were destroyed by serpents. Verse 11 tells us that not only the history of these specific events, but the history of the children of Israel, as a whole, is to be a lesson for us all: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Paul said almost 2,000 years ago that these things happened for examples and were recorded for us living at the end of time. We might say that eschatologically we entered into the end of the world after Christ's death on the cross, and more specifically, Adventists understand that this concept of the end of the world has become more focused since 1798 and especially since 1844. Yet here we are over halfway through 2005. Last year it was the Asian tsunami. Recently it has been Katrina doing a devastating work. Tomorrow or next time it may be even worse. People are searching for answers. I believe with all my heart we are sitting at the very end of the world. We are at the end of the world and there are some things about the example of Israel and about Israel's failure that will be helpful to us today. This is necessary because every Christian religious movement that has ever started on this earth has failed! Do you realize that? Most Christian religious movements have started with good intentions for the most part and had high and lofty ideals, but something happened somewhere down the line to change them. The Lord has promised to cut the work short in righteousness in the last days (Romans 9:28) and He is going to have to do this because we are in just as much danger of failing as ancient Israel was!

Israel Failed by Conforming to the World

Israel conformed to the world. She ignored the messages of her prophets. She lost great opportunities to witness for the truth, and friends, these are lessons that we must have firmly embedded in us, because what God desired for ancient Israel, He desires even more for us today. You might wonder how this can be, but friends, God wants to do something special for us today. We are living in a time of the history of this earth like no other time ever.

Moses stood in the sight of a holy God with a Mediator. David became a close friend of God by the Mediator Christ Jesus. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord through a holy Mediator, and Jesus has promised by His Spirit to abide with us forever, but friends, there is coming a day when He will cease to be our Mediator, and yet God is going to have, not just a person, but a righteous nation

Prayer Requests

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina there are hundreds of thousands of people displaced from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. I want to encourage all to not only be in prayer for these people, but to do whatever is in your power to provide aid and assistance to the affected. Please donate funds, time, or talents to charity and relief agencies. I realize that no agency is perfect and there are problems, but let us not use this as an excuse to not help.

If anyone knows of believers that have been affected we can network to provide them help. If any of our readers is willing to house victims (we have heard from some already), provide clothing, food, or other supplies, you can let us know and we can connect you with those who know of believers who are in need.

Please be assured that this will not be the last of the major disasters that are soon to come upon us. Jesus warned that many such things would occur as we near His coming. "All these are the beginning of sorrows." (See Matthew 24:7, 8.)

Editor

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that will enter into the gates of that heavenly city that will have kept the truth of God. (See Isaiah 26:2) We have the opportunity to be a part of that favored nation.

Deuteronomy chapter 7 describes God's ideal for His people and all of these ideals are to be replicated in His people today. This is no less His desire for His people today. Deuteronomy chapter 7 and verse 6 says: "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself..." Unto Himself. We are to be a special people unto Him. "...above all people that are upon the face of the earth."

Deuteronomy 26 verse 17 says, "Thou hast avouched [publicly proclaimed or made an oath to] the LORD this day to be thy God and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments;" God wanted His people to be a holy people, a separate people unto Himself.

In Numbers chapter 23 verse 9 Balaam prophesied, "For from the top of the rocks I see him," referring to Israel, "and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Today we might say that God desires His people to dwell alone and not to be among the evangelicals. The term evangelical, however, is a good one, for it is a Biblical term. Biblical Christianity is evangelical, according to the Bible definition. A. T. Jones wrote a pamphlet entitled, "An Appeal for Evangelical Christianity," which is very good. The sad thing today is that evangelical Christianity isn't evangelical Christianity. It is Babylon.

Leviticus chapter 20 verse 26 says, "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." In Exodus 20 verse 5 He says, "...for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God." There is a godly jealousy that is good and God is jealous of His people. He doesn't want us out whoring after the gods of Babylon. He wants us to be unto Himself. In the New Testament we also find that the church of Christ is to be a separate, holy, and special people. 1 Peter 2:9 tells us why: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; [Why has God chosen us?] that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:" I don't know about you, friends, but I can honestly say that I have been in darkness, but God has called me into His marvelous light. Not just so that I can sit in that light and enjoy it, but so that I can share it with others. I want the light so I can take it to others and show forth God's praises. Friends, the greatest purpose of witnessing is not to save souls in God's kingdom, although this is a great and wonderful cause, but the greatest purpose in witnessing is to glorify God. Do we realize that? Do we think about that?

At the General Conference Session in St. Louis each one of us experienced someone being rude or callous. How did we react? We endeavored to react in a positive manner because doing so brings honor and glory to God. God wants a separate people, friends, because we can't bring honor and glory to Him

when we are involved in the things of the world. It will drag us down. It will make us unChrist-like.

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:16-18) We can't be His sons and daughters, friends, if we are not a separate and holy people. There is no way that we can give the call of Revelation 18 if we are part of Babylon. Israel was to be a favored nation and a separate, holy people, but friends, Israel failed to avoid and destroy even those surrounding influences. God had a plan.

Israel Failed to Destroy the Surrounding Evil Influences

Deuteronomy 7 reveals parts of that plan. God had a plan to provide an environment for Israel, but they had a part to play in the provision of this plan. The Canaanites had become so vile and wicked that they were beyond the help of even God and for the safety of Israel they would have to be destroyed. Their ability to glorify Him and their ability to be saved was over. They had become so wicked and instead of allowing them to become a snare and a stumbling block to Israel, His plan was to eradicate them. This sounds harsh but it was necessary. Deuteronomy 7:2 says, "And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them." For the God of mercy to instruct His people to not have mercy—that had to be a sad situation.

"But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth." (Deuteronomy 20:16) A very strong sentence and one that Israel failed to carry out. It is true that they did not have the strength to do this of themselves, but God promised to go before them. They would simply be the instrument of God. Caleb in his older age took the walled city Hebron where there were giants and the Bible says he took it because God was with him. However, Israel as a nation didn't do this. We see this quickly by perusing the first chapter in Judges: "Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns." (v. 27) "Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites..." (v. 29) "Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron..." (v. 30) "Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho..." (v. 31) The same in verses 33 and 34 with Naphtali and with Dan. It just didn't happen!

So, what was the result of this disregard of God's commands? There is a lesson for us, for these things happened for examples to us and we need to apply it to ourselves now. Israel's history is summarized in Psalm 106: "They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them." (Psalm 106:34-36)

Now, what does a snare do? It catches something. It is designed to catch and to bring into captivity. These idols brought them into captivity. “Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.” (vs. 37-39) Of course, we look at that and say, “I would never do that. I would never sacrifice my child on an altar of Baal. I would never shed the blood of my own child.” We would never do that, would we? Would we? I wonder what we do today. We introduce our children to the world and their blood may not be physically spilled upon the altar but their hearts are won over to Babylon and they go off and they serve the gods of this world just as verily as those people were serving Baal.

In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 544, we read: “But regardless of their high destiny, they chose the course of ease and self-indulgence; they let slip their opportunities for completing the conquest of the land; and for many generations they were afflicted by the remnant of these idolatrous peoples...” Then on page 545 we read, “By their sins the Israelites were separated from God; His strength was removed from them, and they could no longer prevail against their enemies. Thus they were brought into subjection to the very nations that through God they might have subdued.”

Now, what about us today? Well, there is good news. I can guarantee you, friends, we are not going to be under the conquest of the land for many generations because we don't have many generations left, but the bad news is, if we come under conquest we are not going to have an opportunity to back out, I am afraid, because things are going to wrap up fast. Quickly!

Now, the children of Israel conformed a little further. The Bible says that when Samuel was old he made his sons judges over Israel. Samuel was a righteous man and it might seem logical to think that his sons would be very righteous and great judges, right? Well, unfortunately, not. He really didn't end up doing a lot better than Eli did with his sons. The people weren't content with that situation. “Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.” (1 Samuel 8:4, 5) This is what Israel wanted and God in His submissive will allowed them to have a king. He tried through Samuel to tell them about the wickedness of this plan, but they refused to listen. “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.” (vs., 19, 20) They wanted to be “like all the nations” around them. They wanted to be like the wicked nations that God told them to destroy.

Patriarchs and Prophets, page 607 states, “The Israelites did not realize that to be in this respect unlike other nations was a special privilege and blessing. God had separated the Israelites from every other people, to make them His own peculiar

treasure. But they, disregarding this high honor, eagerly desired to imitate the example of the heathen! And still the longing to conform to worldly practices and customs exists among the professed people of God.” (emphasis supplied)

Ignoring the Messages of the Prophets

So, what is our reaction today? Do we listen to the prophets? Do we take their advice? Do we conform to the will of God? Is this what Israel did? The Lord sent them prophets, but did they believe them? When they did, it worked well. God through Joshua told them to obey His commandments and to do His will (Joshua 1:7, 8), and Jehoshaphat said, “Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.” (2 Chronicles 20:20) When they did, as in the time of Jehoshaphat in this instance in 2 Chronicles, God blessed them, but, the prevailing attitude among the children of Israel was one of disregard of His prophets and disregard of His law.

We are familiar with the first part of Hosea 4:6, but the last part is important as well: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge...” It wasn't that God didn't want to give them knowledge. The greatest knowledge that we can have is the knowledge of God. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3) Continuing on in Hosea, “... because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.” They had dishonored and forgotten His law. They had dishonored the messages of the prophets.

“But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.” (2 Chronicles 36:16) There were prophets but there were also messengers. The Hebrew word is, *mal'ak*. Malak is also translated “angel” in the Old Testament. These were people that perhaps God did not give a divine revelation to, but whom God spoke to in some way or whom God sent to the people. They were messengers, and the people disregarded them.

Jesus Christ is to be our King, but God has appointed among His people, leaders who are to share the truth and His Word. Friends, if we mock and ridicule them, it will only be to our own hurt. When God sends us a message, we need to listen to it. It doesn't matter who it comes from or how humble the messenger is. He may not be the prophet of the Lord, but he may be a messenger and we need to listen, because it will be to our folly if we fail to heed the message from God.

Do you remember what happened shortly before the fall of Israel? Jeremiah's secretary, Baruch, had written out a part of Jeremiah's message which was brought to King Jehoiakim. There was a fire burning on King Jehoiakim's hearth. When he came to a part that he didn't want to hear, do you remember what Jehoiakim did? He took a knife and shredded it and cast it into the fire. Do we do any better? We have been given the Testimonies and other writings to help us. I know that we can say the church has manipulated the Testimonies, but as God gave

them to us they are a great blessing to us. Friends, if we take our little knife and we cut this part out here that doesn't agree with us and we cut that part out there that we don't want to agree with, have we done any differently than Jehoiakim? We know that everything we need is in the Bible and even Ellen White states, "If you had made God's word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies." (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 605) But, honestly, most of us have not done studied as we could have and what a wonderful blessing the testimonies have been and are to those who cherish them!

Some have read that Ellen White called her writings a "lesser light," (*R&H*, January 20, 1903) and have felt at liberty to disregard them for the "greater light." But, friends, if you are in a dark cave where you cannot see the sun, even if you only have a very small flash light, you are thankful for that little light as it will help you to find your way to the outside where the bright rays of the sun are! I am getting older now and wear bifocals. At first I did not want them. But when my eyes degenerated to the point where I could not read even with my normal glasses I wanted the bifocals. I needed help. I needed a stronger prescription and I need all the help I can get to see both physically and spiritually. I think that we need help spiritually and so I want to encourage us today that while we might read how Jehoiakim and the children of Israel abused and mocked the prophets, we have to ask ourselves, "Are we really doing any better today?"

Arrogance and Pride

One of the great sins of Israel was spiritual pride: "And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." (Isaiah 13:11) "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18) Every bit of this applies to us. We might not outwardly appear proud or haughty but the One who weighs the heart knows and will take action.

"I am not proud," we might say being self-deceived. This reminds me of the story of an older person who was asked by a youth, "Have you ever had any of those senior moments?" And he replied, "Well, I can't remember having any," and the youth said, "There you go!" The older person did not remember nor realize he had forgotten. That is part of Laodicea's real problem. She doesn't know. She is blind and she doesn't know it and because she is blind she can't see that she is naked. She doesn't realize that she is destitute of the faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

Is there anyone harder to witness to than Adventist people? Just go to the General Conference Session and find out. One can talk to Jehovah Witnesses easier. Do you know why? Because Adventists firmly believe they have all the truth and therefore no one else can teach them. Among those who are part of restoring the truth about God, we are a little more difficult group, aren't we? We still believe in the sanctuary, and we at least say we believe in Ellen White still, don't we? So, it becomes even a little harder to teach us than it is to teach the

main line church. If you think it is hard to deal with those people, you should see what it is like to deal with us and those in this movement know that I am being honest.

Taking Advantage of Our Opportunities

Israel was placed at the intersection of three continents among the great highways of the world to share God's glory with the world, but they failed to be a shining light. What are we doing with our opportunities?

"Those with whom we associate day by day need our help, our guidance. They may be in such a condition of mind that a word spoken in season will be as a nail in a sure place. Tomorrow some of these souls may be where we can never reach them again. What is our influence over these fellow travelers?" (*Prophets and Kings*, page 348) What if you or I were to drive by a home near where we live and hear that there has been a death in this home. Perhaps we only live a mile or two from this house. Did we ever visit that house? Did we ever at least go and give them an invitation to know Jesus, to maybe come to services, or give them literature? Recently there was a lady near where I live who overdosed on pills. She didn't die, but we should have been there first. We have to realize friends that we have the opportunity and we have to take advantage of the opportunity. Every day of life we have responsibilities which we must bear.

"Every day, our words and acts are making impressions upon those with whom we associate. How great the need that we set a watch upon our lips and guard carefully our steps! One reckless movement, one imprudent step, and the surging waves of some strong temptation may sweep a soul into the downward path. We cannot gather up the thoughts we have planted in human minds." (*Prophets and Kings*, page 348) And that is true. Does that hit you like it hits me? I know how often I have had a careless moment; just one careless moment is all it takes to just start an avalanche of problems.

Israel Misapplied the Promises of God

"Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matthew 15:1-3) In verse 9 Jesus went on to say, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." We do this more than we might like to admit. Traditions led them to reject Jesus.

Those children of Israel were working under the conception that Israel was going to be saved eternally regardless of her actions. They had read the prophecy of Jeremiah.

"Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations

of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.” (Jeremiah 31:35-37) And don’t you think for a minute that when Jesus came into the temple and He upset the money-changers’ tables and He drove out those people and then He said, “*Your house* is left unto you desolate,” (Matthew 23:38) [a place that He had come in before and said, “*My house*, ... ye have made it a den of thieves,” (Matthew 21:13) and now He says, “*Your house* is left unto you desolate,”] don’t think for a minute, friends, that they didn’t get their Bibles out. They unrolled the scrolls and they read the prophecy of Jeremiah and they said, “He is an imposter because the Scripture cannot be broken.” Now, of course, they failed to read all that the prophecy said. They failed to apply it correctly, and today people are looking at you. They open up the books and read, “The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—” (2 *Selected Messages*, p. 380) The ship appears to fall, the structure appears to go. Oh, yes, they are reading it today.

The eleventh chapter of Mark describes an enacted parable of Jesus: “And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry, And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.” (Mark 11:12-14) The fig tree gives out its leaves after the fruit has come. So here is this pretentious tree and it is boasting its leaves, but there is no fruit. Verse 20 says, “And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.” In *Desire of Ages* pages 582 and 583 it says, “The cursing of the fig tree was an acted parable. That barren tree, flaunting its pretentious foliage in the very face of Christ, was a symbol of the Jewish nation. The Saviour desired to make plain to His disciples the cause and the certainty of Israel’s doom. For this purpose He invested the tree with moral qualities, and made it the expositor of divine truth. The Jews stood forth distinct from all other nations, professing allegiance to God. They had been specially favored by Him, and they laid claim to righteousness above every other people. But they were corrupted by the love of the world and the greed of gain. They boasted of their knowledge, [we don’t do that, do we?] but they were ignorant of the requirements of God, and were full of hypocrisy. Like the barren tree, they spread their pretentious branches aloft, luxuriant in appearance, and beautiful to the eye, but they yielded ‘nothing but leaves.’ The Jewish religion, with its magnificent temple, its sacred altars, its mitered priests and impressive ceremonies, was indeed fair in outward appearance, but humility, love, and benevolence were lacking.”

Israel Rejected the Son of God

There came a time when Jesus was considered such a rebel, such a reactionary and revolutionist that something had to be done. Notice what Caiaphas said: “Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for

the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” (John 11:49, 50) “What are we going to do with this man called Jesus? He is causing a disturbance and if we leave Him alone, He is going to take away both our place and our nation.” Was He going to that? Yes, He was. He was going to do that. He was going to bring about a revolutionary order among those people. He was going to sweep away this hierarchical structure that had developed with Judaism, and these people were astute enough to realize this, and so they are having this council about what to do to prevent this. Caiaphas is the high priest. He is respected. He is a man among men among the leaders of Judaism. He said, “You don’t know anything at all. I have a plan. Let me tell you what we are going to do.” This really brought doom upon Israel. Either Jesus or the nation was to perish. They decided that it would be Jesus.

How does this apply to us today? We are not going to kill Jesus, are we? We are not going to go to heaven and try to take Him off His throne. We are not going to try to remove Him from His position by the ark as our Mediator. I tell you, friends, clearly the corporate church, that which has claimed since 1844 to be the called movement of God, has attempted to pull Jesus off of His throne. They decided it would be better for this *Son of God* to die and cease being the *Son of God* so that they would not lose their place with the evangelicals and that they would be considered great among them.

Now, how do we apply it among ourselves? Well, we might have to think a little deeper on that, but I tell you, friends, we can move Jesus out of His place too. It can be done, and there are ways to do it. We might still call Him the Son of God, but do we really live and believe that He is the Son of God? And do we stand for Him as the Son of God?

These people who were warning examples to us, they killed the Messiah. They killed Jesus. Israel failed, friends. She conformed to the world around her. She failed to destroy the evil influences around her, to take action when necessary. She ignored God’s law and prophets and the messengers of God. Her heart became proud and she brought forth no fruit. Do you realize that this is a perfect illustration of Revelation 3:14-21? It is a perfect illustration of Laodecia and I have to ask myself the question, “Are we any better?”

Are We Conforming to the World?

Are we conforming to the world today? Are we failing to preach the gospel to destroy the evil influences about us or to take action in ways that we could? Are we listening to God’s law and prophets, or is it more convenient to listen to the worldly preachers?

There is a certain preacher who has a television program I have seen a couple of times. Honestly, his actions and ways grate my soul. He would be sort of what we used to call a “pretty boy.” He comes across so fancy and a little effeminate to me. But, he is all the time talking about positive thinking and that God will do great things for you, and the people are just flocking to him. His congregation has grown so big they have had to move to an arena or stadium that holds 15,000 people. And people are listening to him. He has written books and you

might be surprised how many Adventist people support, not only this man, but also the Billy Graham crusades. We will listen to those people and we won't read out of the Bible nor a page from the Testimonies!

Our Need to Overcome is Found in Jesus Christ

We must be honest and admit that at times we are arrogant and proud. Jesus says so in Revelation 3. But today, the very thing the early church needed, the very thing that Israel needed, is what we need today, and it is Jesus Christ.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Galatians 2:20a) Paul says the object of the gospel, the goal of the gospel, is "Christ in you the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27) The object of giving the gospel, friends, isn't primarily to go and tell the world about salvation. Jesus tells us to do that, but the real object of the gospel is "Christ in you." Christ lives in men, "and the life I now live in the flesh [even in sinful flesh] I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20b) The same Son of God, born in Bethlehem, who lived and worked and labored in sinful flesh, comes to reproduce that miracle of Bethlehem in you and me!

The Greatest Privilege

Well, friends, we have a choice today. Jesus has died for us. Will I fail; will you fail, as ancient Israel did? Or will you be one of the 144,000? That is the choice we have today. It is one of the greatest choices God has ever given any people. Can you imagine it? A personal friend of mine recently received an award from the Governor for being in business for thirty years. Someone does something great and the Queen of England takes a sword and lays it on his shoulder, and she knights him and he is now Sir So-and-So. God has done a wonderful thing for His people. He has given us many blessings. He has offered us eternal life, and that is a wonderful thing. But eternal life in an eternal burning hell wouldn't be too great a gift of itself, would it? So, there has to be something more! He has offered us the ability to research and to study the sciences, the physics and the chemistry of the universe that He has created throughout all of eternity. That will be interesting. I want to do that and I know some of you do too. I am interested in those kinds of things. I think it is going to be fascinating. But, friends, the greatest privilege He has given us, the greatest privilege He is going to offer any people ever, is to be a member of the 144,000, to be a part of the group that will fully vindicate the character of God and will follow Jesus whithersoever He goes for all of eternity.

We are not living in the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Enoch, Elijah, Peter, nor of John. We are living today, at the end of earth's history. What are we going to do with it? Are we going to learn from Israel or are we just going to continue to be Laodicea? The choice is ours. He offers us the solution. He says, "I have this robe of righteousness for you. I have this eyesalve of the Holy Spirit. I have this gold tried in the fire."

Recently Lance Armstrong of the United States won a record seventh consecutive Tour de France. Do you have any idea how much that man has trained? This was a man who a few years ago was on his deathbed with cancer from head to toe. He developed brain cancer and it spread. Doctors gave him little hope, but here he is. He has worked so hard. During his training Armstrong would get up in the mornings thinking of a bicycle. He would eat, sleep, train, and live on a bicycle. He would train on special equipment. Do you know what he gets for winning the Tour de France? He gets a yellow jersey. That is basically what they give him. The winner gets to wear the yellow jersey. Paul speaks about those little laurel wreaths that fade. What does it matter? Who cares? Some people will invest almost a lifetime to train to do something like climb Mt. Everest. You just can't go and climb Mt. Everest. It is a little easier than it used to be. They have guides and ropes and ladders in places for you now that they didn't used to have, but sometimes it takes people a lifetime to train to be able to do something like that. Do you know why they do it? Because they want it! There is a man who paid millions of dollars a few years ago to ride in a Russian space capsule. Do you know why he did it? Because he wanted it!

How badly do we want this privilege of walking intimately close with God? This is what it boils down to. We have the privilege of walking intimately closer with God than even Abraham had, than Noah had, than the angels who have never sinned have ever had with Him. Do we want that? Why don't we want it badly? We should want it much more than Lance Armstrong wanted that seventh Tour de France. We should want it more than Hillary and Norgay wanted the summit of Mount Everest. Maybe we don't understand the value of the gift, but it should be the most precious thing you have ever desired. I want to tell you it is to me, and by God's grace I am going to have it! What about you? We need the Lord in our hearts. We need to draw close to Him. We need a revival in our lives. Maybe we are starting to feel a sprinkling of the latter rain, but I want more than a sprinkling. We each one need it. The Bible promises He is going to pour out His Spirit upon little children and handmaids, doesn't it? But, the Lord will not pour out His Spirit upon anyone who doesn't truly want it. He doesn't intrude into our lives, but God is clear, if we want Him, He will come and He will give us what we need. He will revive us.

Our Father in heaven is so good to us! He is offering us a privilege that has never been given to any people in the history of this earth or this universe. Our Father loved the great patriarchs like Noah, Abraham, and David, and did great things for many of these people. Enoch, Elijah, and Moses are in the sweet-by-and-by already. But, our Father has something even greater for the people who are living now at the end of time, who are going to give His Word, and who are going to share a witness and testimony about Him to vindicate His character. They will follow Jesus whithersoever He goes. They will have a bond so close and so intimately tied to Christ and the Father, that even in sinful flesh nothing will ever be able to induce them to change their position and that they will be able to be sealed for all of eternity, even in this sinful flesh.

May this experience be the great desire of each heart. Perhaps we are discouraged due to past failures. Beloved, don't allow your past errors and mistakes to discourage and pull you down. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Romans 5:20) Where Satan tries and tempts us, Jesus saves us and gives us grace. God has promised, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13)

We are not going to have this vital experience unless we really desire it and we are spending serious time with our Father. We must be in the Word, for Jesus used the Word to fight the temptations of Satan. We must spend time in prayer

for it too is a source of strength. Most have heard the gospel classic, "Sweet Hour of Prayer." Beloved, I know that if we will take that hour, it will be sweet. In fact, we might need to take another hour, and may God help us to make and to take that time. May we not be content to have sleepy late night prayers, or just a moment or two here or there.

God has never disappointed one single seeker of Him. If any are lost at last, it won't be God's fault. We need not fail individually or collectively as Israel failed. But, we must turn our lives over to Jesus. We must be willing to be different. May we preach the gospel to destroy the evil influences about us and may we listen to God's prophets and messengers as all pride and evil speaking are put away.

Allen Stump

The Humble Heart is Mine Part 2

By Onycha Holt

(The following is the second study in a four part series that was presented at the West Virginia camp meeting this year by Sister Onycha Holt. I believe that the material is extremely vital to us and I highly recommend that each reader carefully consider its content. Editor)

Our opening thought is found in Ephesians 1:17 and this is the prayer I have in my heart for all of us today. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."

God's Purpose for Women

I mentioned in the first article of this series, published last month, that God has a purpose for each one of our lives, whether we are men, women, or children, and in this article we will consider God's purpose for especially the women. Before we do that, though, I would like to remind you that one of the most important things we need as women today is men who are like Moses and Abraham, men who are like Elijah and Noah, men who know God and who speak to God personally and will stand for Him though the heavens fall. I firmly believe that this is what is lacking in most of our homes today, and until this standard is reached, I fear we will continue to tarry this side of heavenly Canaan.

Let's turn to Genesis 1:26 and verse 28. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ... And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every

living thing that moveth upon the earth." This is God's original plan and purpose for us as men and women. Now, before we consider the change that occurred when sin entered our world, let us look at Genesis 2:18. "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." The "help meet" He is talking about is me and it is each one of you, my sisters. God created us to be help meets. This is the purpose of our existence as women. This is the thought that I want to really focus on today. God said, "I will make a help meet for Adam." God said this about Eve before He blessed both Adam and Eve and instructed them to be fruitful and multiply. Being fruitful and multiplying is secondary to being a help meet according to God's Word. Sisters, you may desire a career, you may want a college education, a job, or a family, and all of these things may be in God's provision for you and provided by Him in His own good time, but before any of this, your purpose is to be a help meet to your spouse, and if you have no spouse, there are fathers and other relatives in your homes and in your congregations that you can be help meets to. This is the true essence of our existence as women.

What it Means to be a Help Meet

The expression "help meet" is from the Hebrew word, 'ezer which means to help. It comes from the root word 'azar that means to surround, to protect, and to aid. I know it may seem strange to think of ladies being called to do this, but that is what the root word means—to surround, to protect and to aid. So, ladies, it is not an easy job we have to be help meets, because it means we will always need to be there to help our husbands and the men in our lives. The need may be emotional, physical, mental, or spiritual, but whatever it is, God wants us first and

foremost to provide this support and aid to the men in our lives, and I strongly encourage you to consider doing so.

I am a little older than some of you and it has taken me many years to understand this concept of being a help meet. But friends, Jesus is coming soon and I don't have as long as my parents may have had to figure this out, and the people younger than me don't have as long as their parents had or have had to understand the high ideal God has for each of the members of our families. If we just come to camp meeting after camp meeting and it makes no change in our lives, what good is it? If we know change is needed but we really don't want to make the change, how can God bless us? Making the change may be hard, I agree. It involves self-sacrifice and self-denial, but isn't self-sacrificing love the law of heaven? It involves not saying that hurtful word when you know it will cause pain to the person closest to you. It means denying yourself for the benefit of others. It means denying the time you want to spend on yourself for your own pleasure, perhaps even denying sleep and food, in service to another. In this way, your home and your church can be blessed of God. We need to be submissive to God now and do this because it is right and because it is what God expects of us. He will then bless us with His sweet presence and will help us to be like Him moment by moment as we relate to the people around us.

To understand this concept of surrounding, aiding, and protecting as we are help-meets, let us look at a few texts. Often the Hebrew root word for help meet is used in the context of battle. 2 Samuel 8:5 states, "And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour ('azar) Hadadezer king of Zobath, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men." The word, "succour," is the same root word ('azar) that is translated help meet. Another text is 2 Samuel 18:3, "But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou are worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou succour ('azar) us out of the city." In other words, the men were in a precarious situation. They were being chased by Absalom. David had planned to go out for the battle but his men, possibly fearful of losing him asked him to stay and help them from within the city. In 2 Samuel 21:17 we read, "But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured ('azar) him [David], and smote the Philistine, and killed him." The word "succoured" is the same root word used in Genesis for help meet. Psalm 33:20 says "Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help ('ezer) and our shield." The word "help" is the same word as in Genesis 2:18 for "help meet." God is our help meet. We can depend on Him and God wants us to be the same for the men in our lives also. We will look at one more text, Psalm 70:5, which says, "But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help ('ezer - help meet) and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying." God is our example in being a help meet.

We All Must Follow God's Plan

In the first part of this series, we learned how important it is for Christian men to understand how Jesus related to His Father so

that they can relate to Jesus as their head in the same manner and thereby bless the people in their homes. Just so, we as ladies need to understand how God is a help meet and how He helps us in every situation. Then no matter what problem we might be faced with, we can always cry unto the Lord and He will help us by His power and grace to be the ideal help meet He wants us to be.

Now let us read Genesis 3:16 about what happened after sin entered our world, because sin changed our relationships. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception [most of us understand what this means]; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children [we understand this]; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." We noted in the first article of this study on the humble heart the husband's leadership and rulership in the home. Now we will focus on women and what God means when He says our desire, or our longing, shall be unto our husbands. I believe this is true in every intimate relationship, whether godly or not. This is what has happened to us because of sin and in non-Christian men and women it also holds true, although perhaps to a different degree. When I worked as a mental health counselor I would frequently see this. Ladies who are in abusive relationships, for the most part, have a very difficult time leaving their partners. I began to understand this better when a research report crossed my desk several years ago. This research revealed that during intimate activity something special happens in the female brain that does not happen in the male brain. A chemical, or a hormone, is produced in the female brain that is not produced in the male brain and this hormone binds us to our partner in a strong way. This is a blessing if we will use it correctly, but if we use it indiscreetly and we do not wait until marriage for that special relationship, great harm comes to both people, so I want to encourage our young people to wait to engage in this activity because God does something special for the ladies that he doesn't do for the gentlemen. He binds us to our partner.

Now let's look at some verses that we are all familiar with. 1 Peter 3:1-4 says, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation [conversation is not just what is said but one's lifestyle] of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." I want to encourage you that this is part of God's plan. As we are help meets to our husbands and to the men in our lives, we need to be so with a meek and quiet spirit. We need to help our young ladies learn to have this meek and quiet spirit. Then both men and women are instructed, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should

inherit a blessing.” (1 Peter 3:8, 9) Our words, our actions need to be a blessing.

“The aged women likewise, that they may be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.” (Titus 2:3, 4) It shouldn’t be hard to do this and it won’t be hard to do this if the men in our lives are like Christ and love us as Christ loves us. But even if the men we know are not like Christ, we still must be like Jesus and love those around us. God requires this of us and if we find this hard to do, our only answer is to be on our knees and gain from Him the power, strength, and wisdom to do it, and He will provide this. “That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children. To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (verse 4, 5) I know some sisters do not like to hear these words. It may be challenging to be obedient and under subjection in this world today because we hear from the media and even those in the church the exact opposite, but God’s will is always best.

Please notice these texts that help us to better understand God’s beautiful way:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.” (Ephesians 5:22-24)

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.” (Colossians 3:18)

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” (1 Corinthians 11:3)

The submissiveness of Jesus, both during His sojourn on earth and even today, amazes me. Jesus is willing to submit Himself to His Father in every thing. He came to this world and did nothing of His own will. He did all to please His Father. He had all authority at His hand, but He chose a life of obedience and of submission to His Father. This is such a revelation to me and I encourage all of us to be submissive in the same way. I want to plead with you men to be submissive to Jesus so that you can guide your families into righteousness and they can find pleasure in being submissive to you because you are in submission to Christ.

Jesus Will Provide Your Needs

Now some complaints I often hear from couples in my office are: “He has no right to talk to me like that.” “Who does he think he is?” “I don’t know what she does with all her time, but the place is always a mess.” “He never helps with the kids.” “He’s always gone doing his own thing.” “He never picks up after himself.” “All he cares about is himself. I never get to do anything I want to do.” “I’m sick and tired of being the only one that...” Other sources of dissatisfaction are, “He never tells me he loves me,” or, “He’s not affectionate.” “He barely

talks to me,” or, “She barely talks to me.” May God help us to never say such things, but I often wonder, do we gripe and complain mentally? We might not say a word, but are we thinking such thoughts because of the suffering we go through just by living with someone? People often get blamed for things in the home that are not their fault. Should we blame someone even if it is his or her fault? Of course not! We are to be patient, loving and kind, and forgiving. Sometimes when we judge the other person or speak sarcastically, there are children in the home. The children hear mom and dad fight. They might see things thrown or hit. This should never be. Now we all know that no two people are alike. They may join their lives together, set up a home and even though they are in love, little things still creep in that bother them and that are hard to deal with unless they learn to show to each other the great love that God has shown to them.

I often think about the authors of some of our favorite hymns and I have wondered how they were able to write so poignantly about their Christian experience. I think of the hymn, “I Come to the Garden Alone,” and mentally I see a picture of a garden with someone kneeling at a bench in the garden talking to their Father, but it usually doesn’t happen that way. Your garden is wherever you meet with God. It can be in the darkness or in the closet, in the bathroom or in the woods, and *it is a garden because God is there*. Now, Jesus had a garden and it was a painful event for Him, and when we meet with God it is often with tears and suffering, but that is the best place to go. Don’t gripe at the people in your lives because of the tears and the suffering you are experiencing, go to our Father. He will comfort you. When Jesus was on the mountain praying, Moses and Elijah came to Him. Would you like to have Moses come to you? Of course you would, but we have someone better than Elijah with us in this garden where we are praying. We have someone far better than Moses walking with us. Jesus has promised that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. It does not matter what you are experiencing, His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Now, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and I do not recommend that you stay in an abusive relationship where your body is subject to abuse. Now, you might choose to do so, but before you do, I advise you to obtain counsel from godly people, your pastor or godly men, in your life, about what you should do in such a situation, because it can be dangerous and lives have been lost, but Jesus has promised that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

Perhaps your spouse has left you. It is a painful experience, yes, but Jesus is walking with you through it. So what if you are a single mother. Your child has the best Father he or she could possibly have. It is not easy. I agree it is challenging, but you can do it with God. So what if your husband took all the money and left? Your heavenly Father has riches unknown. So what if you are sent to jail for an unjust reason or even as a consequence of your own behavior? You will not go alone. You have a God that will never leave you. This is not some mystical idea. It is real. You can depend on it, but you have to be in a right relationship with Him, and we all have to be following God’s order in our homes.

Now, our homes are vulnerable, I admit, because once the door closes, you and I don't see what goes on in another's home. However, God does, and we studied last time about when the Lord came down and spoke to Abraham saying, "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great... I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it." (Genesis 18:20-21) Now, God already knew whether those things were so, but I am glad He chose to visit Abraham because it shows me how much He cares about us and how much He cared for the people in Sodom and Gomorrah, because it allowed Abraham to then plead for the city. Cries are going up to our heavenly Father day by day, hour by hour, but, please, don't let it be from your homes.

We don't have that much time left to fix our homes. It will not be easy for, let's face it, there might be two, three, or four people in the home and all of them have to develop a righteous relationship with God. When they all under one roof it often results in conflict and problems, but with God there is no problem that cannot be solved if we will submit our hearts and wills to His and allow His mighty power to work within us.

Let's look at some of the precious promises we can claim to be like Jesus in our homes. One of my favorite promises is found in 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, 7. This promise gives comfort to everyone who might be suffering in his or her home. It says, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ... And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."

What that tells me is that in proportion to your suffering will be your comfort from God. We know it is not an easy thing to suffer, but if we are with God, His presence and His consolation will grow and our suffering will be turned into a blessing. I hope the world doesn't fall down around me, but if it should, I'd rather be with God because I know that He will provide for me in proportion to my need. That is what this verse is saying. As our sufferings abound, so will the consolation. It is not a problem to have troubles and suffering if you claim this promise and if you are right with God, for you will be happy no matter what happens.

Another precious promise is found in 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; [we know this but here is the promise,] but of power, [and here is the key,] and of love, [which is what we need to be able to accomplish perfect relationships in our home,] and of a sound mind." God has given us this spirit of love.

2 Corinthians 12:9 says, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: [It is sufficient for whatever you are going through, brothers and sisters. It is sufficient.] for my strength is made perfect in weakness." This is a promise for us as ladies in our homes when we are trying to exert a positive influence, whether in our homes, or in our churches, or in the work place.

His grace is sufficient for you to be that Christian woman that He wants you and needs you to be.

What About Our Rights?

I would like to share a quotation from a wonderful book on the life of Jesus called, *The Desire of Ages*. This thought has helped me a great deal. It says, "Jesus did not contend for His rights. Often His work was made unnecessarily severe because He was willing and uncomplaining. Yet He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived about these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance. He did not retaliate when roughly used, but bore insult patiently." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 89) The part that helped me a great deal was to realize that Jesus did not contend for His rights. Remember the complaint I often hear in the office? "He has no right to treat me like that." Jesus never contended for His rights, and if we want to be like Jesus, we won't either. We don't need to contend for our rights, because God will do it for us. He will take care of the problem, and in the end He will make all things right, whatever the hurt or the pain has been.

How We React in the Home

Let's turn to Ephesians 4, and hopefully this will be our response to whatever we are going through in the home. This is a prayer that we all have, I am sure. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." (Ephesians 4:29) This edifying conversation is not just to take place in the church, but also in homes, in the work place, and wherever you are communicating. Paul is saying under inspiration to let no corrupt communication proceed, but that which is good to the use of edifying. "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:" (v. 30-31) And here is what we should be: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (v. 32) So, as we relate with people that are near and dear to us, let us try to follow this counsel and let no corrupt communication proceed from our mouths.

Notice what James 3:2 says about perfection. "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." Now, most likely in our homes we don't physically hit people, but we might offend in word. It is very easy to do, even if we don't mean to. We know from experience that truly innocent things can be said that affect others in a different way than intended, so we need to be careful what we say and then to make amends when hurts happen, because we are to be tenderhearted and forgiving one another, and doing things that are uplifting to people.

Ornamentation and Outward Adorning

As we finish part two of this series, I would like to turn to Isaiah 3. There is so much we could talk about that effects us as ladies. We have mentioned some, such as a meek and quiet spirit and loving our husbands and children, but just as the quotation from *The Desire of Ages* had an effect on me, Isaiah 3 also has had a profound effect on me. Starting in verse 16, Isaiah is talking about the daughters of Zion and this also applies to our daughters and to us as ladies today. "Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:" and then we continue on to read about "chains," "bracelets," "bonnets," "ornaments of the," "headbands," "rings," "nose jewels," and so forth.

Isaiah is talking about the display of jewelry and ornaments, a proud walk, the way we dress, etc. We all know as Christians that we are to be modest and that we are in the day of atonement. We are preparing for the Lord's return. Our hearts are to be cleansed and purified. Beloved, there is something said at the end of Isaiah 3 that is very important and should catch our attention. Let's start in verse 24: "And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty." And here is the important part in verse 25, "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war."


God says through Isaiah that because of all of the ornamentation and pride of the daughters of Zion mentioned in the earlier verses, the men of Zion would fall by the sword and in the war. God revealed to Ellen White this will be strictly fulfilled. Notice what she says, "*I was shown that this scripture will be strictly fulfilled.*" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 270 – emphasis supplied) This has solved every problem there could ever be for me about ornamentation and outward adorning, because God has shown us, through Ellen White, that this prophecy applies to the last days and verse 25, "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in war," will be strictly fulfilled. I don't want this to happen to the men in my life, and I know that you don't want it to happen to the men in your lives either. If you are doing the things mentioned in verses 16 through 23, the promise is that your men will fall. Now, I don't know if that is spiritual falling or if it is a physical falling, but I do know that this promise is going to be fulfilled and I don't want to be responsible in any way, by word or deed, to cause this to happen. I love, not only my husband and my son, but I love the brothers in our faith. They are so important to us. So, ladies, I encourage you to study and think prayerfully about this.

What is our adorning to be? We have already read about a meek and quiet spirit in 1 Peter 3:4, so let's go to 1 Timothy 2:9, 10. "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." I

encourage you to be the women God wants you to be. It is such a blessing and a privilege to have a godly home, to have godly leadership in the home, and to be a godly help meet to your companion.

Since the theme of our camp meeting is sharing our testimony, I would like to share one more experience. It involves not one but God and me and I hope it will bless you. Long ago when my first child was very young, perhaps two years old, God reminded me I needed to instruct her in the ways of the Lord. I was a single mother at the time and this is one reason I stated earlier, "So what if you are a single mother? Your child has the best Father in the universe." My Father had to remind me of this also, because I had lost sight of it.

A Beautiful Experience

I remember the first time, in my effort to follow His will, that I had worship with my daughter on Friday evening. We were sitting on a carpeted stairway leading to an upstairs that we never used, the sun was setting, and I was teaching her little songs such as "Jesus Loves Me" and "Zacchaeus." Now, it is not always easy for me to sing on key and I imagine on this particular Sabbath evening I lacked many musical graces because I had not heard or sung these songs in a very long time. I shared one experience with you in the first part of this series about the *second* most beautiful sound I have ever heard, but the *most beautiful* sound I have ever heard occurred on this first Sabbath evening worship with my daughter. It lasted only two or three seconds while she and I were singing. I have no clue whether it was just one angel I heard or if my ears were opened to all of heaven giving praise to the Father and His Son, but it was the most beautiful music I have ever heard. It was not music that anyone on this earth could create. There are no words to describe this music. It was melodious and sweet and something akin to one hundred part harmony. As soon as I became aware of sound, I turned and lifted my chin to listen closer, but it then stopped. What this tells me is that God will bless your every effort to raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, no matter how feeble the efforts are. It matters not how imperfect your music might be, heaven joins in with all heartfelt praise to God and obedience is the highest form of praise and worship you can render Him. Heaven rejoices with us. I thank God for that little window into heaven. My spiritual strength has grown over the years because of all the heavenly windows He has blessed me with, and I pray that you will receive the same blessing as you seek to be obedient to the gospel order He has plainly revealed to us in His Word. I pray that He will be merciful, kind and good to our ladies as they seek to be the godly help meets He wants them to be and I pray that He will richly bless the men in our lives as they seek to be the Christ-like leaders of their homes. 

(Sister Onycha Holt recently resigned from being a social worker to help assist in the Lord's work from Smyrna. She is working as a personal assistant to me and she covets your prayers for her clients she leaves behind and for her; that she may be a rich blessing to all her labors and life touch. Editor)

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Youth's Corner

(The following are two stories from *501 Illustrations* by Robert Pierson.)

There is a Difference: A Frenchman had just become a British subject. A few days after all the legalities had been cared for, he met a friend walking down the street.

“Well, I see you are a British subject today,” the friend greeted him. “But I don’t suppose it actually makes much difference, does it?”

The former Frenchman looked his friend squarely in the eyes. “Indeed it does,” he replied; “it makes a great deal of difference! Yesterday Waterloo was a cursing defeat, but today it is a glorious victory!”

So it is with the born-again child of God. The old life of defeat is in the past when God takes over and gives him victory.

Four Day’s Walk to Sabbath School: Next time you think it is a long way to Sabbath School, think of the two small boys in Borneo whom one of our missionaries told about. In order to be on time these boys must start to Sabbath School on Thursday. After the blessings of the Sabbath they start back home Sunday morning, reaching their destination Tuesday morning. After two days at home they start all over again—a long walk to Sabbath School.

CONVOCATION IN ORLANDO NEXT MONTH

The believers in the Orlando area will be having a convocation October 22, 2005, at the Woodland Lutheran Campground. Guest speakers will be, Lynnford Beachy, Allen Stump, and Onycha Holt from Smyrna Gospel Ministries. A haystack lunch will be provided for all who attend. For further information you may contact Jerri Raymond at 1-407-291-9565 or Ed Cyrus at 1-813-426-5503. I hope to see you there! ✍

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