



Foundation of Faith

A Prosperous Church

A Life Rich in God

Grasping for the Wind

FATHER'S DAY

Memories of My Father

**Affluence
&
Prosperity**

- Blessing and Danger -

Content

AFFLUENCE & PROSPERITY

4 The Hazard of Affluence

5 Build on High

6 Mindset and Wealth

Examine yourself.—What are your values and what do you live for?

8 The Relevance of the Cross

10 A Prosperous Church

This is not about external characteristics or the opinions of men, but rather how God judges a church.

12 A Life Rich in God

RADIO BROADCAST

14 Grasping for the Wind

3 Editorial

YOUTH PAGE

16 I Lift Up My Eyes to the Hills

18 Testimony

CHILDREN'S CORNER

19 A Soldier for the Lord

SOMETHING FOR THE FAMILY

20 Poor Rich Children

22 Making Friends with Unrighteous Mammon

FATHER'S DAY

24 Memories of my Father

25 Saying Goodbye to My Father

ON THE ROAD OF SALVATION

26 The Lord Who Heals You (Part 17)

POEMS

13 The Riches of Love

28 Gifts That Remain

FOUNDATION OF FAITH

Editor

Hans-Dietrich Nimz

Editorial Team

John Reimer

Harry Semenjuk

Ron Taron

Hermann Vogt

•

The FOUNDATION OF FAITH is a journal of vital Christianity, published in the interest of the Church of God, that takes a clear and decisive stand for full salvation in Christ, the unity of all true believers, and the truths of the Bible.

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.

•

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

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.

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 18 Issue 6

FOUNDATION OF FAITH is a trademark owned by Christian Unity Press in the United States and foreign countries.

Printed in USA.

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

Editorial

Dear Reader,

King Solomon, who possessed wisdom, riches, great power, and everything you could imagine, declared: "All is vanity. What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?" (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3). We live in a time in which many can afford a lot of things. Some travel to the most distant countries; others enjoy the most expensive meals and buy the most expensive cars and other things of which our ancestors could never have dreamed. However, our affluence may include inherent danger. God warns us that, "those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Timothy 6:9).

So I would like to present you a question to ponder, my dear readers: Have you considered the fact that a hundred years from now, it will not matter at all how much money we had, whether much or little, or if we owned an expensive house or one of the best cars? All of it will count for nothing when we stand before the Lord, the Judge of all people, to give an account.

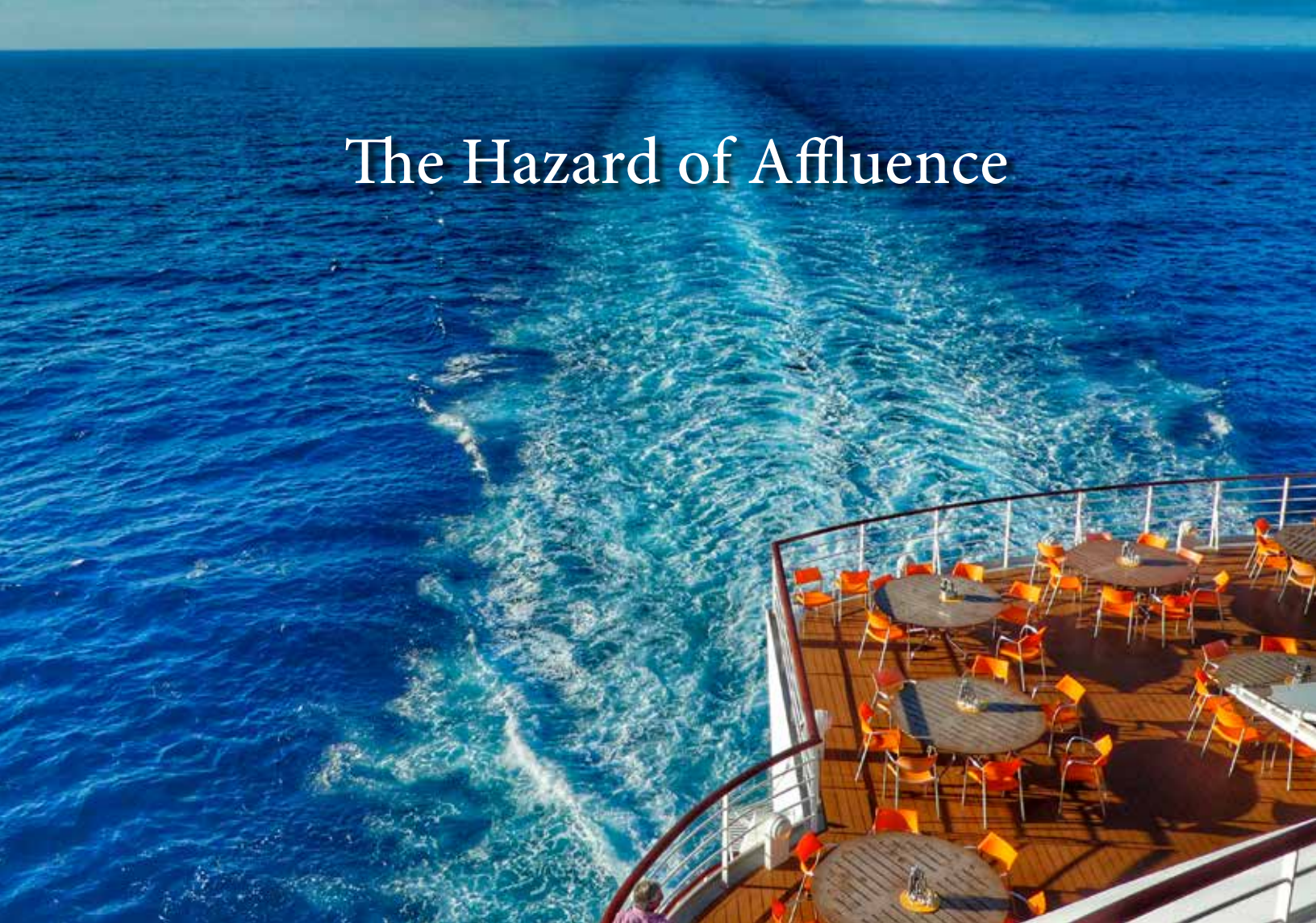
God's Word admonishes us, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:20).

Dear Reader, think of eternity and invest in it. Use your time wisely and seek that which is above. Be a blessing and an example.

Yet, not all, even in our own countries, live in abundance and prosperity. Some have difficulty making ends meet every month, even for the basics, so they place the uncertain future into the hands of God, Who knows what we need every day. What a blessing it is, that He cares for us as a father. Let us all be faithful stewards with what He has given us.

H. D. Nimz

The Hazard of Affluence



How is it possible during a time of highest prosperity, that more and more young people are ending up on a slippery slope, more marriages are failing, and families are being torn apart? What has happened?

If we read the 6th chapter of the book of Amos, it appears the real culprit may be our affluence. During the time Amos describes, the Israelites seemed to have no other ambitions than caring for their own well-being. The prophet Amos writes: “Woe to you . . . who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out on your couches, eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall; who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments, and invent for yourselves musical instruments like David; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint yourselves with the best ointments, but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph” (Amos 6:3–6).

Without a doubt, Amos’ astonishment must have been great when he saw such luxury and wealth. He had come as a poor shepherd from the bare hills of

Judea. What he saw impacted him deeply. The people were so engrossed in the things of their prosperous life that they could not find time to serve God. His place in their hearts had been replaced. That realization caused Amos much anguish.

Affluence often causes lethargy and idleness. Consider the past for a moment, stories of our parents and grandparents, when people would drive great distances to get to a worship service. They would even take a whole week to attend camp meetings.

Why are we feeling stressed to even get to a Sunday morning worship service? What about the mid-week prayer meetings? Could it be possible that our prosperity occupies all our thoughts? Could it be that our culture is like the days of Amos, where people are so concerned about their own well-being that they don’t even notice they are squeezing God out of their hearts?

Let us be watchful and prayerful in order to allow God to have the first place in our lives. ■

Build on High

“Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves” (Genesis 11:4).

In the book of Genesis, we read the narrative of the Tower of Babel. It was a special building project, an outstanding human undertaking. Where did they get this idea? When people turn their focus away from God, when they ignore His plan, when His will and His works are disregarded, when His Name is no longer honored, then people want to make a name for themselves.

When people lose faith in the almighty Creator, when they no longer have communication with Him and lose connection with God, then they become lost, godless, and headed toward their own destruction.

After the fall of Adam and Eve into sin, this was humanity’s great plan: We want to “build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens,” and we want to “make a name for ourselves.”

In other words, we want to go over the top. Don’t we have examples of this in every generation? History verifies that sooner or later, such endeavors fail and come to naught. This is true in economics, in politics, on a grand scale, and also in simple things. People don’t seem to learn from their mistakes of the past. The quest for power, coupled with human arrogance and pride, will lead people to come up with great plans. Then these plans are pursued with great excitement, propaganda is generated, and a project commences; a “tower” is built to show everyone else their great power.

What does the Son of God say about such an attitude? “Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12). This is an eternal, godly principle that remains valid for all of us. The sinful attitude to strive for power and recognition and the quest to go “over the top” is

often short-lived. God says, “Stop! You can go this far and no further.”

In the Magnificat, Mary’s hymn of praise, we see how God steps in: “He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly” (Luke 1:51–52). The same message is given in the narrative of the Tower of Babel.

“So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:8–9). And what remained? A miserable pile of bricks—a great ruin.

What happened to their plan to go over the top? We want to “build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens,” and we want to “make a name for ourselves.” No one knows the names of these people anymore; they were scattered and have been long forgotten.

But one remains. He is the Creator, the Almighty, the Eternal One, the Savior, and His Son Jesus Christ has a name that is above all names. “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Therefore, dear reader, do we want to make ourselves a name that is great? Definitely not. We read in the Lord’s prayer, “Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done” (Matthew 6:9–10). ■

H. D. Nimz



Mindset and Wealth

What Mindset Means

Your mindset can refer to your way of thinking or the basic disposition of your heart, revealed through the values governing your life and the actions you take to achieve your goals.

The Problem with the Carnal Mindset

As David describes the human mindset in Psalm 14:1–3, he looks at the depravity of mankind and comes to the conclusion that “there is none who does good.”

Do we see the people around us through the eyes of the psalmist, or have we let ourselves be distracted by their good deeds? After all, we all know people who are always ready to help and who spend a lot of time and effort on charitable projects.

The Bible shows us where the human mindset comes from. Because of Adam’s fall into sin, all people sin. They live according to their carnal (or fleshly) nature, not only turning away from God but

also rebelling against His order; their mindset is one of hostility toward God (Romans 8:5–7). In Romans 1:21, they are described as people whose thinking has become futile.

Signs of a Carnal Mindset

1. Striving for Independence

The drive to research has led humanity to invent a wide variety of ingenious tools and techniques that make life easier for us in many respects. With one discovery giving rise to another, wealth has been growing from generation to generation, and where we used to be dependent on the help of a neighbor, friend, or relative, we now see a strong tendency toward independence. A good income affords us a variety of everyday conveniences, making it less likely for us to ask other people for help.

The common phrase “We’ve got this” clearly reveals a mindset of independence from God—we can do it on our own.

2. Desiring and Pursuing Money and Possessions

It is in our nature to take care of ourselves and our families. We feel the need to earn an income that lets us meet the family’s basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter.

Unfortunately, in our current society, this desire for material goods far exceeds our basic needs. The shelves in our stores are brimming with goods. Advertising aims to make us desire these products, and because human nature is geared toward comfort, we often let ourselves be swayed, buying more than we otherwise might.

Businesses are constantly trying to improve their products and to fan consumer demand for the latest gadget. People simply go shopping, even when they do not really need anything, and rarely return empty-handed from this modern diversion.

Alienated from God, people try to fill their spiritual void with

things that give them joy. However, because the soul cannot be satisfied with earthly pleasures, the effects of this shopping therapy are short-lived, leading to yet another trip to the mall to recapture that feeling. This is how many people end up getting caught in an unending consumer binge.

God's Word clearly teaches that everything tangible will pass away. Furthermore, we will not be able to take any of our wealth or riches into eternity after our physical deaths. To keep us from making any mistakes in this regard, God has left us the instruction to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

3. *Needing Security*

By security, I don't mean the basic need for protection from danger, but rather the desire to secure our current high standard of living for the future, for example by investing our disposable income. People invest their money in precious metals, in real estate, in the stock market, or in collectors' items such as watches, postage stamps, and the like.

However, the current crisis sparked by the novel coronavirus and the accompanying economic recession teaches us clearly that many of these things cannot provide the security they promised.

The Bible describes the current situation in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, warning, "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape." By contrast, children of God can be

joyfully confident that their future is secured by His promises.

4. *Longing for the Good Life*

A good education enables us to earn a good income. When our basic needs are met, our focus shifts to our free time, where we can spend a lot of money and time on hobbies. Short trips and multiple longer vacations to faraway countries have become a matter of course for large parts of the population, and people often place more value on their leisure time than on earning their daily bread.

We expect our careers and jobs to be fun. Everything revolves around us, and we are all supposed to live happy, fulfilling lives while realizing our goals and dreams.

Dear reader, what values define your mindset? Have you surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus, or do you reject His plan for your life? As a follower of Jesus, you are confronted with the carnal mindset on a daily basis. Have you let yourself be influenced by the spirit of the times?

The Blessing of a Spiritual Mindset

The author of Hebrews teaches that followers of Jesus are guests and strangers on earth (Hebrews 11:13). In 1 Corinthians 4:1–2, we are reminded of our responsibility as stewards, i.e. that everything we have belongs to God and not us. The opinion that we can spend 90 percent of our income while leaving 10 percent to the Lord is a false interpretation of New Testament stewardship. Everything belongs to the Lord!

God's Word urges Christians to make every effort to meet their

families' needs while being content with food, clothing, and shelter. What God has given us beyond this provides an opportunity for us to invest in the work of the Lord's vineyard (Matthew 6:25–34; Luke 12:15–37). We will be richly blessed when we let God's Word guide us in this regard.

Living It Out

1. Dedicate your life to the Lord. If you have given yourself over to God, then He also owns your possessions.

2. Ask the Lord how you can put His will on this matter into practice. Ask Him for wisdom and guidance in the purchases you make. Perhaps it is time to look at the items you already own—are there things you no longer need that you could bless others with?

3. Listen to the Lord and obey, even if other people do not understand you. "Whatever He says to you, do it" (John 2:5).

4. Ask God to show you where your money is needed in His kingdom's work.

I would like to close with a prayer by John Wesley: "Oh that God would give me the thing which I long for! That before I go hence and am no more seen, I may see a people wholly devoted to God, crucified to the world, and the world crucified to them. A people truly given up to God in body, soul and substance! How cheerfully would I then say, 'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.'"

May God, in the abundance of His grace, grant us the desire and ability to fulfill His will. ■

Valentin Stieben
Pforzheim, Germany

Relevance of the Cross

For centuries, the cross has been a symbol of the Christian faith. Crosses are seen affixed to places of worship and illustrated on Bibles and hymnals. Often, you can see people wearing crosses as pendants as well. Yet, it is questionable if people really understand the relevance of the cross for the Christian life and walk. When thinking of the cross, we are immediately reminded of the cross on which Jesus was crucified. The cross was a cruel instrument of capital punishment used by the Persians and later during the time of Jesus, by the Romans. The writers of the New Testament vividly describe



the agony of the Lord on the cross. His death on the cross was the atonement for the sins of the world.

Is the Cross Relevant for our Walk with Jesus Today?

Among other things, Scripture also uses the cross in a figurative sense. Jesus Himself makes mention of the cross when speaking on the subject of following Him. “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). This indicates that a willingness to bear

the cross is required of the followers of Jesus. Yet, this is in direct contrast with how many perceive the Chris-

tian life to be. Nonetheless, the Lord set it as a test for His real followers. What does the cross symbolize?

Self-Denial

This is certainly a foreign concept in today's self-centered and wealth-driven society. People are taught from an early age to assert themselves and to defend themselves, but never to deny themselves. Self-denial is considered to be a sign of weakness we should never display. Still, Jesus repeatedly makes reference to self-denial, establishing it as a mark that sets His followers apart: "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). As a follower of Jesus there is a cross to bear, a cross that must be taken up by each disciple. It is not something we are afflicted with. It is a price we are willing to pay to suffer for the sake of Christ and the cross.

Self-Sacrifice

In Luke 14:33 Jesus says, "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." There is ample evidence that the Lord included material possessions in this requirement. In a time where the trend is to amass as much wealth as possible and by any means, for many this seems too high a price to pay in order to become a true Christian. With a "me first" mentality the very idea of forsaking something is illogical. It is all about my comfort, my benefit, my feelings, my rights, and so on. Sadly, some are tailoring the gospel to this mindset and promise people health and riches if they only accept Jesus. How disappointed people must be when they learn that Jesus actually requires self-denial and self-sacrifice.

A healthy relationship with Jesus not only requires the sacrifice of one's self and one's body, but also of one's possessions. Of the Christians in the early church we read, "Neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own" (Acts 4:32). Circumstances of the early church in Jerusalem were such that great sacrifices had to be made in order to feed the multitude of believers. The people of God showed liberality in sacrificing for the benefit of others. The cross-bearer of today must also be freed from the drive to accumulate wealth in order to be obedient to the Spirit of Christ. Paul endeavored to show people what the Christian life was all about and reminded them, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35). In

a self-seeking society it is difficult to be free from the spirit of accumulation. One messenger of God insisted that "a person is not really converted until his money purse is converted."

Biblical Examples

Abraham was a rich man in his time, but he still put God first in his life. Neither his possessions nor his own son obscured his love for God. Job was a man of great wealth but after losing everything he could still say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). One outstanding disciple of Jesus in the early church was a man named Barnabas, who owned a parcel of land that he sold, the proceeds of which he laid at the apostles' feet. His services and actions toward others gained him the name "Barnabas," which means Son of Encouragement (Acts 4:36).

How can we tell if the cross is relevant in our lives? The Lord Jesus set before the people two distinguishing marks:

1. Matthew 6:33—"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

The life and attitude of the Christian must show that the kingdom of God is valued above all else. As evidence we see a visible willingness to support the work of the kingdom with time, effort, and money.

2. Matthew 10:37—"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

First, God's kingdom is to be esteemed above the things of this world. Secondly, the love for God is to be supreme. Not even our closest family members are to stand in the way of our love and dedication to Christ. How vividly Abraham demonstrated this by being willing to sacrifice his dear son in obedience to God. Christ revealed His love to us in His sacrifice on the cross. Christians show their love to God in demonstrating the relevance of the cross in their lives by their own sacrifice to the Lord and their obedience to the gospel. How does your personal walk with God show the relevance of the cross in your life? ■

Peter Ens
Toronto, ON

A Prosperous Church

Various ideas may arise when you look at the title: splendid church buildings, increasing numbers of visitors, talented singers, eloquent preachers, well-qualified Sunday school teachers, etc. If we conducted a survey, there would likely be many more answers. All of these attributes are not intrinsically wrong and may serve their purpose, but when it comes to an important topic like this, it's advisable to look for answers in the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible refers to genuine and fleeting riches. In the seven letters to the churches in the book of Revelation, the church of Laodicea is mentioned. This church rated itself as "rich" and "wealthy" but received God's judgment as being "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked" in His eyes (Revelation 3:14-22). One fact is obvious: deception is possible and leads to grave consequences.

In his letter to the church in Colosse, Paul greets the recipients as "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse" (Colossians 1:2) and the church in Thessalonica as "the church of the Thessalonians in God" (1 Thessalonians 1:1). These terms "in Christ" and "in God" are extremely necessary with respect to a prosperous

congregation. A church consists of individuals and can only be as spiritual as each person is. If the pastor of the church has a vibrant relationship with God and allows the Holy Spirit to guide, and if this is the case with the leading brethren, as well as Sunday school teachers, choir directors, and the like, then one can speak of a prosperous church, even if no obvious wealth is noted.

We also see characteristics of a prosperous church in Acts 2:42: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

1. A spiritual church is true to God's Word and holds fast to the teaching which the apostles received from the Lord Jesus Christ. It clings to the Word for all decisions and questions pertaining to the function of the church. The core is the Word. This helps us understand the Apostle Paul's words to his young co-worker in 2 Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word!" A thriving church is one where the Word of God is preached in its entirety, where nothing is left out, but also where nothing is

added. The congregation can then respond with "Amen," acknowledging the Word as the guideline.

2. Fellowship in a congregation describes the life that happens within the church. Our differences related to ancestry, upbringing, education, language, and culture can create challenges. In his book, James adds the distinctions between the poor and the rich (James 2:1-13). The prosperity of a church is evident in the lack of discrimination, where no one is favored, yet the needs of all members of the congregation are considered. I once experienced the blessing of this during the ordinance of footwashing. I was sitting between two brothers, one a millionaire, the other a plain employee.

Despite their differences, they shared a tangible bond of unity.

3. The breaking of bread (communion or love feast), that commonly happened in homes during the time of the early church, indicates a gathering of believers, and demonstrates the practical side of fellowship. A congregation that also includes the lonely, the sick, and the elderly is truly wealthy.

4. The verse also mentions prayer. In this case, the main focus is not on individual prayer but the united prayer of the church family, which they did. They regularly came together for various reasons. If you read through Acts keeping this in mind, you will find that they prayed often, including during times of need, when facing hostility, and when dealing with problems. They prayerfully sought shelter in God. When Peter was in prison, we read, “but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church” (Acts 12:5). What

a wealth of blessing arises at well-attended prayer meetings where there is diligent

and active participation in prayer with few periods of silence. How refreshing that no rote prayers are said; instead, unique, timely, and heartfelt prayers are heard. I recall when a family with many children moved to our city several years ago and joined in our services, including prayer meetings. I was so moved and blessed to hear the entire family, father, mother, and children, lifting their voices in prayer. They greatly enriched the church.

The Apostle Paul describes the church as a body. Christ has the Head position. He depicts us as the various parts of the body that need to be willing to serve to allow the body to function. Paul makes it clear that it’s not about being in the limelight or being self-absorbed, but it’s about being focused on fulfilling our role “for the profit of all” (1 Corinthians 12:7), “for the edifying of the body of Christ . . . causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:12,16). The evidence of a prosperous church is found in joyful willingness to serve by participating, helping, praying, and offering.

A prosperous church is not self-centered. It doesn’t think the world revolves around its presence; rather, the church knows its mission in the world. The Lord Jesus tells us to be “the salt of the earth” and also the “light of the world” (Matthew 5:13–14). In plain language, we can’t leave the world around us unchanged. Our duty is, or perhaps it’s better to say we have the opportunity to be guideposts. We have the privilege of sharing the gospel of God’s grace with a doomed world. A prosperous

church prays “first” (1 Timothy 2:1) for the salvation of the lost. It looks for ways and means of active outreach in the community. Jesus did not just preach; He also made certain the people had food to eat. In general, there is a greater willingness to listen when a helping hand is extended. Actions speak louder than words.

Let me summarize these thoughts, and let’s apply them. Is it even possible to be this type of church? Could this just be a vision of the ideal? Were it so, I would turn the page to read the next article in the *Foundation of Faith*. But let’s not do that. Please give me another 2 to 3 minutes of your time. The fact is—and I assume you will agree—we would like “our” congregation, the very one we attend, to be rated as rich. Who happens to be responsible for making this a reality? Here the question becomes very personal. We acknowledge that every child of God, man or woman, young or old, has a role to fulfill. The spirituality of each person determines the spirituality of the church. Most importantly, my personal relationship with God, my attitude, and my willingness to contribute will determine if the church is prosperous or poor. If we have become complacent and less involved, if our attendance at worship services has diminished and it’s been a long time since we’ve prayed, then why not heed God’s call today. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Revelation 3:20). Whoever is right with God and rich toward God (Revelation 2:9) will also strive to make the local congregation a prosperous church.

Harry Semenjuk

A Life Rich in God

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:3-4).

Although we as Christians believe in an unimaginable, magnificent heaven where we will receive our eternal reward, we are standing within an affluent society in an amazingly difficult battle, trying to tear ourselves away from earthly bondage. Since we are given so many almost unlimited possibilities to relish life in our day and age, it is often almost impossible to direct our thoughts completely towards eternal values. The writer of Hebrews warns us of sin which so easily ensnares us, making us weak (Hebrews 12:1), and it is no different with the intoxication of materialism. How can a child of God live a godly life during these times of excessive resources?

1. Realize that earthly riches will not satisfy. Just today, I read about a study where German university students were questioned regarding a purchase they made thirty days ago: Were they happier now than before they made the purchase? The majority answered that they would be happier if they still had the money in their pockets. This truth is actually apparent in our personal lives as well; money, riches, machines, and possessions cannot satisfy us. These material things lose their appeal very quickly.

The sooner we come to realize that all earthly possessions have no lasting value, the sooner we will be able to pull ourselves away from earthly bondage. Another helpful suggestion would be to make a habit of earnestly asking ourselves before every new purchase what the true (read: eternal) value of the item is.

2. A godly life in today's affluent society is a life in which a person behaves as God's steward. Everything God created belongs to Him; He has given us an abundance of resources and pays attention to how we work with them. They are His, but we are using them. If we utilize God's possessions for futile or selfish purposes, it is impossible for us to be happy. Having a desire to live a godly life will help us, also in this regard, to change our entire attitude about those things entrusted to us and to conform to the will of God.

3. A life rich in God will be filled with benevolence. Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive. God allows us to take some of His assets for ourselves, but how much richer we will be if we help others with “our” resources. Many years ago, it became clear to me that I am only as rich as what I pass on in the name of Jesus. If we look at God, especially as He was living here on earth as a man, we observe Him constantly giving. Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit give and give and give. If we want to acquire a life rich in God, then we should ask God to show us where He would like us to pass on the resources with which He has entrusted us. We will find endless possibilities, accompanied by wisdom from God to evaluate them correctly.

4. A life rich in God plans for the future. This does not mean predominately for our future on earth, for many who have worried about that have lost everything in one blow. Jesus commands His followers in Matthew 6:19-20, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” And then He adds (verse 21), “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” How tragic when our

heart adheres to earthly treasures that are short-lived, treasures that will never give satisfaction to our heart and our soul!

The faster technology advances, the more applicable the words of Jesus become: “Where moth and rust destroy.” Indirectly, these words are especially applicable to our modern, technologically driven world. In a few years, a \$1000 cellphone is outdated, and the battery is no longer chargeable, and clothing is no longer in style, leaving a great desire to update. This same scenario repeats itself in many areas of our lives. Dear child of God, do not let yourself be plunged into this current. Yes, there are certain things we need in order to live in our time. The Lord understood this long ago, and He allows for that. But gather treasures for yourself in heaven. These treasures are imperishable and unfading and will never become outdated.

Bear in mind, we have to gather these treasures while we are living here on earth. Though heaven will be totally different than anyone can imagine and the riches and things of this time won't enter in, we can and must gather treasures here on earth, which will accrue unending interest in eternity. And these treasures are fruits of a life rich in God. These are the souls whom we have led to salvation and won for God's kingdom. They are deeds of love we have fulfilled in the name of Jesus and for His will. They are the offerings we have brought and self-denial which we have done out of love for the Lord. Treasures in heaven are our prayers, intercession, faithfulness, and everything else which God can use for His glory. And such a life is rich in God here in this life and even more in eternity.

Dear soul, venture to swim against the current of materialism. Look for the value of a life rich in God. Live a godly life amid the earthly abundance of our time. ■

Ron Taron

The Riches of Love

The treasures of earth are not mine,
I hold not its silver and gold;
But a treasure far greater is mine;
I have riches of value untold.

The treasures of earth must all fail,
Its riches and honor decay,
But the riches of love that are mine
Even death cannot take them away.

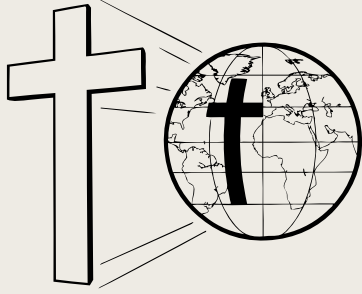
Compared with the riches of love,
The wealth of the world is but dross;
I will seek but Christ Jesus to win,
And for Him I count all things but loss.

Come, take of the riches of Christ,
Exhaustless and free is the store;
Of its wonderful fullness receive,
Till you hunger and thirst nevermore.

Chorus:

Oh, the depths of the riches of love,
The riches of love in Christ Jesus!
Far better than gold or wealth untold
Are the riches of love in Christ Jesus.

H. B. Hartzler



Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, ON

Grasping for the Wind

“Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:11).

Solomon compared all of his efforts and work to a grasping or chasing after the wind. In chapter 2 of Ecclesiastes, he writes, “I said in my heart, ‘Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure’ I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. . . . I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. I also gathered for myself silver and gold Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my reward from all my labor” (verses 1–10). But when he looked at all his work and efforts, he had to confess that, “Indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind” (verse 11). What an unfortunate and yet sage conclusion!

The German theologian Hans Bruns gives a brief explanation of this chapter: “The preacher Solomon looked into this world of sensuality and wanted to find the meaning of life in the joy of work. Looking into the world of culture and civilization, he had experienced and achieved a lot there as well. He stood tall and was ahead of everyone who had lived before him. And yet everything was just a ‘Babylonian tower construct’

which drove him to despair.” To accumulate such wealth took much of his time. Solomon saw not only all the glory he had achieved but also the declining, fading life of men. And he certainly saw it in himself.

In 1 Timothy chapter 6, we read, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” The apostle substantiates this with the words: “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (verses 6–7). Throughout the ages, the fact has remained that no one will take even a small part of their earthly goods with them.

“And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content,” Paul continues. Then he states a warning: “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called” (vv.8–12).

Our forefathers repeatedly lost their houses, farms, and goods and had to start over again. They literal-



ly learned that there are no lasting profits under the sun. It was a grasping for the wind. But how difficult it is for people to get off the beaten track in their lives! They put their hope in earthly gain that must constantly be on an upward swing. But how often have we seen financial profits suddenly collapse? Shattering economic crises occur all over the world: severe economic disasters, unemployment, loss of wealth, investors fearing for their assets. The media often reports these calamities to us. The causes of these catastrophes are seen in the excessive greed for money and sheer imprudence.

Gripped by a similar crisis, a very successful entrepreneur overwhelmed by debt, desperately threw himself in front of a train near his hometown. He was one who could never give up and never knew where to draw the line. “The more he has, the more he wants; his wishes never cease.” The wealth of this world has indeed betrayed and misled many. Especially unfortunate is that these profits detract from God, with rare

exceptions. Man builds on his own power and places his trust in conquered, deceptive wealth. Jesus warned his disciples, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!” (Mark 10:24).

God offers us higher and lasting treasures that survive all crises in the world. The wise Solomon had come to a very important realization. He recognized that there are no consistent and saving values in this world. It is all just a grasping for the wind, which no one can grasp or hold on to.

The crucial question is, “What remains?” Everyone must let go of all earthly possessions, busyness, and fame. And what remains? Each of us must appear before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, and what judgment will we receive for our lives?

King Solomon asked God for an obedient heart. Wouldn’t that be a wise decision for you and me? We want to give up futile grasping for the wind and seize the eternal life that Jesus Christ offers us. ■

I will lift up my eyes to the hills

*“I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
From whence comes my help?” (Psalm 121:1).*

Important events of the Bible happened near or on mountains in Israel. Have you ever thought about the meaning they could have for your life?

1. Mount Ararat—The Strong Mountain on Life’s Ocean (Genesis 7–8:5)

Noah, his family, and many different animals were inside the ark, which drifted on an incalculable mass of water. For forty days, it rained extraordinarily heavily without stopping. The passengers remained in the dim “box” for another 150 days. The massive ship swayed back and forth on the waves. The result of this situation was uncertain to them. Would the food reserves be enough? Yet, their faith in God remained unshakable.

Suddenly, a jolt caught the body of the ship. Guided by the hand of God, the ark settled on the rocky terrain of Ararat (Genesis 8:4), for “God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark” (Genesis 8:1). He had not forgotten them! Now they knew the time of their freedom was getting closer. The water consistently dropped, and they felt solid ground.

Your life today can unfold similarly. The current situation of the coronavirus pandemic has caused much fear and uncertainty. What will your future be like? What personal consequences for your future career will these economic developments bring? Maybe you find yourself in a seemingly hopeless situation that remains unchanging. Instead of a job acceptance letter, you receive a rejection letter. Your occupational jour-

ney is not what you had hoped for, and you feel the competition is weighing in on you. You look for a way out, but all the doors are closed. Your feelings fluctuate between hope and a lack of orientation. Unease and restlessness want to take over. But then you read this Bible passage: “Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22).

Even if the situation doesn’t change right away, be encouraged. This passage supports your hope that God will change the situation into something good. Further, God will help you realize, everything that happens belongs to a plan and works together for your good.

2. Mount Moriah—Unconditional Devotion to God

For many years, Abraham and Sarah hoped for a child. Finally, God fulfilled His promise, and they received a son, Isaac. However, sometime later, God confronted Abraham with a humanly unimaginable trial (Genesis 22:1-19) and said to him, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

You know that God would never encourage human sacrifice. He was testing Abraham’s faith and his willingness to sacrifice everything for God.

Abraham listened and immediately set out on the journey with Isaac. Together, father and son climbed the mountain. God watched them both, listened to their conversations, and noticed the loving care Abra-



VERSE OF THE MONTH

“Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement) . . .” Acts 4:36

ham showed his son. “Here I am, my son.” God also saw how calmly Abraham fulfilled his assignment and how confident he was in reassuring the confused Isaac, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering” (verse 8). Deep within his heart, he believed God could raise him from the dead. When Abraham was ready to go so far as to even sacrifice his dearly loved son, God stepped in. “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now, I know that you fear God” (verse 12).

Abraham named this mountain “The-LORD-Will-Provide” (verse 14). This is the mountain on the journey with Jesus where God watches your willingness to sacrifice and lay everything in your young life at His feet, including your dreams and wishes. He not only watches but also ensures that you do not suffer or endure disadvantages in your life that are not within His will for you. Can you accept from God’s hands when your plans are crossed out, doors are closed, and your path, into which you have invested so much energy and dedication, is suddenly taken in a different direction? God examines the authenticity of your faith—a faith that is willing to sacrifice worldly friendships and materialistic profit to ensure your soul does not endure eternal suffering (see Mark 8:35-36).

Do not walk around this mountain. God will send you the needed help at the right time, for He sees you.

Andreas Schell
Hetzerath, Germany

Barnabas also means one who encourages others or one who gives encouragement. Mind you, he didn’t just have this meaningful name; he really was an “encourager.” Have you ever experienced the blessing of being encouraged? After receiving some particularly difficult news, it’s a valuable gift when friends pick you up with encouraging and consoling words, or if you are writing an exam, and someone sends you an encouraging Bible verse that strengthens your faith. How wonderful to get a heartfelt hug with the words, “I am praying for you.” A sincere “thank you” encourages those people to keep doing this service for others.

Consider a helping hand with a demanding, challenging project, the patient endurance of mutual weaknesses, an encouraging card in times of illness, or simply an open ear and time spent with a friend can mean so much.

We want to pray that God helps you and me to be a Barnabas, to give us opportunities where we can support and encourage others.

TESTIMONY

“I will remember the works of the LORD; surely I will remember Your wonders of old. I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds. Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; Who is so great a God as our God? You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples” (Psalm 77:11-14).

These words have become my stronghold in the most difficult times of my life. Whenever I think about them, my heart is filled with thanksgiving to God. I did not deserve His mercy and grace, but I can always see His love to me when I recall the miracles He has done for me.

It happened on June 16, 2008 as I drove to work. For some unexplainable reason, I lost control of my vehicle, left the road, and the passenger side of my car struck a tree. I was flown to the hospital by emergency helicopter. My parents were notified by the police that I was involved in a very serious car accident and was on the way to the hospital. When my parents arrived, they were told by the doctor that I was in critical condition. As a result of the crash, I had serious head injuries, and my lungs were severely damaged. I was put into a medically-induced coma, and the next 72 hours would determine whether I would live or die. During this time, my family, as well as many brothers and sisters of the church, fasted and prayed for me. Some days later, as my parents visited me, the doctor told them that they would have to do a tracheostomy on me in order to open a direct airway. They tried to wake me out of the coma but to no avail. That was a huge blow for my parents. On their way home, they stopped at a rest area and pleaded with God to have mercy on me. During the following night, I unconsciously removed my breathing tubes and ultimately woke up from the coma.

I spent five weeks in the hospital and was then transferred to a neurological rehab center. It was there that I relearned to keep my balance and to make movements with my broken arm. My memory and my concentration had suffered greatly through the cerebral hemorrhages. However, through the prayers of my church family, God relieved me of the pain and gave me joy. I was especially happy that I was allowed to sing spiritual songs during my music therapy. My music therapist asked me how I could be so joyful after such a serious incident. I explained to him that all things work together for good to those who love God, even if we can't understand it at the time. However, I couldn't have known at that time that this awareness would still be severely tested.

In the summer of 2009, I had to spend one year far away from my church and my family to attend vocational rehabilitation. I missed the congregation and worship services terribly. Almost daily, I was confronted with what I could not do (career-wise) as a result of my accident. Many tears were shed during this time, and I sought comfort in God. One day, as my discontentment overwhelmed me and I couldn't find an answer to the “Why?” the thought came to me to just calm down and listen to a sermon. The brother spoke about Psalm 77:14, which states, “You are the God who does wonders; You have declared Your strength among the peoples.” After this sermon, I still didn't have an answer to the “Why?” question, but I knew this: God had given me peace and calmness for my questions.

I still cannot answer the question “Why?” today. But the one thing I do know is that this is what God used to reveal His magnificence to me. He is full of love and thoughts of peace toward us. May His Name be praised! ■

Nelli Baumbach
Lippstadt, Germany

A Soldier For The Lord

On the way home from church one Sunday, Jared was puzzled. “Daddy, in Sunday school the teacher said we should be soldiers for Christ. How can we be soldiers when God says to be peacemakers and not fight?”

“Well, Son, an army does not just go out and fight wars with other countries for no reason. We have soldiers to protect our country, or in other words to keep someone else from coming in and taking over,” his dad said. “Now can you think how we might help protect Christ and His Word?”

“I guess if someone said the Bible is a lie, we could say they’re wrong, that the Bible is truly the Word of God,” Jared replied.

“That’s right, Jared,” Daddy said. “We can also fight the devil who wants to take over our hearts. Whenever the devil brings bad things to our mind, he is trying to win us over to his army. Sometimes our heart and mind are like a battleground. We are on the Lord’s side,

but the devil often tries to get in and take over. We must fight back or he could get us in his army.”

Jared thought a moment. “One day in the grocery store Jimmy and Danny took a candy bar when no one was looking. I wanted a candy bar, too, but I didn’t dare take one. I told them that was stealing and the Bible said ‘Thou shalt not steal,’” Jared said. “Was I being a good soldier for the Lord?”

“Yes, Jared,” Daddy said. “You were protecting the Truth. Another thing, army soldiers are not lazy and must obey all commands. How are we to know God’s commands?”

“By reading the Bible,” Jared replied.

“That’s right, Jared. We must read the Bible so we may know what the Lord wants us to do.”

“Now that I’m learning to read, I want a Bible of my own so I can read it and be a good soldier for God.” ■

Sandra Whitson (The Beautiful Way)

Poor Rich Children

Are our children rich and happy? Or do they feel sad and poor, even in the middle of all this prosperity?

Peace, Freedom, Prosperity

How fortunate are children who can grow up in peace and freedom, in a country that is shaped by Christian values and which God has also blessed in the natural realm. Rarely has there been a period in world history in which children can grow up with such security and be so carefree. In addition, public education, enhanced by the internet, offers them an education that we could not have imagined years ago. Rich children.

While their great-grandparents' generation was still characterized by the scarcity and deprivation of World War II and the post-war period, the generations of their grandparents and parents grew up in prosperity and lack of cares in general. What grace from God that we have been spared existential worries for so long. However, we have no guarantee that this will go on forever. We don't even know how 2020 will go.

Our own history and example is the template on which the life scripts and value systems of our children are created.

The general standard of living shapes us and our children. We have not only become accustomed to it, we have actually become dependent on it. And with our lifestyle and attitudes, we shape our children as we were shaped by our parents. Quite subconsciously, our children learn from us and largely adopt our attitude: about themselves, about the family in the narrow and broad sense, about other people, about the world, about material possessions, but also about God and the church. If, for example, the child comes first in our lives and God only comes third or fourth, the child will learn that he or she is the center of the universe: "Everything serves me, and when things get really tight, I ask God to help me, or to serve me." As an adolescent and young adult, the son or daughter will enter into life

with exactly this expectation, and with matching experiences that include painful disappointments. However, if parents let their child participate in their spiritual life and the child is involved in answers to prayer and experiences of faith, it will shape his concept of God. If the child learns at home that God and His matters always have priority, that our life is in the service of God, then this concept of God will guide the young person and lead to personal experiences with God.

The Dictate of the Zeitgeist in Christian families

In John 17:14–16, we find Jesus' prayer for the disciples. Here, Jesus addresses the conflict of His followers with their environment. This relationship has changed completely through salvation and regeneration. Before conversion, man is a reflection of the sinful world around him. But through regeneration, he is moved from the realm of darkness to the realm of Christ (Colossians 1:13). He receives a new attitude (Philippians 2:5) and is led by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14).

Whereas the spirit of God now rules in his heart and life, outside is the domain of the Zeitgeist, a spirit from hell. The Holy Spirit wants to gently guide our lives, both personally and as a family. But the Zeitgeist takes its toll. Can it also implement its will in our families?

The showcases of vanity are full of offers that modern man cannot possibly do without. Father, mother, and the children—everyone is sensitive to these temptations. Needs are awakened, which should then be urgently satisfied. The mother notices this when the child loudly insists on the purchase of a certain toy. And our children notice whether we are constantly chasing the latest trends in a wide range of consumer goods. Unfortunately, a life with such demands is often more expensive than the means allow.

Is it worth it if the child no longer knows how to play outside due to the abundance of toys and digital media? Is it worth the expensive vacation, the big house, the expensive car if there is no time left for the child due to the sheer amount of work and career expectations? When both parents have to work to guarantee a certain standard of living and all the debts are being paid—but the child has to deal with his needs and homework alone? A poor rich child!

Does our culture's *Zeitgeist* not dictate the rhythm of our life with its demands? Would the speed of our everyday life not be different if we were only guided by the Holy Spirit? Would our life have a different quality? Wouldn't we have much more time to discover something together with our child—and thus give the child an unforgettable experience and tremendous joy? Do our children perhaps have much more than they need—and yet are actually poor, alone, and helpless?

The modern value system is not compatible with the Word of God. The Word of God comes from heaven; the modern value system is conceived in hell. Our children learn modern thought in public schools. The pulse of our economy beats to this rhythm. More and more laws are being adapted to the humanistic worldview, and biblical order is being thrown overboard. Are our Christian families still a fortress against moral decay and godlessness?

Life According to Divine Order

If we want to protect our children from the grip of the evil one, it is not enough to just monitor the use of the Internet. We have to strengthen our sons and daughters so they can swim against the deadly current. Even as children, they should learn to see the difference between good and evil and should have the will to choose what is good and right.

God's Word does not promise us that this path will be easy and hassle-free. Rather, Scripture shows us that the narrow path is, in practice, associated with many struggles, including pain and tears (Luke 9:23).

Blessed are the children who have learned, even before they can talk and walk, that obedience pleases their parents and is something very beautiful. Blessed are the children who have learned that a "no" to their wishes and plans is normal and no reason for agitation. Blessed are the children who learn to do without. Blessed are the children who have learned to share and give joyfully and thus make others happy. Blessed are the children who are so steadfast in themselves and confident in a positive way that they do not define their place in life through fashion trends, brand mania, or status symbols. Blessed are the children for whom God is a reality and a firm footing in life.

The future needs strong people who are inwardly healthy and free, people who live from the power of God and who are dependent on the grace of God, people whose inner wealth makes them externally independent, who cannot be corrupted by luxury and convenience. Their assets are invested in perpetual, invisible equity and makes them independent of the changing circumstances of the present. They are people who are grateful and happy, regardless of whether they live in wealth and abundance or in poverty and need. They are people who stand with both feet in life and whose heart and home is in heaven.

We achieve inner and lasting wealth only by the way of the Bible, in a divine order. Only God's blessing makes our children rich, even without a big bank account. ■

Hermann Vogt

Making Friends with Unrighteous Mammon

One of the most familiar warnings within Scripture are Paul's words from 1 Timothy 6:10a: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." Paul concludes this verse by saying, "for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Society would have mankind believe that material wealth is the root of happiness and contentment. In reality, wealth and the pursuit of wealth never lead to satisfaction. They lead to strife and destruction. Paul expresses this thought in verse 9: "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." Unfortunately, the pursuit of wealth can even impact churches, when greed, jealousy and the worship of material things are sown in the hearts of those who once served God and loved Him above all.

It is important for Christians to remember that all their wealth and possessions have merely been temporarily entrusted to them by God. They belong to God. David writes in Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." The prophet Haggai records God saying in Haggai 2:8, "'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the Lord of hosts." All creation belongs to God. However, God gave mankind dominion over His creation, as stated in Genesis 1:28. This dominion entails stewardship as described in Genesis 2:15: "Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." Adam and Eve were God's first stewards here on earth.

This stewardship remains today, and in a general sense, includes every living person, because everything everyone possesses really belongs to God. However, more specifically, God's true stewards are those who belong to Him. God entrusts each Christian with various material and spiritual gifts. According to Jesus' Parable of the Talents, God distributes these gifts according to one's ability (Matthew 25:15), meaning one's ability to invest them wisely on His behalf. It is important to God that believers take this stewardship seriously and remain faithful in what God has entrusted to them. Paul warns in 1 Cor. 4:2, "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."

Scripture teaches that followers of Christ ought to invest their God-given gifts, whether material or spiritual, to further His kingdom here on earth. One specific area is in serving others. Peter writes in 1 Peter 4:10, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Through such good deeds, Christians are able to let their light shine and glorify their Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Jesus further elaborates on this type of stewardship in His Parable of the Unjust Steward, located in Luke 16. Jesus begins His parable with the words, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg.'" Up to this point, the steward had performed poorly with his assigned responsibilities. Therefore, he was required to give an account to his master, in the same way all Christians will one day give an account to the Lord regarding their stewardship in Christ.

Seeing his imminent punishment at hand, the steward devised a plan, located in verses 4-7: "I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.' So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'"

At first glance, it may seem as if the steward was once again squandering his master's wealth by allowing his master's debtors to reduce their debt. This is partially true, since Jesus even explains the steward's motives for doing so: that they would receive him in their houses after being removed from his stewardship (verse 4). However, the master commends his steward for finally behaving as a wise steward. Scripture states in verses 8 and 9, "So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that

when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.” The New Living Translation says, “Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.”

Jesus uses the term “unrighteous mammon” to describe earthly riches. They are unrighteous because they are temporary, and prone to entice earthly attitudes and behaviors as mentioned earlier. Like the steward, the Lord encourages His followers to invest the material gifts that He has entrusted them with to help others, or as stated here, to “make friends.”

Using material wealth to help others can produce spiritual, eternal fruit. Or as stated in our text, fruit that will help us receive our everlasting home. For example, giving to others allows Christians to protect themselves from becoming overly attached to their possessions. If we’re not careful, our wealth can become our master and god. Jesus warns in verse 13, “No servant 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.”

Second, generous giving glorifies God for it reflects His mercy and compassion on mankind. Scholars note that the master in the parable would have received honor and thanks from the debtors whose debts were lowered. It’s a beautiful thought that our giving can increase praise and thanks towards God.

Third, giving is a tool Jesus wants to use to further His kingdom here on earth and His eternal kingdom in heaven. This includes financially supporting missionary work or supporting benevolence programs in our community. Benevolence can soften hearts for God’s Word. Either way, God’s life-giving seed can be sown through generous hearts that give. Perhaps, God may even show us one day how our benevolence helped win souls for Christ.

God has called all of His children to a life of stewardship, and He wants His children to remember the warning Christ shared in His parable: “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10). May the Lord help us remain faithful stewards with what He has entrusted us. One day, we will give an account. ■

David Knelsen
Seminole, TX



ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please note that all events are subject to review and cancellation due to the current world crisis.)

Youth Retreat in Tuningen, Germany

July 31 - August 4, 2020

*Bible Course in Winnipeg/Steinbach,
Manitoba*

August 10 - 21, 2020

Camp Meeting in Blaubeuren, Germany

August 15 - 20, 2020

Fest in Seminole, Texas

September 26 - 27, 2020

*100th Anniversary Services
Christian Unity Press*

Swartz Creek, MI (USA)

Postponed till 2021

Memories of my Father

I grew up in a home full of love and music. My dad was happiest when we were all together, very often with church friends, making wonderful gospel music.

My mom loved cooking for a large crowd and so our home was often filled with friends making music and sharing wonderful meals.

Because he loved music, my dad encouraged me to learn to play musical instruments, and although we were never wealthy, he told me he would buy me any instrument I wanted to learn to play. For quick access, my father hung the instruments on our living room wall, and I remember small children coming to our home, asking if we owned a music store.

My dad had a gift for encouraging children to learn a musical instrument and for many years he led a children's orchestra of more than 20 children in Kitchener, Ontario.

Later when we were older, we drove to Aylmer, Ontario, every Thursday evening so my dad could give lessons to the children and young adults there.

My dad loved music, but he was also a man of prayer. As a small child, I recall getting up at night and seeing my father on his knees talking to his Heavenly Father. That had a deep and lasting impact on me and created in my young heart a desire to also know God.

Another fond memory is of my dad often telling me, "Junge, vergiss das Beste nicht," meaning don't forget what is most important in life, which for him was a close relationship with God.

He was a great and godly example for me. He worked as maintenance man in a large medical arts building, and when I was older, he showed me the

small nook he had created for himself in the building's heating room, where he would kneel and pray whenever he found time for it.

My parents loved the church of God and were very involved and active in congregational services, setting a good example for my sister and me.

Once, when I had very little time to study for a major exam in high school, I asked my dad if I could stay home from prayer meeting to study some more. His answer was not surprising: "If you put God first, He will help you with your exam." I went to prayer meeting with my parents that night and when I received the results for the exam I had written, they were the highest I had ever received in that subject. What a lesson for life!

My dad was very handy fixing anything broken: watches, cuckoo clocks, and even our family car. He wanted me to help and work along and I am thankful for the lessons I learned from my dad and especially the time I was able to spend with him repairing things.

Both of my parents have gone to be with the Lord, and my dad has been gone for over 28 years; yet, I still often remember and cherish the things he said and the love he showered me with.

I consider it an incredible, undeserved privilege to have had parents who loved the Lord with all their heart, loved His church, loved us, and were such a great Godly example to us.

Now it is my deep and sincere desire to be a godly example for my children and grandchildren. May God help me. ■

Sieg Henkelmann
Edmonton, AB

Why Do We Celebrate Father's Day?

The first Father's Day was officially celebrated on June 19, 1910, in the state of Washington, USA. However, it did not become a national holiday until 1972, when it was set to be celebrated on the third Sunday in June. It was supposed to be a day of thanksgiving and honoring fathers, for God's Word tells us:

"Honor father and mother, for it is the first commandment with a promise" (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2). Therefore, Father's Day is celebrated like Mother's Day in the United States and Canada.



Saying Goodbye to My Father

John Paton (1824–1907), a missionary to the New Hebrides, wrote about parting from his father when he was on his way to university in Glasgow: “My faithful father accompanied me for six miles. His advice, warnings, tears, and his divinely-inspired speech on this farewell journey are still so vivid in my heart as if it were only yesterday. When I remember that day, tears still flow abundantly down my cheeks just as they did back then.

“At about the last half mile, we walked next to each other in nearly complete silence. My father held his hat in his hand, which he often did. His lips moved in silent prayer for me, and his tears flowed quickly when we looked at each other, which said more than words could say.

“When we reached the designated parting point, we stood still. He took my hand and held it silently for a minute long. Then he said solemnly and lovingly, ‘God bless you, my son! May the God of your father give you true success and protect you from all evil!’

“Unable to say anything further, his lips moved in silent prayer. With tears, we hugged each other and said goodbye. I hurried away as quickly as I could. Be-

fore I was about to turn on the path where my father would no longer be able to see me, I looked back and saw him still standing there with his uncovered head at the spot where I had parted from him.

“After I tipped my hat in farewell, I turned the corner and disappeared from his view, but my heart was too full and raw to continue on. I threw myself down on the side of the path and cried for a while. When I had carefully stood up again, I scaled the dike to see if he still stood where I had left him. In that moment, I saw him also climb the dike to look for me. He didn’t see me.

“After he looked intensely for a while in the direction that I had gone, he climbed down the dike and made his way home, his head still uncovered and—of this I was sure—his heart still lifting me up in prayer to God.

“As I continued on my way, I made the solemn vow, with the help of God, to live and act in such a way as to never disappoint and dishonor such a father and mother as God had given me.” ■

Excerpt from “A Missionary Hero” by Bessie L. Hittle



On the Road of Salvation

Part 17

The Lord Who Heals You

Ron Taron

God's Plan of Salvation in the History of Israel

“If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you” (Exodus 15:26).

Before taking a trip overseas we need to make preparations. Among these, certain questions must be considered: “If I need medical intervention on my trip, how will I get it? Do I have sufficient insurance to cover the cost?” But now, consider the Israelites on their great journey from Egypt to Canaan. There were no hospitals, trained medical professionals, or emergency services. Israel had to rely on its own resources and on God.

People often forget to make preparations for a trip, but never God. We read nothing in the Bible that the Israelites even considered the need for a doctor before leaving on their journey. In the context of our text, they were faced with the need for water. They had found water, but it was not drinkable, and now they were in trouble. They murmured and complained, and then God “healed” the water, so they could all drink their fill. At this time, God gave them His promise: “I am the LORD who heals you.”

God's Plan of Salvation and the Healing of Our Bodies

Is divine healing of our bodies a part of the plan of salvation? God had redeemed His people from the slavery of Egypt and right at the beginning of their journey, He promised to be their Healer. King David also had no doubt that God was his Healer. He wrote in Psalm 103:2-3, “Bless the LORD, O my soul, And

forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.” Other translations use the word “sicknesses” here.

When Isaiah saw the vision of the dying Messiah, he wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus and the apostles applied this prophecy to healing of the body. Therefore, Jesus, in His ministry here on earth, went about and healed “all their sick.”

When Jesus stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth and read out of the book of Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18–19), the following occurred: “Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’” (Luke 4:20–21). Obviously, the primary purpose of Jesus’ coming to earth was to save mankind from eternal damnation. However, according to Jesus’ words, the acceptable year of the Lord also includes divine healing of our bodies.

John the Baptist, when he was incarcerated in prison, began doubting his mission and sent messengers to Jesus to ask Him if He was truly the promised Messiah. In Matthew 11:4–5 we read Jesus’ answer: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear;



the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” What was the definite proof that Jesus was the fulfillment of the plan of salvation? Healing of the soul and the body.

When Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law of her fever, Matthew reports, “When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: *‘He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses’*” (Matthew 8:16–17). Clearly, the suffering and dying of the Lamb of God was also for sickness, infirmities, and diseases. Yes, there will be an ultimate salvation of the body in eternity, where no pain, suffering, or sickness will ever be, but until then we have the privilege of bringing all our physical needs to the Great Physician, our Healer and Helper, Jesus. Praise God!

Healing of the Body on the Road of Salvation

We no longer have access to Jesus here on earth in the physical sense, for He is reigning at the right of the Father in glory. Yet, for His children who continue their pilgrimage with Him on the road of salvation, He is accessible in the presence of the Holy Spirit at all times through prayer and faith. This also applies to the healing of our bodies. His accessibility did not end with the ascension of Jesus or with the death of the apostles, as some others claim. Divine healing is available for God’s people at any time.

In the book of James, we find the inspired method provided by our Lord for His children to access His power to heal. “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven” (James 5:14-15). James uses very definite terms here: “the prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up.” In response to the prayer of faith, God will respond, be it immediately, progressively, or with a much better solution than we knew to ask for. In every case, access to the Great Physician remains a significant component of the plan of salvation. In faith, we can bring all of our needs and sicknesses to the Lord, trusting He will fulfill His promise in the best way for us.

When Jesus gave His Great Commission, He included divine healing of the body as part of the gospel to be shared. “And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17-18). On the road of salvation, divine healing of our bodies is accessible to all.

We are reminded of the Israelites in the desert. Once again they had sinned against God, and God sent fiery, poisonous serpents among them. When they cried to Him, God commanded Moses to raise up a bronze serpent among them. Whoever looked to it in faith was healed (Numbers 21:4–9). Of course, this is a symbol of Jesus, Who was raised up much later on a cross for our salvation from sin and for the healing of our bodies. Dear child of God, the great, almighty God wants to be your Savior and Healer. Trust Him, follow faithfully the requirements of His Word, and He will reveal His work in your life as well. “I am the LORD who heals you” . . . on the road of salvation. ■

Gifts That Remain

Years come and go and vanish. How quickly time flies by!
That which remains eternal e'en when the end is nigh
Are things that heaven gave us, all else will pass away;
So let us be reminded and thank God when we pray.

The Word, it is eternal, the anchor of our faith,
A gift from God the Father, to us the human race;
Though humans prove deceptive and falsehood may abound,
The Word of God is faithful and never lets us down.

Eternal life is given through Jesus Christ the Son,
And through His resurrection the victory is won.
Our mortal bodies perish, but we will rise again;
Our hope in life eternal is sure and not in vain.

A godly joy is given to those who trust the Lord,
And in the deepest darkness, we have light in His Word.
He's with us in affliction, our Comforter and Guide;
God gives us strength to carry whatever may betide.

There is a heavenly dwelling prepared for us with love;
In storms of life, remember, it's waiting up above.
There we will be glad rejoicing with God forevermore;
There's peace beside the river on that celestial shore.

Our heritage is waiting in God's eternal light;
Our sins have been forgiven, and sonship is our right;
For Jesus came and suffered, atoning for our loss;
He opened heaven's portals by dying on the cross.

We have a loving Savior; His Name is Wonderful,
Our Mighty God and Father, He is the Counselor,
The Prince of Peace eternal, His name above all names,
Now, yesterday, tomorrow, and evermore the same.