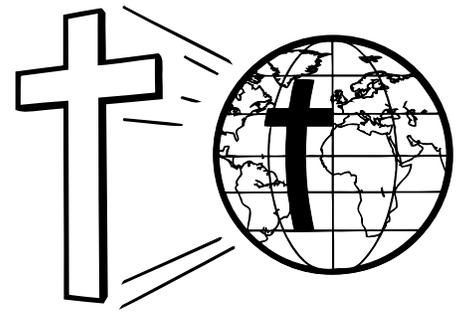


# Foundation of Faith



HE CHOSE  
TO SUFFER

OBEDIENCE  
RATHER THAN ENJOYMENT

HOW TO OVERCOME  
DISAPPOINTMENT

HIS PRESENCE  
COMFORTS ME

CAN WE LIVE A  
SIN-FREE LIFE?

HOW TO PROPERLY  
PLAN FOR LIFE

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

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## FOUNDATION OF FAITH

*Editor*

Hans-Dietrich Nimz

*Editorial Team*

Dieter Jeske

Sieghard Schulz

Ron Taron

Hermann Vogt

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The editors reserve the right to abridge and edit all materials and information submitted for publication. Research sources are listed for information only and should not necessarily be construed as an endorsement or recommendation.

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Questions and suggestions can be sent to:  
contact@foundationoffaith.cc

Please address all other correspondence and subscription requests to:  
Christian Unity Press  
5195 Exchange Drive  
Flint, MI 48507  
Tel.: (810) 732-1831  
or email us at  
cupress@thechurchofgod.cc  
www.christianunitypress.com

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FOUNDATION OF FAITH (USPS 9008) is published monthly by Christian Unity Press, 5195 Exchange Dr., Flint, MI 48507, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Flint, MI, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Christian Unity Press, 5195 Exchange Dr., Flint, MI 48507, USA  
Volume 13 Issue 6

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Printed in USA.

FOUNDATION OF FAITH is published free of charge. All expenses are covered by freewill donations.

## Editorial

*Sadhu Sundar Singh was a committed Christian who came from India.*

*He wrote the famous lines:  
I have decided to follow Jesus,  
No turning back, no turning back!  
The world behind me, the cross before me,  
No turning back, no turning back!*

*In one of the messages he preached, Singh said, "We only have the opportunity to carry the cross while we live on this earth. In heaven, that opportunity is no longer there."*

*We read of Jesus: "Then [Pilate] delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha" (John 19:16-17). The Son of God carried His cross! The first person to follow Him in this was Simon of Cyrene. When Jesus was no longer able to bear the weight of His cross, the soldiers commanded Simon to do it for Him (Luke 23:26).*

*Dear Reader, have you ever thought about what the cross teaches us?*

- 1. The cross teaches us obedience and the willingness to suffer. We read of Jesus: "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8).*
- 2. The cross teaches us patience when we are mocked or despised (Hebrews 12:2).*
- 3. The cross teaches us to carry burdens and to do the will of God. Jesus carried the burden of the sin of the world and prayed: "Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).*
- 4. The cross teaches us self-denial and self-sacrifice. Jesus denied Himself and gave Himself for us (Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 10:12).*
- 5. The cross teaches us to be silent, and to leave everything in the hands of God (Isaiah 53:7; 1 Peter 2:23).*

*Dear Reader, the cross teaches much more than this: the value of a soul, the seeking of what is above, the counting of the cost. It shows the way to Heaven, and that we gain the crown only through the cross. The way to glory leads through Calvary!*

*H. D. Nimz*

# Only Three Letters

Whoever learns to write these letters in life is well equipped to deal with whatever comes. Whoever does not, will fail.

It is easy to spell them, and they are easy to pronounce. But to heed them in life, and shape and form one's life after these letters is more difficult. These are the three simple letters: **Y E S**.

God wants to help us through His Word and His Spirit to say "yes" to the things we encounter and the people we come into contact with.

We will also have to say "no" – to sin. We cannot agree with everything that people do. We will have to oppose

sin when it is pressed upon us, when people sin and lead others into sin. Above all, we need to say "no" to sin in our own lives. But the other word is at least as important: saying "yes" to the life we have and that God has planned for us.

Saying "no" to God's guidance and rebelling against His plan for us will make us tired, bitter, sick, afraid, and sad. Saying "yes" to God's plan and the way He has for us will make us content, happy, grateful, and pleased. That is what Jesus said, and what He taught His disciples to say as well: "Even so, Father!" (Matthew 11:26).

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## The Halves

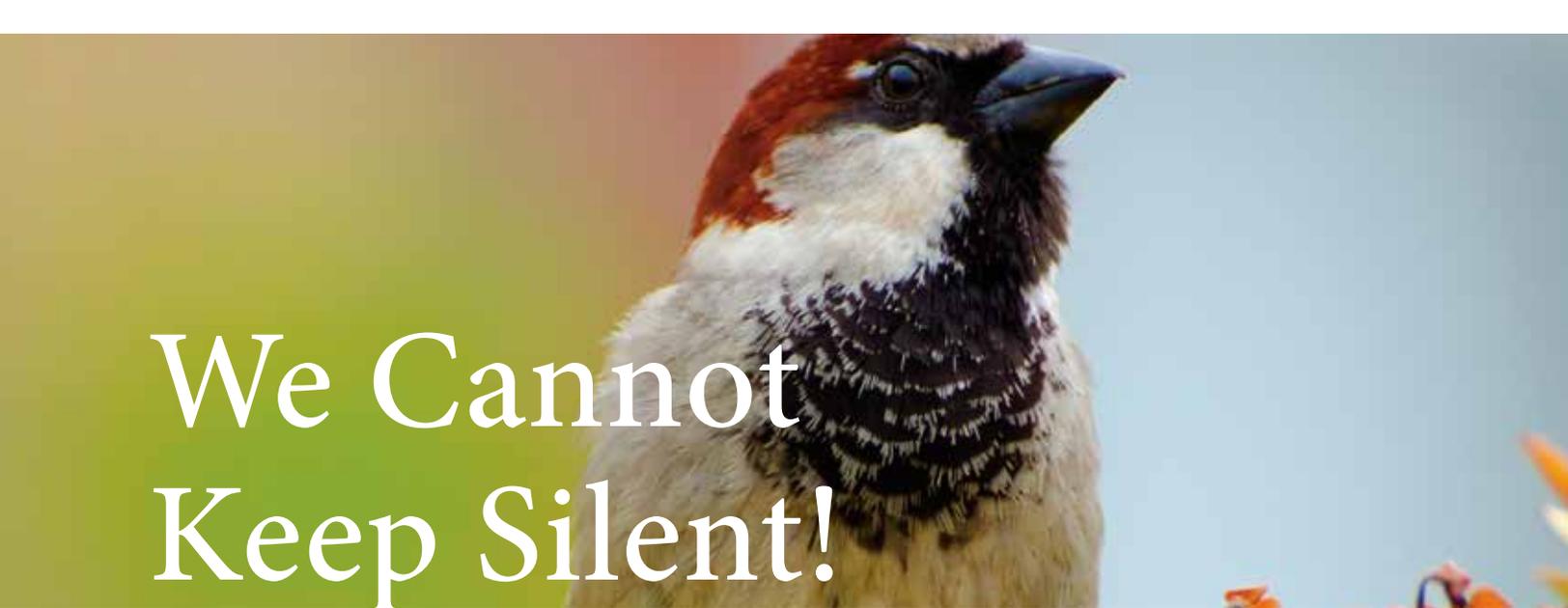
Ernst Moritz Arndt states in a song: "Freedom and heaven are not won by halves." That is the truth. No diligent businessman will allow his employees to be only half engaged in their work. No battle victory can be won with only half-hearted people. The majesty of truth will not tolerate halfheartedness. It blesses wholehearted service but destroys halfheartedness. If someone is prepared to be honest 50 to 90 or even 99% of the time, but reserves the right to lie 1% of the time, he is considered a liar. In this case, only all or nothing applies.

A similar tragedy is found in the fact that many so-called Christians seem to think that the highest and greatest things can be done with half a heart. They don't want to ruin things with God nor with the world. They want to be Christians, but aren't willing to suffer for it. As if God is willing to make Himself a fool! Such halfheartedness is selfishness. Christ wants to free you from this and fill you

with His love. Come to Him completely!

Half-hearted Christians, not wanting to let go of God or the world, find themselves in a situation that is unbearable in the long run. They ruin their lives completely and go on without joy and without fruit. "To be half outside and half inside causes much suffering for the soul."

But, when we give ourselves over to God completely, then our soul breathes in true peace. We feel like a mountain climber who has reached an enormous peak and smiles down at the cliff which he has struggled to conquer. Whoever wants to inhale the freshness of the air at the mountain's summit is not permitted to make half an effort, but must give all he's got.



# We Cannot Keep Silent!

*Prayer is effective - it brings changes and opportunities. Prayer is the seed whose fruit blesses many people. Even though a present situation may completely overwhelm us and plunge us into difficulties - we will only fall into the hands of God. That is where we experience true blessings.*

**T**his past summer vacation, my family and I went on a road trip to the South. We were driving fast.

Suddenly we found ourselves in a very dangerous situation. My wife was at the wheel. She swerved to the right to avoid an accident, but then we began spinning out of control and our car headed off the road. I was sure we were going to flip over! Thankfully, my wife somehow managed to bring the vehicle to a stop on a gently sloping meadow. The passengers and the vehicle came through unscathed. Several other drivers had witnessed the incident. They stopped and ran to help. Fortunately, no help was necessary.

One of them complimented my wife: “You did that amazingly well!” – Without much thought, my wife answered: “I’ll tell you what I did. I prayed aloud: ‘Lord, help us!’ ”

Afterwards we considered whether we should have spoken about God and prayer on the side of the highway. But I feel it was the right thing to do. When we experience an answer to prayer, we shouldn’t keep silent. When we know from personal experience that God helps when we ask, then we must tell others about it. We don’t like to “preach” at others. However, there on the side of the highway that would not have been possible. We often don’t have time for long discussions. But when we’ve had

an experience with God and enter into a conversation with others about it, then we should tell them about the value of prayer. We should tell them that God is alive! We should especially tell those that don’t know about this great opportunity, or that don’t take it seriously!

Our word only has weight if we make prayer a priority in our everyday lives. Whoever prays regularly in everyday life will also pray in crucial moments - even at the wheel of a car, and even in an accident. Anyone who prays can encourage others to pray. People will notice if we are simply talking about prayer, or if prayer is truly the center of our lives.

And one more thing: When we live this out, no one can respond by saying that prayer is simply a righteous ritual that we can do without. No one can argue that too much prayer keeps us from performing our daily duties. We’re not worse off when we pray. We’re better off! Men and women of prayer accomplish their tasks better. They have what others lack. God walks with them, keeps them, leads them, and helps them.

“More necessary than bread and all good gifts is that we have You, O God, with us on our journey.”

E.W. Erdlenbruch

# The Cost of Following Jesus



Mark 8:34: **“Whoever desires to come after Me [...]**” The “whoever” means everyone: young and old, rich and poor, sick or healthy. “To come after” refers to Jesus. **“Me,”** says Jesus. Many aspire to be our leaders. If not people, then things: A purpose in life, work, prosperity, security, wealth, philosophy, art, science, the world, pleasure, passion, and sin. But nothing compares to the life in the service of Jesus.

If we are **“coming after”** Jesus, than we cannot run before Him, and we cannot claim to know better than He. Although we are fully responsible for our actions, we need only follow the Lord as His disciple. “My Lord knows the way through the wilderness – all I have to do is follow.”

**“Let him deny himself.”** Denial means to go without. It means to be unconcerned about one’s own honor, well-being, ease, and gain. Denying oneself means to willingly do an unpleasant job that others try to get out of. It means doing something that we actually would not have to do. We are willing to forgo something that we could do. In self-denial, we can see the true follower of Christ.

**“Take up his cross.”** Notice, it is “his” cross, not the one intended for others. Also, the cross must be taken up. Dragging a cross creates a lot of noise and dust, and is an inconvenience to our fellow human beings. Not everyone needs to know how heavy our cross is. There may, however, be an opportunity to pour our hearts out

to a pastor or friend.

**Gain or Loss** (Mark 8:35-38). We can gain or lose life. People generally try everything possible to improve and extend their lives. Many risk their eternal lives for pleasure. They are so busy with what is earthly, with the pursuit of wealth, honor, and prestige, that they have no time for God and His requirements. The gain of the whole world—which no one person can acquire anyway—does not outweigh the loss of one's salvation. A worldly attitude harms our soul. If they are not overcome, they can throw us into eternal perdition.

Life can however be preserved if we regard the spiritual life as the most important. Then we may lose the earthly, but we will have eternal life. Luther sings in his famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God":

"Let goods and kindred go,  
this mortal life also;  
the body they may kill:  
God's truth abideth still;  
His kingdom is forever!"

*We are not usually called to give up our physical life. Our greatest challenge comes in simply enduring the relatively minor trials and difficulties of everyday life.*

**The Costs** (Luke 14:25-32). "What costs nothing is good for nothing" is a saying that has been proven many times over. Even eternal life has its price. It is true, certainly, that salvation is free: "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8); "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves" (Ephesians 2:8). But Jesus also makes demands. Whoever does not hate his family and his own life, cannot be Jesus' disciple. Albrecht, instead of translating "hate" uses "give up." Others prefer the word "neglect." Bruns said: "It is necessary to counter things in the family or in your personal life that do not belong in the discipleship of Jesus with a decisive "no," while accepting what the world, which is hostile to Christ, inflicts on us in the manner of suffering, or what God has otherwise ordained for our life with a resounding "yes," because it is intended to serve a purpose."

Jesus gives us two examples, one from building construction, the other from the military world. His theme: You must count the cost before you begin constructing a building or waging war. Certainly, none of us can know to the full extent what following Jesus will cost us. Still, there is a common requirement for everyone at the outset of discipleship: a whole heart, a

complete surrender.

**"Forsake all"** (Lukas 14:33). "Whoever does not forsake all." We cannot serve Jesus half-heartedly. "A divided heart brings pain and suffering, and never leads to heaven." Giving up and letting go is a problem for many. Again and again they are faced with similar questions: "Can I do this as a Christian? Can I still wear this revealing dress without giving offense? Can a Christian go there or join in with that activity?" – What a difficult and miserable Christian life!

Others have decided this question once and for all. They have denied all in their hearts; they are purposefully following Jesus. They are now occupied with completely different questions: "How can I come even closer to the Lord? How can I be useful for His service? How can I bring more fruit for Him?" They are grateful for an opportunity where they can be of help to others. They no longer live for themselves. Jesus has freed them to be of service of others. They are in the church of Christ and follow the Lamb wherever He leads them. The Lord needs such people today.

**Practical Spiritual Application.** Jesus called the crowd along with His disciples to Himself and taught them the commandment to follow: They were to deny themselves and take up the cross. Thus, this exhortation is not only for the preachers but for all God's children. No one can hide behind others or excuse themselves.

Many have traveled far away in pursuit of the world, only to trade the salvation of their soul for a "stew of lentils" (Genesis 25:34). What matters is not the extent of the gain or the loss, but the direction our heart is taking. Repentance, turning away from the world, puts us in the right direction.

The cost of being a Christian has held many back from turning to God. The costs of the world are by no means small: Conflict, unhappy marriages, dissatisfaction, sorrow, strife, war, a wounded conscience, the wrath of God, just to name a few. The costs that Jesus exacts only seem high and difficult to those who have not yet paid them. Those of us who have been serving Jesus for a number of years know that the costs are nothing compared to the joy that we find in Jesus' service (please read Matthew 19:27 – 30). Jesus' yoke is truly easy! And His burden is light! (Matthew 11:30).

EP

# Obedience Rather Than Enjoyment

What an important concept for us to understand! Many Christians do not live victoriously because they have not yet realized that we do not live to enjoy life, but rather to obey Christ. Of course, following Jesus does bring enjoyment. The Psalmist could not say: “Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good,” if there were nothing to taste and take pleasure in (Psalm 34:8):

*Truly those who've died to sin,  
will bask in blessed joy!  
God fills our hearts deep within,  
His riches to enjoy.*

Only those who have experienced forgiveness of their sins can truly enjoy life. Having peace with God is a wonderful and blessed gift! It is true:

*Drawing near to you, Lord Jesus,  
fills my heart with Your great peace;  
and Your grace makes me so happy,  
My soul with praise finds sweet release.*

What a joy it is to be together with God's children to study His Word. Then we experience what David wrote in Psalm 23:3: “He restores my soul.”

However, as true as this is, we are not here just to enjoy but to obey. Those who live to enjoy life here on earth will never attain a victorious life. The “pleasure Christians” are a burden on themselves and others.

Paul writes to the Thessalonians: “You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

Saved – to serve! Our great God is not just there for us; rather, we are there for God.

Years ago, a newly-converted gentleman came to see me. He was very agitated and said he was going to give up on Christianity. When I asked him why, he told me a

story. He had completed many errands and during this time he had misplaced his umbrella. Then he prayed that the Lord would ensure he find his umbrella again. – But the umbrella did not turn up. He said this was not right. The Lord did not hear his prayer.

I then told him, “I am glad you had this experience because it has become clear that you have the wrong idea about your relationship with God. You thought that after your conversion God would be there for you. In a sense, you believed you simply needed to push a button and God would come and ask what you desire. Not so! God is not there to serve us; we are there to serve God. We are called to be instruments in His hands to serve His purpose.”

It is not surprising that this brother had such a misconception of God. Many Christians suffer the same false notion, always wanting to receive, and expecting God to fulfill their every wish.

Once received two letters in two days regarding similar situations. A faithful young woman had moved in with her mother after the death of her husband. She was lacking fellowship with others and prayed that God would give her some new relationships in this city. She sought to be uplifted and encouraged.

The other letter was from a daughter who had been temporarily volunteering at a hospital and had become a Christian during this time. When her time at the hospital was over, she returned home. But she really missed the fellowship. She thought, I need to do something to change this. The next Sunday, she visited a woman who was ill, spoke with her, read a passage of Scripture, and prayed with her. Saying good-bye, she asked if she could come back again. The patient was pleased. “Oh yes! Today was a real Sunday again!”

Then the patient asked, “Can we already confirm a time for next week? That way I can invite my friends to our meeting as well.” They planned for the following Sunday. When the young woman returned, she found eight other ladies at the patient's bedside, who continued to gather



every Sunday from then on. A small congregation had been established. Now this sister in the Lord was asking for prayer to continue this work.

**W**hat was the difference between these two young women who lived in similar circumstances? The first wanted to receive. She wanted edification, fellowship and inspiration. God was supposed to provide that for her.

The other began by giving, making herself available to God. He blessed her and gave her fellowship with others, where none seemed otherwise available.

The “pleasure Christians” who are not interested in serving become a burden. They attend church like they would a concert or theater, expecting to become motivated and to have a religious experience. Then, if they are not properly “edified” they blame the pastor. “I don’t get anything from him. Why should I continue to attend?” Many a pastor grows weary of this kind of attitude. Such people do not help him, nor do they help serve. They’re only there to receive. Everything revolves around them. And beware if they do not get enough attention and consideration!

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 2:9: “For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.” – Obedient in all things! Is it not rather daring to obey God like this? But might He not require me to do something beyond my strength? Never! God will never give a task without equipping His servant for the work. For every service, He provides the grace to serve. Of this you may be certain. No mission that God gives us will exceed our ability to complete it. He will never let us down or abandon us. Let us simply be obedient and leave everything else to God. The results are not our

concern. Our job is to obey.

I would like to emphasize three words that have become very important in my life and for my service. The three words are: fully, willingly and directly. Thus should be our obedience if we want to please and honor the Lord.

We need to obey fully. It is not enough to do a task just to the point that it suits us and then leave the rest to sort itself out. No, we need to complete it!

We need to obey willingly. When we are reluctant to obey we make life difficult for ourselves, which prevents us from leading a victorious life.

**T**he final word that I would like to emphasize is obeying “directly.” We need to obey right away, not just when it’s convenient for us. Do not procrastinate. What we postpone, we often cancel.

Fully, willingly, and directly! If this describes our obedience, we will delight the Lord Jesus, because we will have modeled His obedience. He was available for His Father. Whether it meant going to Gethsemane or Golgotha, He was willing to do anything. He could say, “I delight to do Your will, oh my God” (Psalm 40:8). He said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (John 4:34). His whole attitude can be summed up in the words, “Yes, Father.” That is why His life was one of victory. He was willing to do anything because He said “Yes, Father” in everything.

May the Lord help us to have the attitude of 2 Corinthians 2:9 as our motto: “Obedient in all!” Finally, may He give us the grace to obey each task He gives us fully, willingly, and directly!

Ernst Modersohn  
(Victorious Living)

# Either – Or

To be a Christian is a serious matter of importance and significance. It is about the salvation of our souls. Indifference or inaction cannot be tolerated. The following applies: Either – or! There can be no half measures in serving Jesus. Christ wants our whole hearts.

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24). With this statement, Jesus removes all neutrality with regard to Christianity. It is a divine ultimatum by which each of us must judge ourselves. Bengel stated: “The human heart can never be so empty that it will serve either God or the creation, nor can it serve both at the same time. Yet, some people still think this is possible. Either the heart is still full of hatred towards God or it has found rest in God. If it is the one, then there is no choice but to serve the world. If it is the other, then there is no choice but to despise the world.”

Whoever is not for Christ, is against Him. Whoever does not gather with Him, scatters. This kind of dual service has never been successful. Judas greeted his Master with a kiss in Gethsemane after Jesus’ intense struggle in submitting to His Father’s will. Judas would have proved himself more of a man if he had struck Jesus in the face with his fists. To betray Jesus with a friendly greeting and a kiss marked Judas as a coward and earned him the contempt of the world. His name has become a byword of cowardice and treachery. That kiss! It was like a stab into his Savior’s breast! The words of the Psalmist were fulfilled: “Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me” (Psalm 41:9). There has never been a more shameful betrayal!

You may be appalled at the insolence and meanness of the traitor. Do not be too harsh in your condemnation. It could easily fall back on you. Remember when the prophet Nathan paid David a visit? With righteous indignation the king pronounced the death sentence upon the rich man who had so wronged the poor man. How devastating for David to hear the words from Nathan: “You are the man!” Maybe we are righteously condemning Judas since what he did was truly awful. The punishment he received was probably

well deserved.

But what about you? You profess to love Jesus. You vowed loyalty and obedience to Him. Have you maintained your loyalty to Him? You renounced the world, but do you secretly still look towards the pleasures of this world? Do you waste the Lord’s money and time? Are we using the talents that God has given us for His service in the right manner? We need to examine ourselves carefully. Testing ourselves like this should not harm us in any way if we are walking close to God. If we are leaning too close to the world, we need to recognize this and make a clean break.

It happens too often that we “greet and kiss” our Lord on Sunday but “sell Him out” during the week. Is this not the same as praising and acknowledging God on Sunday but then acting selfishly, dishonestly and unlovingly during the rest of the week?

It is possible to deny Christ without doing something evil. Passive Christianity is a renunciation of Christ. It is an “either—or” situation: either Christ or the world. Friendship with the world is enmity with God: “For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial?” (2 Corinthians 6:14-15). Serving God half-heartedly is impossible.

Jesus did not say: “It is hard to serve God and the world.” Instead He said: “You cannot serve God and the world.” To be forced to do something against your will, for which you have no love or desire, is hard and difficult. To serve two masters who are polar opposites, such as God and the world, is just as impossible as trying to serve and be loyal to two opposing army generals. Nor is it possible to serve God today and the world tomorrow. It is only possible to love one and hate the other. Paul wrote to Timothy: “For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Timothy 4:10). “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

It is not enough to profess to be a Christian. We have to prove it whole-heartedly. Away with faithlessness! Away with all indecision and halfheartedness! If you want to be a Christian it has to be in all circumstances, at all times, fully and completely!

G.T.

# Following Jesus

*Jesus invites everyone to be courageous when following Him. And really, only the courageous can truly follow Him. Only people that are willing to deny themselves are willing to face difficult tasks. Jesus wants people who courageously fight against complacency, laziness, sin, and deception.*

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34).

This was Jesus’ message to those who had not yet started following Him. Clear and direct, the Lord provided information about what it meant to become one of His disciples. His message? The halfhearted and cowardly need not apply! Only those who were fully committed to giving up everything for the sake of Christ were acceptable. In this way of thinking, only those people are actual followers of Christ who have gone everywhere with Him, whether through deep valleys or over difficult peaks. To follow Jesus means to share His every predicament.

There can be no compromise for the Christ-follower. After all, Jesus said: “In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples” (Luke 14:33). Jesus requires our full commitment. Anything that might hold us back in our discipleship must be given up. This includes seeking to please people. A disciple of Jesus can be concerned only about pleasing God. This was Jesus’ only concern! Christ becomes the great and worthy example of all of His followers. By following Christ’s example, the disciple reflects the glory of Christ.

Discipleship is always voluntary. The Lord said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple.” No one is forced to follow. In fact, Jesus never coerced any of His disciples. He respected their free will. Every person was free to consider and evaluate Jesus’ invitation, and then to respond with either a “yes” or a “no.” That was true when Jesus was on earth, it is true today, and so it will remain true until He returns as Judge over the living and the dead.

The purpose of discipleship seems to have changed greatly over the years. Today, a profession of faith or an allegiance to a certain religious denomination is considered synonymous with discipleship. But Christ stands opposed to such thinking because it circumvents

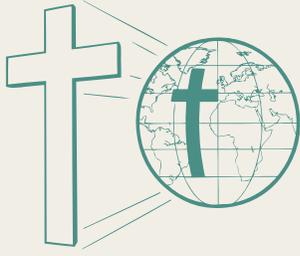
the requirements for discipleship. Our Scripture passage speaks of self-denial, of taking up the cross, and of an actual following of Jesus. And, Jesus meant what He said: His followers must walk in His ways.

The Holy Scriptures tell us that Christ left us an example that we are to follow: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:20, 21). From a human perspective, Jesus’ actions continually put Him at a disadvantage. Ultimately, He was rewarded with rejection and even crucifixion. Still, this was the only way that we could all be saved. Jesus died so that we could be reconciled to God.

Christ’s followers are His representatives on earth. We are His foreign servants. Like our Lord many years ago, we live in a world of unrighteousness. However, this world no longer reigns over our hearts. Often, we are regarded as behind the times. Undeterred by what others think of us, however, we live the life of Jesus and reveal His nature to our surroundings. Just like Jesus, we have sacrificed our entire lives, complete with our talents, skills, and strengths, to God. The only concern we have left is to do God’s will. This is our act of worship. Our lives characterize Paul’s words: “For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:8).

Christ is still calling people today into His discipleship. It is an appeal to begin a new life. Even if a person’s sins are as red as blood, they will be made snowy white. This is why He died, and through His death He also makes it possible for us to follow Him. Would you like to become a true follower of Jesus today?

Gustav Sonnenberg  
(1898 – 1980)



# Radio Broadcast

## The Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs  
Kitchener, Ontario

## "He chose to suffer..."

*"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin."  
(Hebrews 11:24-25)*

**I**n Hebrews 11:24-25 we read: "By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin."

What an extraordinary choice! In the tribulations and hardships of this life, Moses, as well as many others, have made this incredible choice. They made this choice because of their faith and the salvation of their souls. They did not want to lose out on the promises of Christ. They had glimpsed the eternal values that are far above earthly possessions and even above the value of their earthly life.

As a rule, we choose to avoid suffering as much as possible. Naturally, we cannot always avoid it. Many people have to accept their suffering or illness with a great deal of patience. Suffering through no fault of our own is probably the most difficult. People may have inflicted this on us through hatred, enmity, or injustice. Generally, no one chooses to suffer. But this is exactly what our Bible text refers to.

The author of Hebrews points his readers to the man of God, Moses. We read about him: "Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people" (Exodus 11:3). "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds" (Acts 7:22). He had spent forty years of his life living among the Egyptians, had a high ranking

with the Egyptian king, yet he did not belong to this nation. In spite of all his advantages, his high ranking and his secure lifestyle, he chose to go back to his people, the Israelites. Through his action, Moses set a shining example for the Israelites, as well as all believers today. His choice was spiritually grounded. His gaze was fixed on the eternal reward. That is exactly where our view should be as well. What value was all the prestige, the accolades of the people and the riches of Egypt in comparison to peace with God and eternal salvation?

**M**any sorely tried Christians have been uplifted by Moses' example. Our faith journey can often be painful and difficult. Jesus clearly stated: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). Most people are afraid of the cross. In the same context, Jesus said: "For what profit is it to a man if he gained the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Moses gave this much sober thought. He and others chose suffering rather than giving up their faith and losing their right to the eternal glory of heaven.

**I**n the south of France stands an infamous tower called "The Tower of Constance." One day, during the persecution of the Huguenots under King Louis XIV (1638-1715), the heavy iron door closed behind a large group of women. They were imprisoned for their faith while their men were sentenced to the ship's galleys. Their legs were chained with heavy chains and they had

to row huge warships. The sufferings and deprivations of the women were equally appalling. Deeply depressed, the women sat in the prison where only a little light and air penetrated through an opening in the ceiling. The youngest of the prisoners was a fifteen-year-old girl. The girl's name was Marie Durand. During the many years of innocent suffering, she encouraged and comforted those who were tempted to renounce their faith. A strong faith and a burning love for God filled her young heart. The punishment for these women had been set at thirty-eight years. Year after year they were offered their freedom. Most of them were determined to persevere. They chose rather to suffer than to give up their goal to maintain the faith. One of them had carved the word "Resistez" – "Stand fast" into the stone wall. We should all have this resolution, even if we do not have to suffer for our faith!

**T**hank God, we have not had to suffer these types of tribulations and persecutions. We can hardly imagine these kinds of situations. We might have already experienced some sort of hardships, but who of us has actually chosen to suffer for our faith at the expense of our freedom? Sometimes a way out is associated with extremely high losses. For these Huguenot women, losing their eternal salvation and the right to be called children of God was unthinkable.

**A**re you perhaps, for some reason, contemplating giving up your faith and your eternal salvation? Do not do it! God's word tells us: "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12). Remember, Jesus chose to suffer for the sake of our salvation. Therefore, choose the way of the cross and remember the reward!

Friedrich Krebs



# How to Overcome Disappointment

*Unrealistic expectations often lead to the bitter sting of disappointment, which we have likely all felt. When we learn to submit to God's plan and desires, accepting His way as best, we can learn to find joy in disappointing situations.*

**Y**ou have been disappointed, haven't you? Of course you have, again and again. Does it hurt very much when things do not go as you have planned and hoped? Does it seem as if you "just can't stand it?" Some people can bear disappointment; they seem to have learned the secret of taking off the keen edge so that it does not hurt so much. Have you learned that secret yet? I fancy I hear some one say, "Oh! I wish I knew that secret." There is more than one part to the secret. You may learn it if you will; you may get where you can bear disappointment and keep sweet all the time.

**M**any people prepare themselves to be disappointed; they arrange things so that they are certain to be disappointed. They set their heart so fully upon the thing they wish to have or do, whatever it may be, that they make no provision whatever, except to carry out their plans exactly as they have devised them. They do not provide for any contingencies that may arise. Their plans fill their whole horizon. They can see nothing else; they can think of nothing else; they want it just that way and no other way. Thus they prepare themselves to suffer keen disappointment should anything happen differently from what they expect. This is what puts the sting in disappointment. Always make provision in your plans for whatever may happen. Always make your promises to yourself with the provision, "If nothing prevents." If you are going on a journey, say, "If it does not rain, or if I am well, or if this or that does not prevent." Keep the thought in your mind that something may prevent, and

do not get it too much settled as a fact, that you will do what you have planned. Take into consideration that you are a servant, not the master; do not forget to put in, "If the Lord wills" (James 4:15).

**I**f disappointment comes, it may be necessary for us to repress our feelings of dissatisfaction. If we begin pitying ourselves and saying, "Oh, it is too bad! It is just too bad!" we shall only feel the hurt more keenly, and the more we cultivate the habit of self-pity, the more power it exercises over us. Some people have so yielded to the power of self-pity that whole days are darkened by little trifling disappointments that they ought to throw off in a few minutes. Nine tenths of the suffering that comes from disappointment has its root in self-pity. You have better qualities in you! Use them! When you are disappointed, take hold of yourself and say, "Here, you cannot afford to be miserable all day because of this." Repress those feelings of self-pity, lift up your head, get your eyes on something else, begin making some new plans. Your old plans are like a broken dish and you cannot use them any longer. All your worrying and brooding over them will not make them work out right. Take a new start, smile whether you feel like it or not. You have many other things to enjoy; do not let this one thing spoil them all. Refuse to think of your unpleasant feelings; resolutely shut the door against them. God will help you if you try.

**A**nother thing to learn is to submit our will and desires to God. When our plans fail, we must submit to circumstances, whether we want to or not. If we rebel, that will not change the



# No Crown Without the Cross

*The Cross alone!*

*Is true joy what you're after?*

*Free from the vain things you have known,*

*Not earthly pride, with pomp and hollow laughter;*

*A blessed child, whose hope is on*

*the Cross alone.*

*The Cross alone!*

*It's strength may seem deficient,*

*For many it's a stumbling stone.*

*Cling to the hope, for He who rose triumphant*

*Will see you through, your help is in*

*The Cross alone.*

*The Cross alone!*

*The blood of Christ there flowing*

*Saved and redeemed, for sin atoned.*

*And by His merit we can now be knowing*

*Eternal life, for Jesus bore*

*The Cross alone.*

*The Cross alone!*

*And then the resurrection,*

*Victorious from Cross to Crown.*

*Be strong in faith, by God's grace and election*

*This painful way leads to God's throne*

*The Cross alone.*

*The Cross alone!*

*God cares and knows your story,*

*O bear your cross and claim the Crown.*

*And before long, you'll sing and see God's glory.*

*Before the throne with those who've known,*

*The Cross alone.*

circumstances, but it will change our feelings. The more we rebel, the more we shall suffer. The way to rid ourselves of the suffering is to get rid of the rebellion. We must submit; therefore, why not do it gracefully? Many times we cannot change circumstances, no matter how much we dislike them. Resentment will not hurt circumstances, but it will hurt us. We need to learn the lesson of submission without rebellion - submission to circumstances and to God.

**T**he Lord is our Master. It is right for Him to order our lives as He sees best. Sometimes it is He who changes our plans for His own purpose, and when He does this, the outcome is always better than the thing of our own choosing. If we rebel, we are rebelling against God, and right there lies the danger. If we are so determined to have our own way that we do not willingly submit to God's way, He may have to let us suffer. But when we submit and commit our ways to Him, then we shall have the consolation and comfort of His Holy Spirit. If we will just learn to change a single letter in disappointment, and spell it with an "h" instead of a "d," it will help take the sting out. Try it once. This is what we have: His appointment. Now, does not that make it quite different?

# How to Properly Plan for Life

**D**o you know what you would like to achieve in life? As a young person, you probably have thought about this question often. Most young people pursue a career, hope to get married, find a nice place to live, and secure a comfortable, happy life. Other plans may include a short vacation, an activity on a Sunday afternoon, or working on a project with friends. How do you hope to achieve your dreams and your many plans for life?

We read in Proverbs 16:9: "A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps." Two things are mentioned in this verse: People make plans for what they desire in life, but God is also able to intervene and make adjustments to our life's journey through various circumstances.

What happens if our plans do not consider the will of God? What if we are unwilling to let Him to make adjustments to our path?

I recall visiting a city and seeing an unfinished bridge. The goal of the project was to improve traffic flow, and commuters anxiously awaited its completion. Tall concrete columns were poured to support the deck of the bridge. When it was discovered that the columns were sinking and that the bridge would be unsafe, the work stopped. A large sum of money had been spent. Now, the road, which had been designed to temporarily zigzag traffic around the bridge columns during construction, had become a permanent route. The original idea was good, but poor planning resulted in creating a greater problem, and its purpose was never achieved.

Many people approach their goals in life in a similar way. Their desires are reasonable; however, because they leave God out of their plans, their dreams turn into problems.

This kind of planning is found in the Bible in the story of Lot in the Old Testament. His goal to find good pastures for his animals was a reasonable desire. When

he saw an opportunity to reach his goal, he quickly chose the area of Sodom and Gomorrah and departed from Abraham. He found a home with plenty of pasture for his animals and was pleased with how quickly his goal was achieved. How well did this plan work without God's input? The very situation that was supposed to bring him lasting joy quickly turned into his deepest heartache. He found himself alone in a godless place, and soon he was fleeing the city with only his two daughters, having lost all he owned. Instead of God's blessing, Lot had to face the consequences of his poor decisions: devastating losses and the ensuing bitter grief.

Friend, how do you hope to reach your goals in life? Are your plans in harmony with the will of God?

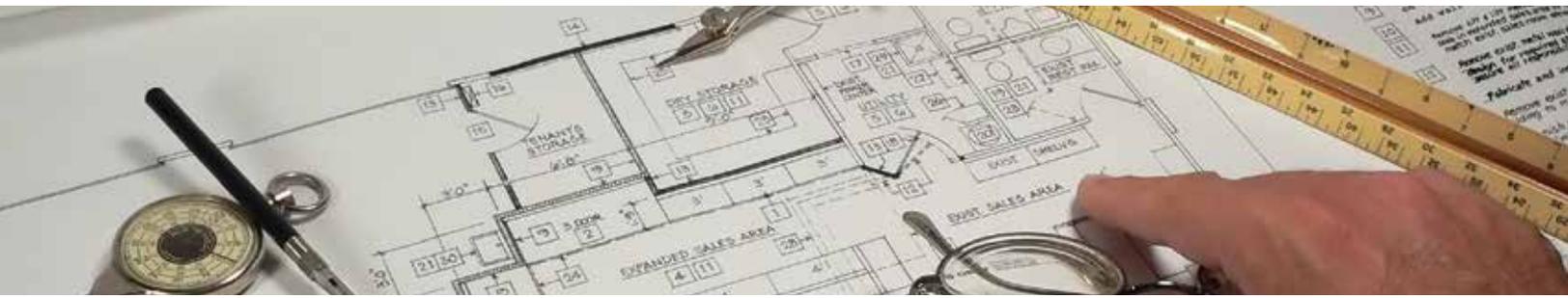
We read: "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that'" (James 4:13 - 15).

How can we include the will and guidance of God in our plans?

*When you make plans, your intentions must agree with God's desire for your life.*

If the plan contradicts God's Word and requires you to sin, it will not carry His blessing or bring lasting joy. Absalom wanted to be king and chose a path of rebellion against his own father to achieve his goal. Instead of a crown, his path of sin brought death. Can this truth be applied to everyday life today?

Many young people have chosen a career, a university for study, a spouse, a more convenient place to live that has taken them far away from the positive influence of the local church. Despite the warning of



fellow believers, people pursued their plans and later experienced spiritual harm and suffering because they ignored the warnings from God’s Word. When Daniel and Joseph faced decisions in life, they made obedience to God their priority. By choosing God’s approval over man’s, they opened themselves to God’s guidance, which resulted in rich blessings.

*When you make plans seeking God’s guidance, you must learn to accept the roadblocks He may place along the way.*

We read in 1 Kings 22 that King Ahab had a plan to go to war. Unwilling to accept the warning that the Lord gave him, he perished in the battle. People’s plans have often brought devastation and failure because they were unwilling to change their mind when it lacked God’s approval. Instead of being grateful that God protected them from failure, they too often chose to rebel. The Tower of Babel, the prophet Balaam, Jonah’s plan to flee his assignment, or the jealous men who planned to destroy Daniel are just a few examples of an unwillingness to give up a bad plan. Maybe you had your heart set on a relationship, a desirable job, or the purchase of something you really wanted and it did not work out. In your disappointment, did you ever thank God for blocking that plan and then seek a better way? When making plans, ask God to give you strength to submit to His will should He choose to hinder you from making a great mistake.

*Proper planning for life will require faith and patience in the way God leads.*

Being impatient with God and having little faith in His timing was the reason Sarah influenced Abraham to have a child with Hagar. This plan brought much grief into the marriage and home. Had the couple shown stronger faith, that God is indeed able to do what seems impossible at the moment, they could have seen how wonderfully God is able to fulfill His promises when patience and faith work together.

**A**fter David had been anointed king, he waited for God to place him on Israel’s throne. There were times when the king-in-waiting was

encouraged to kill King Saul, and it almost seemed as if God had given him the opportunity to do so. But David was unwilling to commit murder in order to secure the throne. Instead, he let God direct his path and open the doors of opportunity when the time was right. Sometimes we feel that things need to happen now, and this is when we are in great danger of making mistakes. Patience and faith allow God to set up the situation perfectly and give us the courage and confidence to step forward when He opens the door. Perhaps you need the reminder from God’s word in your planning: “For ye have need of patience...” (Hebrews 10:36 KJV)?

When we allow God to direct our path and make changes to our plans, we will often experience things that are beyond our imagination. Keep in mind that sometimes God uses portions of our plan and adds to them. David had a desire to build the temple and began planning how to build it. When the prophet Nathan showed him it was not in the will of God, he allowed David to begin gathering material and included David’s son Solomon in the plan. Both were able to be involved in that historic project, and God’s presence filled the temple at its completion.

Dear reader, when we plan for things in life, it is important to remember that God’s leading will guide us into the best life possible for us. Certainly, good planning includes looking at your options and considering where each of those choices may take you. Ask yourself if the time is right and how this decision might influence your future. Is the plan realistic and are your motives pure? How will this plan influence your relationship with God? What are the steps that need to be taken in order to achieve your goal and give room for God’s input?

As you look ahead and consider your goals, I encourage you to leave room for God’s guidance in your plans for life.

H. Mueller  
Seminole, TX

# Experiences with God



*"Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!  
For His mercy endures forever.  
Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?  
Who can declare all His praise?" (Psalm 102:1, 2)*

I could not agree more with the Psalmist. I simply cannot list God's countless manifestations of grace in my life. The words of a song go like this:

*Count the gifts, think soberly;  
Count the gifts, see God's mercy.  
Count the gifts, do it daily;  
You'll be surprised at God's generosity!*

First, I'm so thankful for the great miracle of salvation that Jesus finished for me at Calvary. He gave Himself as the SON OF GOD, took my sins upon Himself, and shed His blood for me. I was able to come to Him and find forgiveness for my sins. I am thankful that I am His child! It is a wonderful privilege to be able to serve Him.

We have a great Savior, Helper, and Healer in Jesus. I've discovered this often in times of both major and minor illnesses. For example, God freed me from a major speech impediment. From a human standpoint, there was no way for me to become rid of it. However, I knew that with God nothing is impossible. In this hope, I earnestly and repeatedly brought the matter to God. He had pity on me and helped me in a marvellous way.

Incredible! How could I not praise Him?

I would like to take this opportunity to tell about the period of blessing I experienced in 2010-2011. I was able to spend time with friends and brothers and sisters in Bolivia. This intimate bond with brothers and sisters in Christ whom I had never met before was something very special. Many prayers were answered and I had many special experiences with God during that time. I'm also thankful to the many brothers and sisters who prayed for me, and helped and supported me in so many ways. May God reward each of you richly!

I'm thankful for the many material and spiritual blessings that God supplies. We have so much more than we need, and we shouldn't take God's blessings for granted.

I'm thankful for victory that God consistently supplies in the many spiritual battles. Without the Lord I would have given up long ago. However, He has graciously lifted me up again and again. As I look towards eternal glory with Him, I am able to move forward with joy. My desire and prayer is that I will be faithful until the end. Glory, praise, honor, and thanksgiving be to Almighty God!

Dina Grötzinger  
Eppingen, Germany

# Right Turn! Forward March!

**T**hese are the right words in the hour of temptation! Fred often heard his grandfather tell of his war campaigns and battles and called out excitedly, "I want to be a soldier too!"

Grandfather answered, "I would rather there never be war again. You know, you don't need a weapon to be the hero and winner. There are other conflicts, and to win these is a greater honor than going to war."

"Fred," said his grandfather now, "when you get out of school today, please go to Mrs. Red's place. She's laid up in bed. Yesterday, her potato patch was flooded with rain. If the potatoes don't get uprooted today, they'll be ruined. So, take care of it."

"Yessir!" replied Fred.

As school let out, Fred had every intention of going to Mrs. Red's house. But a boy called out, "You know the new student, Roger, who joined our school? He wants to have a swimming contest with you. He said he'd like a contest with each of us."

"What'd he say?! That scoundrel! But I promised Grandfather I'd go somewhere for him," said Fred.

"That can't be too urgent. You're afraid of Roger's skill, aren't you?" was the reply.

And someone else yelled, "He's scared of him!"

"That's not true!" shouted Fred, disgusted that his friends would question his standing as the best swimmer. Deep in his heart, a battle began to wage. Duty or ambition? On one side stood Mrs. Red with her potatoes that could be ruined if he didn't take care of them today. On the other side, his reputation as the best swimmer was at stake. He stood there hesitantly.

**S**uddenly a voice called out, belonging to his grandfather, who'd been standing behind a wall and had heard the whole confrontation. "Right turn! Forward march!" Shocked, the boys stood there with their mouths hanging open, while Fred took off as fast as he could for Mrs. Red's house.



# Do We Need Our Grandmothers?

*Grandparents used to be an integral part of the family. They were the ones who provided an important balance in everyday life and in raising children. Today we don't see that family structure very often. Grandparents are sometimes excluded from the lives of their grandchildren and spend their days in a lonely seniors facility. Even though grandparents are a bit removed from the daily grind and are sometimes considered "behind the times," they are a valuable asset to today's family.*

Our grandmother passed away a few years ago. The tall, white house in which she lived is not our home any longer, and today strangers enjoy the large, wonderful garden that was always such a paradise for us vacationing grandchildren. My memories of my grandmother are as fresh as though I had seen her yesterday: Her intelligent face, her body bent over by arthritis, supported by a cane. My best memories are the many hours of conversation I shared with her. She often sat on a low stool near the window and spoke to me about the past. She told me about the wars she lived through, the good years as well as the difficult ones. She talked about her many siblings, and how she loved the family evenings spent playing games and making music. I could have listened to her stories for hours, but our visits were never just about her story-telling.

Grandmother was not a person who lived only in the past, admiring it and longing for what once had been. Even in her old age she was interested and engaged in the present. And, as a result, she asked questions. She asked us about our friends, about school, about our career plans, and she helped us weigh the pros and cons, discussing our options and choices with us. Grandma was my dear, wise counselor. I still long for her insightful advice.

But did I really need that advice, you might ask? We are the youth of the 21st century: educated, comfortable with all new technology, active in sports, excelling in our careers – what value does the sentimental advice of an older generation have? Would we not do better on our own? Don't we have courage and drive? Our entire

upbringing and education has taught us to examine, question, and interpret – to evaluate truth objectively. What do old people have to offer us?

It wasn't until several years after my grandmother died that I realized the value of a connection between modern youth and the elderly – not just the value, but the necessity of such an inter-generational connection. It wasn't really about the advice or opinion of my elderly grandmother. That is actually almost beside the point, because often my grandmother and I didn't agree on things at all. The value of what she offered me lies in her attitude toward life.

Even though my grandmother was lively, in tune with the times, and knowledgeable about current affairs, she lived with the ever-present awareness that eternity is not far off. Her sensitivity to eternity gave her life a depth that I didn't have yet. She wasn't tossed about by the daily hectic obligations and activities. In all things she looked upward, and in her presence, I also learned to look beyond my activities and toward a heavenly goal.

I remember an evening when my grandmother was sitting at the piano, playing old hymns. I remember her singing:

"My Soul, if this is what you seek,  
Then look beyond the temporal;  
Leave the earthly far behind you,  
Turn your gaze above the natural."

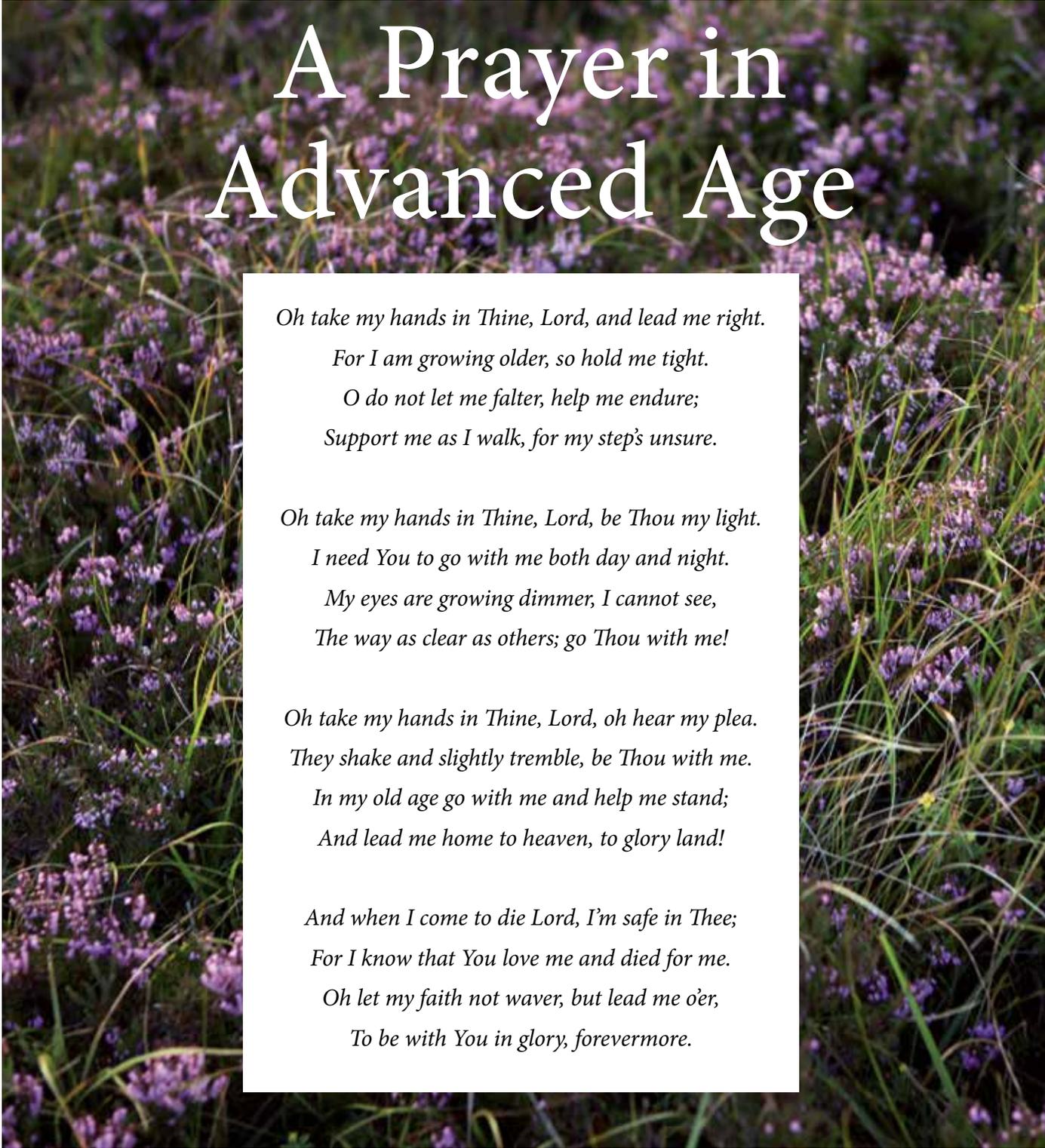
It was as though the burdens of this earthly life had already distanced themselves from my elderly grandmother. The land in which all will

be perfect and complete became visible to us through her song – because she could see it in her mind’s eye. She exuded peace and restfulness.

Do you still have a grandmother in your home or living nearby? It might be tempting to sigh about how out of touch she is, or how slow she has become. You might even see her as a burden to your family. Yes, my grandmother got slower,

and in the end we did care for her, but that burden of caring taught us love. For me it was an expression of gratitude for the things she taught me. I learned from her to quiet my heart and to look to the future with hope. In grandmother’s wrinkled face I saw peace and the joy of God’s heavenly light.

D. U.



# A Prayer in Advanced Age

*Oh take my hands in Thine, Lord, and lead me right.*

*For I am growing older, so hold me tight.*

*O do not let me falter, help me endure;*

*Support me as I walk, for my step’s unsure.*

*Oh take my hands in Thine, Lord, be Thou my light.*

*I need You to go with me both day and night.*

*My eyes are growing dimmer, I cannot see,*

*The way as clear as others; go Thou with me!*

*Oh take my hands in Thine, Lord, oh hear my plea.*

*They shake and slightly tremble, be Thou with me.*

*In my old age go with me and help me stand;*

*And lead me home to heaven, to glory land!*

*And when I come to die Lord, I’m safe in Thee;*

*For I know that You love me and died for me.*

*Oh let my faith not waver, but lead me o’er,*

*To be with You in glory, forevermore.*

# His Presence Comforts Me

“Sorry!” The young man didn’t even notice that he had knocked loose a package from the arms of the tired woman that he had bumped into in the busy department store. Leaning on the store counter, the woman took a deep breath and wearily picked up the package and made her way to the bus stop.

As the woman handed her fare to the bus driver, a quarter slipped between her fingers and fell to the floor. Of course, the bus driver did not know that she had given him her last 75 cents. Had he known, perhaps he would not have growled, “You should be more careful. I don’t have time to pick up everybody’s money!” Fighting back her tears, she found a seat at the back of the bus. Oh, how she wished that someone would say just one kind word to her!

When the bus finally reached her stop, she disembarked with several other passengers. The woman began to walk down a dirty street packed with small, gray houses. As she reached the dirtiest house of them all, she turned onto its walkway and climbed the worn steps. She hesitated a moment before she unlocked the door. A sigh, almost like a sob, escaped her lips.

The living room was a mess! The bed linens were strewn all over the floor, right where the woman’s stepdaughter had thrown them in the morning. The laundry was scattered everywhere – the carpet, the chair, and even the mantelpiece. For a few minutes, the woman just stared, and then she moved on to the kitchen. The sink was filled

with dirty dishes, dishes that had accumulated in the two days she had been away. She went to the cupboard and opened the door.

“What would they have done if I had not decided to return today from my mom’s,” she mused. “All the dishes are dirty!” A bitter smile flitted across her face, but suddenly she pulled herself together. “Listen,” she said to her reflection, which she saw at the other end of the messy room. “This will not do! You are starting to feel sorry for yourself. The Word says, ‘Be patient with everyone.’ I think your patience is wearing thin. It is time for you to go to your room.”

She went through the messy room once again, but this time she did not pay attention to the clutter. She put down her parcels, opened her bedroom door, walked in, and closed the door behind her. Thirty minutes passed – minutes in which the state of the mess did not change. However, when the woman opened her door, she looked at the mess with a smile. Just as storm clouds clear after a shower and the sun shines brighter than before, so had the Author of peace cleared the worry lines from the woman’s face and in their place shone a look of contentment.

Singing softly, the woman put on her apron and went to work. In an incredibly short time, the bed sheets were folded, and the laundry was put away. After she vacuumed the carpet, the living room was clean once again. Next, the woman tackled the stack of dirty dishes in the sink, singing all the while:



*O, what sweet communion  
I have with Jesus;  
earthly joys do not compare.  
I am His, and He is mine.*

*O, I know Him. I see His face,  
for He always walks by my side.  
His presence is so dear to me.*

While the woman was singing, her stepdaughter quietly opened the door and stood listening in the doorway. The soapy water foamed on the shiny plates, and there was a stack of clean dishes on the table. The woman continued to sing:

*His presence comforts me and brings me great joy.  
It was His grace that saved me for all eternity.*

“Mother!” The woman looked up, surprised to see her stepdaughter. She had not noticed that the girl had come into the room.

“Yes, Nina, what’s up?” she asked. She was somehow afraid of this almost grown-up, independent girl – this girl whose mother she desperately wanted to be, but her efforts all came to naught.

“Mother, how can you sing? I saw you in town today. You looked so tired, and then that cheeky, young man knocked the package from your arms, and he didn’t even offer to help you pick it up. I knew what you would find at home. I am... I am so ashamed, but I made this mess on purpose. I wanted to see what you would do when you got home because you have always been so religious. I wanted to rob you of the joy of your religion, but I know now that I can’t. I’m sorry, Mother, that I was so mean. I have never been nice to you, but can you please tell me your secret? How can you sing when you came home to such a mess?”

The woman’s eyes filled with tears of joy. For months she had prayed that her stepdaughter would become sensitive to spiritual matters. With a smile on her face, she told the girl her secret, “Nina, you heard the words that I just sang?”

“Yes, some of them,” the girl answered.

“A line in the chorus reveals my secret, ‘His presence comforts me.’ When I came home today, I was very discouraged at first. I had just spent the last of my money, and you can imagine how someone would feel coming home to such a mess. I knew I needed help. That is why I first went into my room to pray. As I prayed, I experienced how His presence comforts and brings joy. Why should I not be glad and sing? After I had spoken with Him, the work was easy. Nina, don’t you want to share this experience with me?”

The woman knew that the harvest had come because the girl’s heart was ripe. Her lips quivered, and she began to sob, “Mother, Mother, I have been so mean to you, and I have treated you so contemptuously. I worked, and I should have given you the money after Father left us, but I wanted to see you suffer. You have proven yourself! Without a doubt, you know what you’re talking about. I would like to share your secret. I want to be able to sing that song with you and know that the words are true. Please, sing it once more for me.”

The woman’s tears fell into the dishwater. As she sang softly, the darkness left her stepdaughter’s soul. The light of a new day dawned in her heart, and joy shone in her face as her heart echoed the beautiful words:

*O, I know Him. I see His face, for He always walks by  
my side. His presence is so dear to me.  
His presence comforts me and brings me great joy.  
It was His grace that saved me for all eternity.*

# Can We Live a Sin-free Life?

*The question about a life without sin has occupied people for thousands of years. To this day, there are multiple views about this important and serious question. The source of truth and wisdom is God. Only His Word is able to reliably answer this question. What does the Bible say about this topic?*

**T**he question, “Can we live a sinless life?” is one that is contested by both religious and secular teachers. Some claim that a sinless life is possible. Others directly reject it, while a third group simply ignores this question. For people whose hearts were awakened and who are aware of the worth of eternal riches, this has become a topic of great and vital importance. Upon examination of this highly important topic, we therefore don’t want to inquire about rational arguments and the wisdom of man, but turn instead to the living Word of God and allow it to decide.

As is generally known, the Bible is divided into two parts, the Old and New Testament. In John 1:17, we read about the mediator of the old and the mediator of the new covenant: “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” A mediator is an advocate, or someone who mediates between two parties to reconcile them to each other. When the law was given, Moses said to the children of Israel: “The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb... I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD...” (Deuteronomy 5:2, 5). Here, Moses relayed the Old Testament covenant or law to the people, which was to rule them for a specific time until the new covenant came, one that was founded on

better promises. The mediator of this New Testament is Christ: “But you have come...to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24). This passage of Scripture contains two thoughts that we would especially like to emphasize: First, that a new covenant was given; second, that its mediator is Jesus Christ.

The fact that a new covenant was given shows that there was a need for it. If the covenant given through Moses had been satisfactory, and the needs of the people had been fulfilled, then there would have been no need or desire for a second one (Read Hebrews 8:7-9). We also find that the Lord found fault with the first covenant and promised a new covenant. But why was fault found with the first covenant? It was weak and made nothing perfect: “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3; see also Romans 3:20 and Acts 13:39).

The justification that was required by the law was only ceremonial and could not remove sins. The first covenant, instituted by Moses, was dedicated by blood; for “without shedding of blood there is no remission”



(Hebrews 9:22). Please read Hebrews 9:19-20 as well. The law, with its ceremonial offerings and the blood of animals, was only a shadow of better things to come (Hebrews 10:1-4).

**A** shadow is an imperfect and weak depiction of reality. The law was only a shadow, a weak depiction, a model of the gospel of salvation. In order to produce a shadow, three things are necessary: a light, an object, and a background onto which the shadow is cast. These three essential elements are shown to us in the Holy Scriptures. A shadow is generated when an object stands in the beam of light between the light source and the background. If the object stands directly at the background, the shadow disappears – in its place now stands the object. Similar is the case of the law and the gospel – the old and new covenant. The law was a shadow, the gospel the object. When the reality of the gospel appeared, it took the place of the shadow and the shadow disappeared.

The entrance of sin into the world brought both physical and spiritual death for people. Man was lost and without hope in the world. Sin had robbed him of all that was pure and holy and condemned him to eternal agony and misery. But Christ, the pure and holy Son of God, stepped between the offended Creator and the offensive

world and offered himself as a ransom and atonement for the offense. This great plan of salvation was faintly reflected in the Old Testament, symbolized by offerings and gifts. In other words: the Old Testament offerings and gifts were a shadow of the great plan of salvation. The Father was the light, Christ was the substance or object, the law was the shadow, and the Mosaic dispensation or the era of the Old Testament was the background onto which the shadow was cast. But this was only the shadow of future riches, not the essence of the riches or the actual substance. The actual glory had not yet come and was symbolized in the Jewish dispensation through the ceremonial purifications and washings, though they could not take any sin away.

A new covenant was promised, though it was completely different from the old one. The new covenant was founded on better promises. In fact, it was grander in every aspect and provided the world with a higher measure of salvation: “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and



their sin I will remember no more” (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

The old covenant was written on stone tablets; the new covenant was to be written in the minds and hearts of the people. Under the old covenant, a reminder of sins took place every year (Hebrews 10:3); under the new covenant, Jesus’ blood takes away our sins. He does not remember our sins (verse 17); they are blotted out (Acts 3:19), taken away (1 John 3:5), and washed in His blood (Revelation 1:5). Yes, “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

In the Old Testament, a ceremonial purification or washing was bestowed on the people, though it had no power to remove the sin from people’s hearts or to wash it away. But in the New Testament, the blood of Christ purifies the heart of all sin and gives grace to live a sinless life in this world.

Why was the law given? Paul asks: “What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator... Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Galatians 3:19, 24-25). In ancient times, the tutor was a man who led the students to the teacher. He had completed his task if they were in the care of the teacher. Likewise, the law served as the tutor to lead the world to Christ, the Seed. It was given because of transgressions. It could not remove sin or give spiritual life (Galatians 3:21), but it served to suppress or restrain sin until the mediator was to come, namely the Seed, who was Christ,

who would wash away and destroy sins in the heart.

From the moment when Christ said, “It is finished,” the spring against sin opened and lost souls can plunge in and be purified. The law reached the end of its tenure, and the gospel appeared in its full power. Now the world is pointed toward Christ, the Savior of all people. Only in Him is the power to live a sinless life in this world. In Him alone lies the hope for heaven.

Finally, we would like to direct the attention of our dear readers to a passage of Scripture that seems to contradict the doctrine of leading a sinless life. In Romans 3:10, we read: “As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one.’” Notice the apostle’s wording: “As it is written!” It was written in the Old Testament, and the writer wrote the truth at that time, for he still lived during the time when the blood of animals was sacrificed. In regard to animal sacrifice, Paul says that it can never take sins away. If the blood of the testament, under which they lived, could not take away sin, they could not lead a righteous life; therefore, no one was righteous in the sense as people under the new covenant are made righteous. The words in Ecclesiastes 7:20 and 1 Kings 8:46 were spoken by Solomon, who lived in the same time period as David lived, and therefore had no higher standard to measure up to other than his. But such teaching is not found in the New Testament. Here, a higher standard of grace is presented. Through repentance and faith in Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, we can be saved from all sin and are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

D. T. Koch



*Herzliche Einladung zur*  
**Lagerversammlung in Deutschland**

29. AUGUST *bis* 5. SEPTEMBER 2015 IN BLAUBEUREN

*Informationen und Anmeldung:*

WWW.LAGERVERSAMMLUNG.DE

*Bitte bete ernstlich für diese Tage und nimm teil  
an dem reichen Segen, den Gott schenken wird.*

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### *Carrying the Cross*

You have called me, this I know,  
Here the cross to carry.  
I will take the heavy load  
Without grumbling while You tarry.  
Help me carry as I wander,  
For such is the Christian's honor.

Does the load seem heavy here?  
Are the edges hard and pressing?  
Lord, you suffered more, that's clear,  
Wounded, mocked, devoid of blessing.  
On the cross You died for sinners--  
Giving us a new beginning.

So I know You understand,  
When I suffer here in silence.  
Everything is in Your hands;  
I rely upon Your guidance!  
Since You know of all my sorrows,  
Peace is mine now and tomorrow.

My desire is this alone:  
Faithfully the cross to carry  
Always let Your love be known,  
And embrace me while You tarry.  
I will bear the cross that's given,  
Till I'm free from it in heaven.