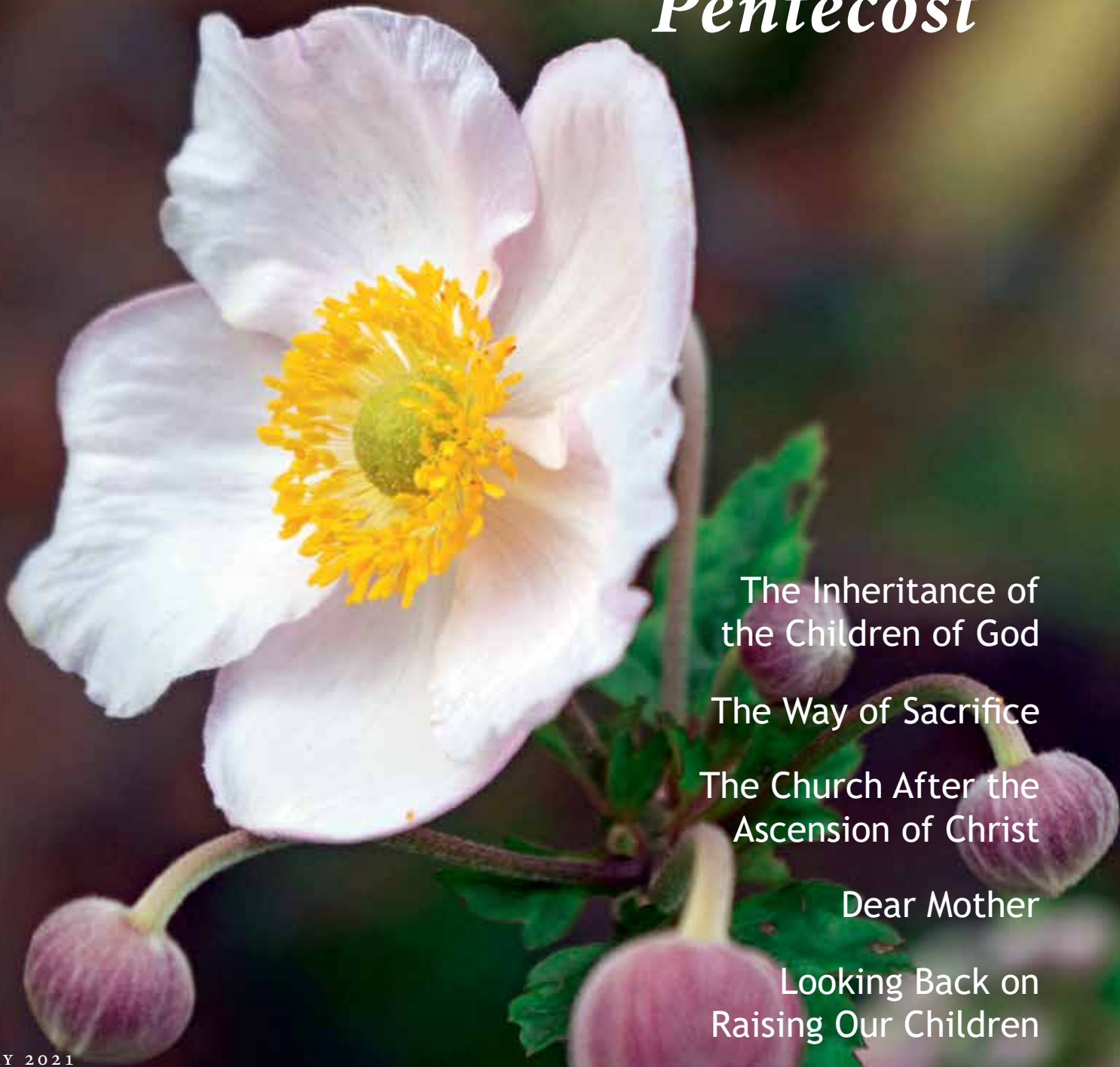




Foundation of Faith

Experiencing *Pentecost*



The Inheritance of
the Children of God

The Way of Sacrifice

The Church After the
Ascension of Christ

Dear Mother

Looking Back on
Raising Our Children

Content

EXPERIENCING PENTECOST

4 A Memorable Auction

6 The Inheritance of the Children of God

Many believers in our day are content to live with far less than God has prepared for us.

8 The Way of Sacrifice

Our path in life may often be difficult and involve sacrifice, but along the way we are rewarded with unimaginably glorious blessings from God.

10 Are You Sanctified?

12 The Church After the Ascension of Christ

RADIO BROADCAST

14 You Are Sanctified

This is a wonderful assurance we can have, not an unattainable goal.

16 The Holy Spirit in the Life of Christians

3 Editorial

CHILDREN'S CORNER

17 Fred Honors His Mother

YOUTH PAGE

18 Notes from School (11) Deceived

19 How God Found Me

SOMETHING FOR THE FAMILY

20 Looking Back on Raising our Children *Is there such a thing as perfect parenting?*

22 Dear Mother

23 What Does It Mean to Be a "Mother"?

24 The Weapons of Love

26 Clean Up

SAMUEL HEBICH

God's Protection In the Greatest Danger

POEMS

25 The Best Place

28 Total Commitment

FOUNDATION OF FAITH

Editor

Hans-Dietrich Nimz

Editorial Team

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 19 Issue 5

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,

We all have our moments of forgetfulness, but we should never allow ourselves to forget God's grace, love, mercy, and faithfulness. In the words of the psalmist, "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands" (Psalm 143:5). And in Hebrews 10:32, we are urged to "recall the former days."

Personally, I was reminded of something that happened in our early years in Mexico, around 1975–77. One of the brothers who had found the Lord came to me and told me that certain people were circulating ridicule and rumors again, warning others, "Don't go to the services in Neustädt, because they'll ensnare you with their preaching, and you'll never get free."

While this misrepresentation greatly pained the brother, I saw it differently and replied, "Brother, if only I could preach the Word of God in such a way that sinners would turn from unbelief to Jesus and never stray again, and would instead remain with God through all storms and battles, how happy and thankful we would all be!"

Speaking to new believers, the Apostle Paul echoes God's Word in expressing his desire and prayer "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you [may be] rooted and grounded in love" (Ephesians 3:16–17).

Yes, let us be rooted and grounded in God, serving Him faithfully, with all our hearts. That is the message of Jesus Christ and the will of God.

With this in mind, this month we want to discuss once again the wonderful events of Pentecost. We are still called to obey the words of Jesus today, including this command: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me . . . to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

H. D. Nimz

A Memorable Auction

The English preacher Rowland Hill (1744-1833) once preached in a large city in England. People came from far and near to hear him.

In the middle of his sermon, a wagon pulled up outside. Lady Anne Erskine, a person well-known for her wealth and love of splendor, stepped out. She was a star at all balls, concerts, and theaters but seldom a guest at a church hosting an earnest worship service. She had heard of Rowland Hill and wanted to hear him preach once “for her pleasure.”

Her presence never went unnoticed, because she was not used to just mingling quietly among other people; she dressed in a manner designed to attract attention. This time was no different. Rowland Hill, who knew of her and whose eagle eye saw every movement among his listeners, had noticed her entrance at once. Like lightning, the thought flashed through his mind that he had been given a special opportunity to minister to her soul.

Suddenly interrupting his sermon, he stretched out his arm and called out in a mighty voice, “Look, here comes Lady Erskine! Come let us auction her off!”

The woman’s surprise was indescribable, and now she would have liked to sink into the ground as all eyes were on her. But she could not turn back. The preacher called into the congregation, “Who wants to buy the soul of Lady Erskine?”

Pausing a bit after this strange question, he then continued, “I see three earnest bidders, all wanting to pay their price.”

“World, what will you pay for it?”

“I give all the splendor and glory that is at my disposal, honor and prestige, good life and good days!”

“Nothing more? No immortality and eternal life?”

“I do not have that myself.”

“Then your price is too low for us, World. You will not get her soul, for what good would it do the Lady

if she gained the whole world and yet suffered damage to her soul?”

“Now, Satan, what do you give in return?”

“I give desires of the flesh, desires of the eyes, and the pride of life. She may have her way with me, satisfy all her lusts and desires, and empty the world’s cup of pleasure to the last drop.”

“And what do you ask in return?”

“Her soul, that she may one day come completely under my power.”

“The price is too high for us! Nor will you get her soul, Satan, for you are a murderer from the beginning, a liar and the father of lies.”

“Now, Lord Jesus, what will You give?”

“I have already given My own life for the Lady. I poured out My blood for her when I paid the ransom for the whole world on the cross. I will give her peace in her soul, which surpasses all understanding. I will give her joy that the world cannot give and cannot take away. I will clothe her with righteousness and adorn her with the gold of faith. She will be like a signet ring to Me, and no one will be able to snatch her out of My hand. When she has finished her race of faith, then I will bring her to Me in glory, for where I am, there shall My servants be also!”

“And what do You ask for all these glorious gifts?”

“Her sins, her bad conscience, everything that inwardly suppresses and torments her. That is what I ask for.”

“You shall have her, Lord Jesus. She is Yours, and she shall remain Yours forever and eternally. Lady Erskine, are you satisfied?”

“Yes,” she replied in a loud, firm voice, while deep emotion moved throughout the congregation. Lady Erskine kept her word. She repented, and from that hour on, her spirit and conduct were changed. She put aside her fancy trinkets and flashy apparel and gave

up her revelry and worldly companions. She became a friend and mother to all who were poor, sick, suffering, and distressed. There was no one to be found far and wide who showed such enthusiasm for the cause of Jesus Christ and who made so many sacrifices for Him as this woman, who had previously been so ensnared by the things of this world. Throughout her life, she praised the love of God, which had searched for her and led her to that assembly and had snatched her

life, good days, and happiness without end. Millions believe it and follow its lures, only to find out too late that they have been deceived. Will you allow yourself to be deceived?

Know that Jesus Christ has already paid the price for your soul. You have long since been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, but you are unjustly still a servant and slave of sin. At any hour, you have the right to leave this service and follow Jesus. Jesus is calling and



so powerfully from the clutches of the world and its prince.

Yes, Satan, the prince of this world, and Jesus, the Son of God, are the two powers who compete for every soul and fight each other for its possession. This battle is also raging for your soul, dear Reader. You may have felt this wooing, this pulling from both sides many times in your life. With loud words, the world praises its pleasures and glory to you and promises you good

beckoning you even now through this literature which He has placed in your hands. You don't need to wait for a more favorable opportunity. You must not think you have to improve yourself first. That is in vain. No, no opportunity and no hour is as favorable as this one. Therefore, do not delay any longer but surrender yourself to Him to become His permanent, eternal possession. Jesus can and will make everything new in you. ■

The *Inheritance* of the Children of God

The Bible teaches that it is every believer's blood-bought privilege to be spiritually reborn in God, and to be sanctified through baptism in the Holy Spirit. With Christ's sacrifice on Calvary, God made it possible for us to be saved from our sins.

Christ died not only for our sins to be forgiven but also for our hearts to be fully purified. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

In His High-Priestly Prayer, Jesus prayed not only for His current disciples, but for all who would come to believe through them, that "they also may be sanctified by the truth" (John 17:19b). He also said that His leaving would benefit His followers by making way for the Spirit to come and live in them and be with them eternally. Finally, shortly before His ascension to Heaven, He ordered them to stay in Jerusalem until they received the power of the Spirit.

Trusting in His promise and obeying His command, they remained in the upper room and waited as one. Their waiting was not in vain, and "when the Day of Pentecost had fully come . . . they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:1-4).

They could no longer be who they had been before. The truth that had been hidden was now revealed to them. Their weak and faltering hearts were filled to the brim with new strength. Their message was heavenly dynamite. They witnessed with great boldness. Their listeners had to acknowledge that something extraordinary had taken place and continued to take place. It caused a stir, and with good reason, because a key event which the prophets had already spoken of centuries before had really come to be. The Kingdom of God had arrived in all its power, and the people of God had

come into their own. This was God's inheritance for His children. The spiritual Israel had come to Canaan, the long-promised land of rest.

If our report were to end at this point in the story, we would have no special cause for joy. The best thing of all is that this coming of the Holy Spirit extends to us today. As the Holy Spirit explains through Peter, "The promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39).

The fact that this coming of the Holy Spirit and His indwelling did not end on the day of Pentecost is made clear in the case of Saul of Tarsus, who also serves as proof that the Holy Spirit only comes upon believers, i.e. people who are already saved and who have experienced forgiveness for their sins. It is hard to deny that Saul's conversion happened on the way to Damascus. Up to that moment he had been a blasphemer, persecutor, and man of violence. Yet now he said to Jesus, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Three days later, Ananias came to him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:17).

There are other examples that show us the same thing, like the Samaritans in Acts 8, Cornelius and his household in Acts 10, and the disciples in Ephesus in Acts 19.

This is how the believers in the church came into their blood-bought inheritance. The strength they gained this way marked them wherever they went and in whatever they did. It was this strength that inspired others to speak of them as "these who have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Wherever they went,

something happened to jolt entire regions of people out of their ignorance; they caused a spiritual revolution.

Thanks be to God that receiving the Holy Spirit in His fullness is not the privilege of the few but a right enjoyed by all who follow Jesus. Speaking to the Ephesians, Paul very directly instructed them to “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). The apathy and worldliness prevalent in so many individuals and congregations today can be traced back to people ignoring this instruction. This also explains why the lives of many Christians are stuck in infancy, why many draw no real joy from serving God, why so many lives bear no fruit, and why there are so few people leading spiritual lives and so many walking according to the flesh, to use Paul’s terminology (Romans 8:4). Many are children in Christ rather than grown men and women in God.

Even worse is that they are content with this state of affairs, going so far as to reject the idea that there is something better and greater in store for them. Too many people are content to live without many of the privileges afforded to them by the Lord. They do not recognize that we live in the best of times—not only

in the time of grace but also in the glorious fulfillment of this promise. As Jesus says, “And the glory which You gave Me I have given them” (John 17:22). This means that we can be full of glory and grace, just like our Master.

It is true, we need to meet certain conditions before the Spirit can come in His fullness; but do not let this fact obscure how simple it is to receive the fullness of the Spirit. The conditions are: a sincere desire to be filled with the Spirit, an unconditional surrender to the will of God, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit through a simple act of faith. If you are a child of God, you do not need to wait until Pentecost, like the disciples, because the Spirit is already waiting for you, waiting to enter your heart.

But do not seek only influence or power or comfort or joy; seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit Himself. The Holy Spirit is a person. When He arrives, He brings strength. When He enters you, you gain not only comfort but also the Comforter. He brings lasting joy, joy in the Holy Spirit. His presence makes us holy.

Give yourself fully to Him, and He will give all of Himself to you. ■



The Way of *Sacrifice*

In Genesis 22, we read how Abraham got ready for a difficult journey. He rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took along two of his servants, as well as his son and the wood needed for the sacrifice. He may have trembled as his hand took the knife that would slay his beloved son.

Abraham did not hesitate. He could have procrastinated a bit before obeying the command given to him. He could have somewhat prolonged the days to be with his son just a while longer. Yet in order to fulfill the call of God, he “rose early” (Genesis 22:3).

We too must “rise early” if we wish to heed God’s call. Obedience is the first step in following the Lord. It is deceiving to consider delaying it a bit, to enjoy life, to be with a loved one a while longer. If your attitude is to procrastinate and do it later, and you think you will follow the Lord wholeheartedly someday but not yet, then beware. A well-known proverb says that the way to hell is paved with good intentions. The “half-way” path and the “do-it-later” road do not lead where we should go.

Abraham had a three-day journey, and then he saw “the place afar off” (Genesis 22:4). If we go forward and obediently do what God commands, then we too will see the glory of the Lord, even if from afar. In following Christ, we may not see the fullness of His glory right away, but as we travel the road in patient perseverance, God will allow us to have a glimpse of His glory. As Abraham was journeying with his son, he buried many a hope and wish deep inside himself. If you follow the Lord in obedience without complaining and defiance, then you too will be able to lift up your eyes like Abraham and see God’s plan.

After Abraham left his servants in the valley, he and Isaac journeyed the last portion to the mountain alone. Abraham took along the wood, fire, and knife. This was the final preparation.

We, too, must be prepared in order to bring a pleasing sacrifice to God. Look at Abraham. He left his ser-

vants behind. You may have to leave your best friends behind in order to sacrifice to the Lord. It is not easy to climb to the top of the mountain, because the goal is lofty. The way before us can either go up, or it can go down. We can decide. Let us resolve to take along the wood, fire, and knife and, despite all temptation and obstacles, let us go onward and upward.

With each resolve according to God’s plan, our character will be strengthened, and we will be empowered to take the next steps. A successful life is not unhappy and unfulfilled. The higher the goal, the more satisfaction it brings. Go for the heights. Only by taking the right steps and going forward can the impossible become possible.

Then Isaac said, “My father . . . where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” (Genesis 22:7) Here is a question that hits the wounded heart with full force. Where is the sacrifice?

Dear Reader, where is your sacrifice? What is it that wounds your heart? Where and what is your beloved Isaac? God has asked Isaac to be the sacrifice. Take your beloved Isaac and go to the top of the mountain. The Lord does not want your sacrifice before your will is completely and harmoniously encompassed into the will of God.

“God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:8). That is the confidence of one who has triumphed over temptation. The temptation has been successfully overcome. The battle is over. The top of the mountain has been reached. Below lies the land of Canaan, the land given to the generations that follow.

How precious are the words of Paul, when we can say with him, “I have fought the good fight” (1 Timothy 4:7). Do you belong to those who have fought the good fight? Do you belong to those who have triumphed over temptation? The Promised Land lies before you. Yes, you will possess it. You will live because you have died. Here is the place where you too can build an altar. This place was called Moriah. Centuries



later, Solomon built a temple for the Lord there, the holy place where God's presence was to reside among His people. You too can become a part of the temple of the living God.

"The Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven" (Genesis 22:11). The journey of Abraham is a drama that even the angels watched. They see your journey and your battle as well, watching in order to assist you. It is the Father in heaven Who watches your steps. He loves you and is greatly interested in you. He wants to form your character in order to reveal His secrets to you.

The faith and obedience of Abraham were so cherished by God that He gave him a glimpse into the mystery of God that was in place even before the world began. This mystery was so great that God even gave His own beloved Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Genesis 22 is the shadow seen because of the light of the Gospel. Abraham was given a glimpse into the heart of God.

"Because you have obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:18), a promise was made to Abraham. Every command of God has the promise of a blessing. Abraham was told to look at the starry sky. The promise made to Abraham became a reality. God's grace is as wide as the heavens. He can repay you a hundredfold for what you have given up for His sake and give you eternal life as well (Mark 10:29-30).

Abraham was given a glimpse of his natural inheritance. He saw his seed grow. He was told that his offspring would be as numerous as the stars in the sky, his reward for being faithful. When he began his journey, he may have thought that God did not recognize his plight. Yet later he named the mountain "The-LORD-Will-Provide" (Genesis 22:14). Dear Reader, take courage and go forward. It is worth giving your all to the Lord. God sees you. The promise that "in My Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:2) is a promise for you too. ■

Are You Sanctified?

Many do not have a clear understanding of the doctrine of sanctification. Some are quite confused and cannot even form a proper concept of the entire experience of sanctification. They are in the dark regarding this experience because they lack proper teaching. But is this uncertainty and insecurity necessary?

Many would say in response to the question, “Are you sanctified?” that after their conversion they went forward to the altar again, and therefore they assume they have attained sanctification. However, this is no proof, nor does it give any assurance that we are sanctified. But then, how can we know we are truly sanctified?

Sanctification is called a second work of grace. This dualism in salvation is due to the reality that sin is present in the human heart in two forms: the inherited tendency to sin which we all possess since natural birth, and the sin we have actually committed. In all of us, there is an inherited inclination to sin; but then we have also willingly and knowingly done evil after reaching the age of accountability. These two forms of sin are different from each other, and they must not be regarded as one and the same.

Adam and Eve were created righteous, just, and holy, but they fell from their high position, thereby plunging all of humanity into sin. From them, all their descendants inherited sin, or an evil nature. Clearly, we had already fallen short of complete holiness, although we came into the world completely innocent.

Jesus teaches that the born-again person is like a child in one sense. “Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3). So whoever has repented, confessed his sins, and obtained forgiveness is converted. He has returned to the innocence from

which he has fallen. But just as the innocent child is one step below the original state of true holiness, so is the convert, who is now like a child. Scripture then exhorts us to “go on to perfection.” It also tells us that “by one offering [Christ] has perfected forever those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14).

The Apostle John clearly teaches that one must be born of God. He also teaches that those who have become children of God through the new birth still need further purification. “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every one who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:2-3). In Ephesians 5:25-26, Paul says that Christ gave Himself for the church “that He might sanctify her.”

The promise of a second work of grace was given to the disciples by Jesus Himself three times in very specific ways. First, He promised to allow us to “be pruned” by the “vinedresser.” “I am the true vine, and My Father the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:1-2). The second promise is that Jesus would ask the Father to sanctify them, to give them the Holy Spirit. And then Jesus asks the Father, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

We are sanctified when we receive the Holy Spirit. And Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to all who believe in Him. Before His ascension, He said to His disciples, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me” (Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit purifies the heart from the innate inclination to sin, and He also gives us power to live

and work for the Lord. Therefore, the question we should ask ourselves is, “Have I received the Holy Spirit?” If we have received the Holy Spirit, then we are also sanctified.

Paul tells us what the fruit of the Spirit is: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). If we have the Spirit of God, then we have His fruits. To determine if we are truly sanctified, we must examine ourselves to see if we are producing the fruit of the Spirit.

Some people say this is not so easy to determine. It seems to me that the Apostle Paul anticipated this problem. To make it easier for us to test ourselves, he wrote 1 Corinthians 13. He has taken one fruit of the Spirit—love—and dissected it, so to speak. He has shown the nature and characteristics of love.

If we are sanctified, we have the Holy Spirit. And when we have Him, we also bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. Paul tells us that love is long-suffering, patient, free of envy, it does not boast, it does not puff itself up, it does not seek its own advantage. It is not embittered, it bears no grudge, it does not rejoice in wrongdoing. Rather, it rejoices when it sees truth and justice prevail.

What does your life look like when you look at it in the light of these scriptures? Are you demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit? If you do not possess that which brings love into your life, you do not have love; and if you do not have love, clearly you have not received the Holy Spirit, and are therefore not sanctified.

If you are born again and are a child of God, lay yourself completely on the altar of the Lord as a living sacrifice. Give yourself completely to the Lord with all that you have and are, and He will give you the Holy Spirit if you ask Him. ■

Robert P. Loudermilk



The Church After the Ascension of Christ

The disciples had experienced the resurrection of the Lord. After that, He instructed them for forty days about the kingdom of God. Now the day of departure was drawing near. In the future, the disciples were to take responsibility for spreading the word concerning the kingdom of God.

Jesus Gathers with His Disciples

“Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen” (Mark 16:14).

At the last gathering, the Lord had important things to say to His disciples. When the Lord speaks, we should always listen carefully. What did the Lord have to say to the disciples? It was not praise but a rebuke of their unbelief. They had not believed those who proclaimed the resurrection. Did the disciples accept the exhortation? Yes. The firm decision was made, we will doubt no more. Do all the listeners in the churches today accept rebuke and exhortation? Unfortunately not. Let us remember the seven letters and what the Lord said to the churches at that time. Let us ask the Lord to tell us personally what we should be doing better.

Jesus Sends out His Disciples as Evangelists

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned’” (Mark 16:15,16).

It was the disciples’ task to spread the gospel. Jesus had commanded the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until Pentecost, when they would be equipped with power from the Holy Spirit. No one should go into the

preaching ministry who is not filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

After being filled with the Holy Spirit, it was time for the disciples to obey the divine command to “go into all the world.” They should not just stay in Jerusalem. The disciples were obedient to the Great Commission. Just staying at home would have been the most comfortable thing to do, but the disciples took on hardship, contempt, persecution, and imprisonment in order to be obedient to the command of the Lord.

The Great Commission also included baptism. Unfortunately, people twist this command and put baptism first. Only a born-again Christian may be baptized, not a sinner. In this verse, the way to salvation and condemnation is shown.

The statement is short, concise, precise, unambiguous, and clear. There are only two ways. He who remains unbelieving will be condemned. On Judgment Day, the loving and righteous God will be the righteous Judge.

Jesus Walks with His Church

“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 their hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:17-18).

Christ often cast out evil spirits from possessed people and healed many sick people. The Lord also conferred this authority on His disciples and His people. The disciples spoke in “new tongues” after the Holy Spirit was poured out. All the listeners understood the proclamation in their language. These new

tongues were not gibberish that no one understood but understandable languages.

The Lord sees when the lives of His children are in danger, as we read in Acts 28:3-6, “But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.” But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.” The Lord is the Lord over life and death.

Even a deadly drink should not harm them. Before our first trip to Africa, we were required to obtain a vaccination against yellow fever. The doctor from the health department mentioned the side effects of the vaccination and concluded by saying, “And you could die. Would you like to have the vaccination?” I answered, “Yes,” thinking of the Word “and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them.” The vaccination did not harm me, for which I thank God.

“They will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Someone commented to me that divine healing only applied to the disciples. I pointed out that Christ said, “*they* will lay their hands.” If it was only meant to apply to the disciples at that time, then Christ should have said “*you* will lay your hands.” This man responded by saying that one should not dwell on a word like that. In James 5:13-16, God’s Word tells us what to do in the event of sickness.

The Lord’s Great Commission includes the assurance that God walks with His church, He sees our need, and He even wants to heal our bodily sicknesses. Let us hold this in faith and not doubt the Word. Every divine healing and every miracle happens because of the faith and prayers of God’s people.

After the Lord’s last words to His disciples, the Lord ascended to heaven. One last look followed, and the Lord became smaller and smaller among the clouds until they did not see Him anymore. Acts 1:9 reads, “And when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” Mark 16:19 further reports that the Lord sat down at the right hand of God.

Jesus Watches over His Church

Christ walked with the disciples and constantly taught them for three and a half years. He was visible among

them. Now, Jesus is looking at everything and at all the churches from heaven. We read in Revelation 2:1, “These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.” The Lord walks among us; He walks with us; He sees what is needed. The Lord carries His children through ups and downs and is the focus of their lives and nothing else.

But other things can become the focal point in a congregation: musical performances, sports activities, individuals, and more. But only One should be the center of attention, and that is Christ alone. If this is not the case, then Christ will overturn the lampstand in the congregation.

The Lord introduces Himself to the church at Laodicea, according to Revelation 3:14, with the following words: “These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.” Absolutely nothing escapes this Faithful Witness.

Christ watches over the purity of doctrine in the church. Jesus watches over the personal purity of the individual. The Lord watches over every work in the church.

In conclusion, we ask ourselves the question:

What Does the Lord Expect from His Church?

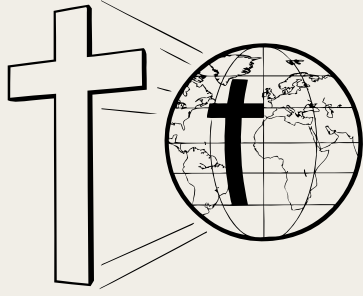
We read in Mark 16:20, “They went out and preached everywhere.” They were obedient. This obedience is what the Lord expects of all His children. Work, establish, labor, and do your best with all devotion for the Lord. If you do so, the results will be glorious. Mark 16:20 concludes by saying, “the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.”

Likewise, the Lord desires to work with His people today. But this requires the divine authority and power of the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus went to heaven, so will He come again. Then the earth and the works on it will be burned up, and all eyes will see Him. Is your destination heaven?

If not, then turn to the Lord so you can be with Him in all eternity, for only the redeemed enter heaven. Then you will be in the eternal home to which Christ ascended on Ascension Day. ■

Herbert Kowalski
Hamm, Germany



Radio Program Message of Salvation

Friedrich Krebs
Kitchener, ON

You are Sanctified

Unfortunately, there is a lack of clarity about the doctrine of sanctification in general within Christianity. Many attempt to sanctify their lives on their own; but God wants to do this work in the hearts of His children.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul reminds his readers of some of the serious sins in which they had indulged. Yet that life was behind them now. They had broken with their old lives and started anew. This had become very visible, and therefore, the apostle could say, “But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” They had full salvation, which encompasses sanctification.

The experience of sanctification is taught very clearly in the Bible. However, there are varying opinions regarding the term “sanctification.” By far, most Christians hold to the opinion that sanctification is something to be pursued as long as one lives. However, according to that opinion, sanctification would have to be so unattainable that it could not be achieved in this life. But then Jesus would have prayed for something that would not have been achievable. Thus, Paul saying, “You are sanctified” would not be plausible. Wouldn’t God’s character of truthfulness then be called into question? We should all be convinced of the fact that God never promises anything He would not be able to give us. Through many scriptures of the Bible, the fact is sufficiently established that sanctification, as well as salvation, is an experience for this life. Since salvation is something definite and certain, so is sanctification.

A regrettable lack of clarity about sanctification comes from the incomprehensible teaching by some that on the one hand, conversion exists for the purpose of forgiveness; but on the other hand, “daily repentance” is preached, which states that man, despite his conversion, remains bound to sin. Precisely for this reason, he must pursue sanctification and strive to rid himself of his sins on a daily basis. From this incomplete/incorrect point of view, sanctification is presented as a constant putting away of sin and is therefore related solely to the power and ability of man.

However, according to John 15:1-6, this kind of sanctification is clearly refuted. Here, Jesus referred to the image of the vine and the branches. He told us that His Father will separate the fruitless branches from the vine and throw them into the fire. But He will cleanse the fruit-bearing branches so they can bear more fruit.

This is precisely the purpose of sanctification. It is not the constant taking off of self-inflicted sins, but its purpose is the cleansing from the original sin and for a deeper spiritual life which results in bearing more fruit.

Another effect is that it frees the born-again heart from carnal attitudes, such as stubbornness, selfishness, pride, vanity, the desire for recognition, and oth-



er such tendencies. These things stand in the way of bearing spiritual fruit and must be eliminated. As long as this carnal mind remains in our hearts, our usefulness in the service of the Lord will remain greatly hindered. The lives of many of God's children could be far more useful, fruit-bearing, and blessed if they would seek and experience sanctification as outlined in Scripture.

The carnal mind is also a great obstacle for the harmonious coexistence of God's children. Much hardship, friction, destruction, and suffering among the people of God is due to the unspiritual, carnal mind. Sanctification, however, does not make us insensitive, unfeeling people, but it certainly saves the children of God from human power struggles, unspiritual actions, unforgiveness, and the like. The sanctified person resists such willful activity.

Jesus knew about these dangers, but He also knew about the high value and great necessity of this experience. Therefore, shortly before His death, He prayed earnestly for the sanctification of His disciples. Before His return to the Father, He admonished them to remain in Jerusalem until they experienced the filling of the power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Sanctification, as taught in the Bible, is a work of

God on the heart of the born-again believer. Just as no one can attain salvation in his own strength, neither can sanctification be attained. Jesus' request for the sanctification of His disciples was addressed directly to His Father. "Sanctify them," He said, which expressly shows that the Father was to accomplish this work in them. In the same way, Paul had addressed the need for sanctification in his letter to the church at Thessalonica, writing, "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). It is very clear that sanctification is an exclusive work of God.

Sanctification also has a human side. Whoever desires this experience must be willing to surrender his will to the will of God; he must become a sacrifice on the altar of the Lord. This sacrifice must be "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (see Romans 12:1). Faith, an inner desire, and corresponding prayer are also necessary for this experience. There is no doubt that the people of Corinth had walked this biblical path. They had experienced sanctification, and Paul could say, "You are sanctified."

May God grant that many more of His children would recognize the need for sanctification, seek it according to the biblical mandate, and then testify, "We are sanctified!" ■

The Holy Spirit in the Life of Christians

We live in a time when many sincere souls are confused and believe they have received the fullness of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. Salvation is effected by the Holy Spirit, and the child of God is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Yes, “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:14), and “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His” (v.9). Also, in verse sixteen we read, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” But the baptism of the Holy Spirit is only for children of God.

Someone once wanted an explanation about the difference between the Holy Spirit’s testimony that we are God’s children and the Holy Spirit’s baptism. I gave him the following illustration:

Before someone can move into a house, the house must first be built. He may call it his house before it is finished. But only when it is finished can he live in it. It is the same with the child of God who already belongs to God and is led by the Spirit of God. But the Holy Spirit has not yet fully entered the heart.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is a special experience after being born again. Aside from the day of Pentecost, when Peter told the crowd “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38), we do not have a single passage in God’s Word that might suggest that man is simultaneously born again and baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The prophecy of Joel 3:1-2 was literally fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter says, “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy’” (Acts 2:16-18).

Those gathered at that time were all children of God; all were born again. Someone may object and

point out that Peter fell when Jesus was taken captive and that he denied Him. But Peter repented bitterly, and Jesus forgave him. He also appointed him to His apostleship before Pentecost.

We are living in the age of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He is a teacher, a comforter, He is eternal, like God the Father and the Son. He is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. He can be grieved and angered. The Holy Spirit is more than an influence. He is a guide and teacher into all truth. He chastises and convicts man and brings about His regeneration. We are sanctified through and through when He is poured into our hearts.

The Holy Spirit calls the ministers and sends them out. “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:1-4).

The Holy Spirit also gives them the messages to speak. He organizes the church and unites its members. “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Likewise, the Holy Spirit distributes gifts. “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all” (1 Corinthians 12:7). He pours out the love of God completely into our hearts (see Romans 5:5).

He reminds us of Jesus’ words: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (John 14:26).

It is absolutely necessary for every child of God to receive the Holy Spirit. Without Him, our life will not have the victory it should have. The Holy Spirit also gives power and enables us to serve the Lord. He purifies our hearts, and helps us crucify our egos, thereby allowing the Holy Spirit to take complete control of our lives. ■

Fred Honors His Mother

"Please, Mother, let me do the dishes while you rest." Fred saw how tired and pale his mother was, and how slowly she moved about. He knew she was sick.

"You do the dishes?" she asked. "Do you know how?"

"I have watched you many times. Just let me try. You'll see." A look of relief came over his mother's face as she seated herself in the rocker. Before he went to school, Fred washed the dishes, put them away, swept the floor and brought things upstairs from the cellar his mother would need.

Fred was an active boy of twelve, and he usually went to school early, and stayed late, so he could play with the other boys.

When Fred continued to come late to school, arriving just before the tardy bell, and then hurrying home right after school, his buddies began to wonder. "I know," said Tom, "I'll find out what he is doing." The next morning he pretended to be going by to walk to school with Fred, but he walked close to the window and looked in. There he saw Fred with a dish cloth in his hand, busily scrubbing the dishes. "Oh-ho," Tom thought, "wait until I tell the boys about this!"

When Fred arrived a few minutes before the bell rang, he was greeted with, "Well, sissy, did you get your chores done? When are you going to take up sewing?" and so on. Fred felt like jumping in the middle of them and knocking them down, but he resisted the impulse. He knew his mother was sick and really needed his help. Helping his mom didn't make him a sissy or a girl.

As the boys continued their name calling, the teacher stepped

to the door. Though Mr. Lawson didn't say a word, Fred felt encouraged by the look in the teacher's eyes. Later in the day, the boys received a good talking-to, and no longer called Fred any bad names.

After a few days, Fred's mother was much improved and able to resume her work. Deep in his heart, Fred was glad he had helped her to get better by giving her time to rest. ■

The Beautiful Way



... Notes from School (11)

MY VACCINATION RECORD

During my last practicum, I had to present my vaccination record, which is customary for hospital jobs. Because my practicum was arranged rather hastily, I didn't have time to get a record from my family doctor. So I took my vaccination record with me to the hospital to ask a doctor there to fill out the necessary documents. Unfortunately, I lost the vaccination record on the way home. Since I always take the same path through a small park, I initially still had the hope of finding it again, because what could someone do with someone else's vaccination record? I kept a careful lookout for it the next day—but it was nowhere to be seen. I kept thinking about the inconvenience of having such an “ancient” document reissued. My pediatrician had long since retired and my last two family doctors as well. It would probably be long and tedious to reconstruct all that. I considered the annoyance that was coming my way with a frown. As if anyone had time for this! Well, it couldn't be helped, so I prayed that God would let this matter proceed reasonably quickly. But before I even started pursuing it, I received a letter from the municipal office. With kind regards, they sent me back my vaccination record, which had been found and delivered to a nearby school. I was thrilled! I had not even thought of such a solution. I hurriedly wrote a reply to express my gratitude and to find out the name of the person who found it, because I would have liked to show my appreciation. But, unfortunately, it was no longer possible to identify him. So I thanked God that He had put an end to my troubles even before they had really begun, and I resolved from then on to pay special attention to things whose loss might cause great grief to other people. ■

*Corinna Kowalski
Hamm, Germany*

Deceived

An online shop offers high-quality, brand-name shoes at a greatly reduced price, almost half of the original cost. A quick background check of the shop's website inspires confidence. Could this really be true? The shoes are quickly ordered and paid for, and everything goes smoothly, until the goods arrive: a parcel from China with a cheap imitation, not worth the shipping costs. Deceived by empty claims—how disappointing.

The Bible speaks of the devil as the ruler of darkness. He offers us a happy and seemingly carefree life, according to the motto, “Do what you want and own it—it's your life.” How many people fall into this mode of thinking and experience the deception of sin in their own lives? Destroyed families, broken relationships, severe addictions and illnesses, social isolation, etc. It does not always end so drastically, but a life without God is always a deceived life, because it ends in eternal death. In contrast, Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). This is guaranteed not to be a deception. ■

*Niko Ernst
Herford, Germany*

*Let no one
deceive you with
empty words.
(Ephesians 5:6)*



How God Found Me

I had the privilege of being raised in a Christian home and community. Therefore, Christian morals and values have always been part of my life, and I never questioned whether or not God existed. However, I have to admit that I did not have a seamless transition into a personal relationship with God. The “picture” I portrayed to others was never that of a bad lifestyle. I still attended worship services, youth meetings, and orchestra and choir practices regularly. What counts, though, are the intentions behind those actions, and sadly, they were empty. Even my parents thought they were real, and therefore they implicitly trusted me. Back then, I thought it was my good fortune; now I know it was the contrary, that is how I become entangled in a worldly life.

In the summer of 2017, I experienced God knocking on my heart for the first time, through a new group of young people who entered my life. However, I ignored this call.

At a youth meeting at the beginning of 2018, God called me so clearly again.

I ignored it again.

The reason for it was easily explained. I was tied to the world. I lived entangled in sin and knew that if I gave my life to God today, I would have to give up a lot. I was not ready for that.

At the end of 2018, I finished high school. I did not get into the university I was hoping for, so I volunteered at a hospital. During my time there, I got to know two girls with whom I am still friends to this day. They did not hide their faith, and through them, I experienced God in a completely new way.

When my dad sent me a song one evening with a very moving message, “I need Thee, oh

my Savior,” it happened. I gave my heart to Jesus.

In the following days and weeks, my life changed radically. Part of this change was separating myself from my boyfriend at the time, who was the cause of much heartache. God set me free from my guilt of sin and even from the pressures that had bound me to this world.

It was not God’s will for me to start attending university. Why would He send me somewhere when it meant I would go without Him? How great is His love, that He did not push me away from Him! Sometimes we don’t understand God’s ways, but we are able to trust that He has only the best in mind for us.

His best for me was that I should give Him my life.

Shortly after reading the story of the lost sheep in the Bible (Luke 15), I understood that I was this sheep. I ran away for so long, yet Jesus never gave up on me until He found me.

“So He spoke this parable to them, saying: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!” I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance’” (Luke 15:3-7). ■

*Diana Reimann
Eppingen, Germany*

Looking back on Raising our Children

Everyone does it differently, everyone has their own methods and goals. But only one method has been tried and tested for years: biblical parenting. It starts with God and leads to God.

I recently had the privilege of rejoicing with first-time young parents of a newborn son. When this little gift of God was almost six weeks old, I was invited to a baby shower for him. Having two sons and a daughter of our own, I was asked to share a few words at this event about some of our life experiences in raising children. I agreed. Likewise, the opportunity was given to share these thoughts with the readers of the Foundation of Faith.

In no way were we the “perfect” parents. Although we did our best, we weren’t always successful in doing what we strived for. We soon realized that each child was unique, and therefore had to be raised in his or her own unique way.

When our children were born, it was our prayer to raise them to the glory of God. Our heart’s desire was to set a good example for them so they would love the Lord, serve Him wholeheartedly, and make the Kingdom of God their priority. Beginning at a very young age, we read well-known Bible stories to them, sang with them, and taught them to fold their small hands

to pray. We prayed with them and for them each day. Even to this day, we pray daily for our adult children and for our grandchildren too.

It was important for the children to say “please” and “thank you” for everything they wanted or received, even for the smallest gift. Before they were able to speak, they were shown to hold up their hands and clap when they wanted something.

As we had no parents nearby to watch our children, we took them along wherever we went. While visiting members of our congregation, the children learned to respect the elders, not to interrupt when someone was talking, and not to touch anything that did not belong to them. The children were kept busy with a few toys, books, or Lego blocks which we brought along.

Behavioral skills and simple principles, like telling the truth, were taught. It was important for our children to listen and obey when we asked them to do or not to do something. Consistent actions of discipline were used for them to learn obedience.

Love and encouragement were also important in our household. When the children did something



praiseworthy, they usually received a reward for it: sometimes a word of encouragement, other times a small gift or special toy or gadget they had wished for.

The children learned to be kind to others, especially to show compassion to those who were laughed at or ridiculed or who came from less fortunate homes.

Each child was given age-appropriate tasks around the house. They learned to put away their toys, tidy their room, help clear the table after a meal, load the dishwasher, carry out the garbage, help wash the car, mow the lawn, shovel snow, and so on.

Although we had a very busy schedule, we made a point of taking time as often as possible to do something with each child individually, like playing a game with them, taking them shopping, or working on a project together.

Anything to do with church was just part of our family life. It was a given that all of us were present at the worship services. We not only attended but actively took part in singing and in playing instruments. This also included such things as the annual church

cleaning event, where everyone diligently helped along. Being part of the church also included offering, which was taught at a young age. By doing small jobs like mowing neighbors' lawns or delivering papers, it brought the children joy to donate a portion of the money they earned to the Lord and to support His Kingdom.

It was also important for the children to have good friends who had similar moral values. Several friendships have lasted throughout the years. They cherish many wonderful memories, especially those of camping trips.

This list of how we raised our children could continue, but I'll stop here.

Raising children is a rewarding experience, which makes us smile when we see our children teaching their children similar values.

I wish all parents God's blessings, wisdom, and joy with their boys and girls! ■

Doreen Semenjuk
Wetaskiwin, Alberta



Dear Mother,

God's Word makes it clear how important it is for us to honor father and mother" (Ephesians 6:2), which is why it's so right for us to celebrate Mother's Day. God has used you so powerfully in my life, and I know without a doubt that I wouldn't be the person I am, or have the relationship with God that I have today, if it weren't for you. I thank God for you with all my heart, and would like to share with you just a few of the things I am most thankful for.

Thank you for first introducing me to God, teaching me about Him from as early as I can remember. The daily Bible stories you read to us had a profound impact on how I saw the world, knowing that I am created by a God Who loves me and values me. Thank you for teaching me how to speak with God, demonstrating how important a life of prayer is by praying with us and praying for us. We knew you weren't just going through the motions, but that you truly believed God hears us. From the very beginning we were able to experience His wonderful answers to prayer. I know you have prayed for me since the moment I was born, asking God to protect me, to draw me to Himself, to work in my life, to show me His plan for me, that I would find the right spouse, and so many other requests God has answered in such wonderful ways. And I'm so thankful to know you pray for me still, which means more to me than I can express.

I'm so thankful for the example you were and still are, of faithfulness to God, demonstrating in so many ways what it looks like to really seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. We always knew that although you deeply loved us, you loved God above all else. Thank you for lovingly but earnestly teaching us right from wrong, and demonstrating that there are serious consequences to disobeying God. Every time you had to discipline us, we knew we had earned our punishment, and that our disobedience not only hurt your heart, but God's heart. Growing up, we always knew that

God must be the first priority in everything, where it was never a question of if we would go to a worship service, or prayer meeting, or choir practice, but that these superceded everything else. Our unfailing dedication and loyalty to God and His church, where our life's schedule was centered around Him, is something I will never forget. Thank you for the way you were always willing to use your many gifts and talents for the Lord, and the way you encouraged us to do the same.

Thank you for your example of faithfulness as a wife and mother. Seeing how much you loved Dad, how you trusted and always honored each other, made us feel so safe and secure, knowing we could always count on our family. Thank you for always making time together as a family so important, lovingly cooking so many meals for us to share every day, for all of the family vacations, the special occasions, and the countless happy memories you gave us. You were such an example in how you honored your own parents and parents-in-law, as well as valuing the time with all of our aunts and uncles and extended family, impressing on us what a blessing from God families really are.

Thank you especially for demonstrating to me what God is really like. Anyone can talk about love, but nothing demonstrated to me what true love is more than the way you lived it out for us in the way you so patiently and selflessly took care of us. You served without complaining in so many ways, we didn't even realize at the time, putting our needs ahead of your own. You always treated us as a great blessing rather than a burden, making us feel deeply wanted and cherished. You demonstrated God's grace and mercy in the way you always forgave us when we messed up and let you down. I can never thank God enough for giving me you as a mother, and I hope you know that I love you so very much! Happy Mother's Day!

Your Son

What Does It Mean to Be a “Mother”?

An Address to Young Mothers

Dear Ladies,

I am about to speak to an audience of young mothers. So are you young mothers? I will not and cannot deny that you are young. But whether you are mothers, I am not so sure.

Does this make you uneasy? You say, “But we have children!” Well, yes. But let me explain. The fact that you have children does not make you mothers. Having children is just the beginning. I will attempt to tell you what it means to be a mother. A real mother loves her child so much, from the heart, that she knows exactly what her child needs right in the moment.

Let me clarify with a few illustrations. I know a young mother who gives in to her child every time he becomes defiant. After all, he shouldn’t need to pout! But when the child dropped a coffee cup—well, it was a nice collector’s cup!—she thrashed him woefully Do you think this was right? It was nonsense! In the first case, it would have been better if she had not overlooked her child’s defiance. A child is not a golden toy. But with the cup? This was clumsiness, not malice.

A real mother knows what her child needs in that moment, whether it’s discipline or a hug.

Let me tell you about my mother.

When I was a schoolboy, we had a math assignment. I dreaded it and didn’t feel like making an effort. So I noticed with joy that my throat hurt a little that morning. Hooray! A little sickness! It was nicer to lie in bed and read than to write such a stupid paper. How would Mom respond?

She did not speak a word against my illness. On the contrary, she took it very seriously. She quickly arrived with a horrible, thick, rough, nasty woolen cloth. After tying it around my neck, she said, “Lie very still. Do not read. Sick people must rest completely.”

After an hour I had had enough. So I got up, and went to school. You see, her wise and healthy response allowed me to face harsh reality. That’s exactly what the boy needed in that hour You laugh? Certainly, but please understand how much wisdom there was in this treatment.

May I tell you another story about my mother? I was already a man at the time of the incident. But even a man remains the child of his mother. I was arrested at a time when the Nazis had control of Germany because I had preached in spite of being forbidden to do so. At that time, pastors were commonly arrested. But whoever was affected was hit hard.

Completely despondent, I was sitting in my cell when a letter was delivered to me. A letter from my mother! Of course it had been opened. My mother had to have anticipated that. But imagine, although she knew the letter would be opened, she had not thought for a moment about the inspection center, only about her son. She wrote, “I am glad you are allowed to suffer for Jesus’ sake. I am very proud of you. Just don’t become soft. The Lord Jesus can give you strength and power every day” It continued in this vein. I can tell you this was exactly what I needed in that hour—a heart that stood by me without reservation in my shame and loneliness.

You see, this is what “being a mother” means: loving your child from your heart in such a way that you give him exactly what he needs, whether a rough cloth or divine comfort. You feel that being a mother is a great thing. Yes, it is. How any woman wants to be a proper mother without asking God for such wisdom and for such love, I cannot understand. Nothing will come of it. Mothers who choose not to pray are not real mothers. ■

Wilhelm Busch

Weapons of Love

*A word, a song, a phrase so dear,
Like music ringing in my ear – Mother!
The riches of this world can't match
A love so true until the last – Mother.*

*Go ask a wise man, ask a fool,
Ask those who wish to ridicule:
When Mom is gone, the loss is great,
And what can ever compensate—for Mother?*

A seven-year old set of twins started a conversation about their mother. Henry read an article about Mother's Day. The author claimed that a mother has several weapons of love to help conquer her children's bad habits. Lena asked Henry, "What are weapons of love?" Quickly, he answered, "You know, those are the swats we sometimes need."

But his sister answered, "Maybe weapons of love are those small candies Mommy sometimes gives us." This theory made some kind of sense to her brother; however, it was also hard for him to understand the love of a mother being described as a "weapon."

They were discussing back and forth until their mother walked in to grab something and then leave again. While walking by, she gave the kids a friendly look. The door had barely closed behind her when Lena exclaimed, "I know! Her eyes are her weapons!"

"You mean," said Henry, "because Mom has blue eyes? The color has nothing to do with it!"—"That's not what I mean!" said his sister quickly. "Mom's eyes could also be black, but there is so much love shining through!"

Henry agreed, but he argued, "Eyes a weapon? Can we say that? Oh, I know a definite weapon: Mother's hands! Think about how they work the entire day: making the beds, cleaning, cooking food, and . . ."

Lena interrupted her brother. "Hey, I know something about love—Mother's arms! You can run towards them and just fall into them when you're hurt."—"You also have to think of Mother's feet", said Henry. "They

run so much, and often to the store, even though Mother's feet aren't all that healthy."

The children's chatter about their mom's weapons of love continued, until their father, who had come home from work, stood in front of them. The children told him about the four weapons of love Mom had, from her eyes to her hands, arms and feet. "But kids," Dad said, "you forgot the mouth. Mom doesn't have a mean mouth like other women in the neighborhood." "You're right," Henry agreed with emphasis. "She doesn't rant and scold the whole day like Aunt Anna."—"And," Lena added, "yesterday, when you were mad, Mommy looked at you sadly and said something loving." Henry could not deny that.

Then their father said, "Children, what would it be like if we all behaved selfishly, thinking only of ourselves? If Mom would only express complaints and would only reprimand you, she would not be balanced in her parenting. One of her fine weapons is her dear mouth. But the most beautiful and most important weapon is still missing. Without this one, Mom couldn't use any of the others."

The children thought about it, and then Lena whispered, "Mom's soul!"—"No," Henry corrected her, "heart!"—"You're both correct," said Dad. "Mom's heart is the engine; without it, the car wouldn't run. And her soul is the driver, whom she tells where to go. And the car she sits in is her body with the hands, arms, feet, eyes, and mouth."

Suddenly, Mom walked in and declared with a happy voice, "Let's go eat. What a great family I have!" Henry couldn't resist the urge and said to his sister,

“See, Mom is saying it again!” Shortly afterward, Mom, Dad, and five kids were sitting at the table for dinner.

There is still one more whom we need to trust. He loves us even more than the best mother ever could: Jesus Christ.

A truly devoted mother is constantly in need of Jesus’ love and asks for it daily. When she does this, she finds that the more she walks with God, the deeper her experience: “The heart of the Lord Jesus is a deep ocean of love even for me!”

His feet let Him walk the way to Golgotha for all people. There, He “loved us free” from the burden of sin, even for me! For “greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13).

The words of His mouth shame me for my wrongdoing, but are at the same time full of forgiving love towards me.

His eyes are earnestly questioning but at the same time full of forgiving love towards me.

His hands are the only real help in difficulties, even when I can’t perceive His way as helpfulness.

His arms display His constant offer of love. Who doesn’t think of loyal family members, relatives, and acquaintances who have not yet found refuge in these arms during the storms of life?

If a mother is of such great importance to us, how much more so is Jesus Christ! A mother’s love can be so true, but Jesus’ love—who can explain the bliss that already begins here on earth when you allow yourself to be conquered by His love?

Even greater than a mother is Jesus, Who does all for you. ■

A Place of Comfort

*A place that I treasured so much as a child,
A place where my heart was at rest,
A place of contentment and comfort so mild,
Where Mother was, there it was best.
At home with my mother,
though storms may rage wild,
There I feel comfort, for I am her child.*

*My mother was steadfast, her heart was so true;
The world could not match her great love;
Forgiveness and mercy were showered anew
Like blessings that come from above.
Should others disdain me and also revile,
Yet she understood me, for I am her child.*

*O Father in heaven, I thank You so much
That you gave this mother to me.
In all of her love, her commitment, and such,
A wonderful treasure I see.
Let love for my mother be shown all the while,
So that she may sense it, for I am her child.*

Clean Up

In Acts 5, Luke recounts a shocking incident from the time of the first-century church. Into the circle of disciples, who were glowing with true Christ-mindedness, entered a married couple who certainly desired all the blessings and promises of the joyous young church, but who were not willing to sacrifice their all for the Lord Jesus and His Church. This was not necessarily about their money and possessions, but their complete devotion to Jesus Christ.

Because this misguided couple did not open themselves to the Spirit of Christ, Satan, who seeks to deceive the Holy Spirit and the church, filled their hearts with his lying spirit. During a meeting of believers, the couple's true intentions of the heart were revealed and brought to sudden judgment before God's throne by death.

"Clean up." This has always been necessary. Clean up those things that promote death and hinder life.

Clean Up Half-Measures

In the biblical account of this couple, it says, "They brought a portion and laid it at the apostles' feet." Whoever does not surrender his whole life to the Lord Jesus ultimately loses his whole part in the kingdom of heaven. To submit only a part of yourself to the truth of Christ means to ultimately end up under the power of Satan. "Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:33). Therefore, do away with half-measures.

Clean Up Your Love of Money

The love of money deprived these two deceived people of all their possessions. "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" (1 Timothy 6:9). Clean the "love of money" out of your heart. This love of money is an instrument of Satan, designed to cheat God's children out of the everlasting gifts God intended for them.

Clean Up the Craving for Attention

Worldly ambition and an ugly thirst for fame brought this couple down. They wanted to make a big name for

themselves here on earth. They wanted to shine outwardly, even though inwardly they had impure motives. Just as wearing white clothes cannot clean an impure heart, giving a good, but false impression will not keep the judgment of God from you. Rather, let God give you the garment of humility. But first, you must clean up all pride and all showiness. Rid your heart of these evil "poisonous plants." They are from "Satan's garden" and cause death.

Clean Up Any Untruths

How could Ananias and Sapphira think they could deceive God? Lying is evil, but powerless against the penetrating light of divine truth. Clean up all deceit because it does not help you. If you do not want to turn away from all lies, then you will die from them.

Clean Up Friendships that Tempt You to do Evil

With his wife having knowledge of their mutual plan, Ananias went ahead with their plan. "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?" (verse 9), Peter lamented. How terrible it is when people entice one another to commit evil! One has encouraged another to wrongdoing and condemned another to death. Get rid of those whom Satan tries to use to seduce you to evil. Seek to uphold life where Satan wants to sow death.

Clean Up Excuses

Peter asked Ananias, "Why has Satan filled your heart, that you have lied to the Holy Spirit?" (v.3). Why have you allowed the enemy of your soul to manipulate you? Do not seek excuses but stand firmly against all sin. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Clean Up the Idea that God Doesn't Take Things Seriously

How merciful God has been with you this long, even if you have not yet accepted His redemption! He has not yet summoned you before His throne of judgment; but do not let that make you apathetic. Corruption of the heart begins with little sins. Every sin, even the most inconspicuous, carries the germ of corruption. Clean up your sins, even the smallest ones. Bring them to the

cross of Christ and accept the completed work of redemption by your Savior.

Clean Up the Misconception that External Things Will Secure Heaven for You

You may have grown up in Christian circles and may even be a church member. You may have done

many good works here and there. However, only a personal experience of salvation from God counts. “You must be born again,” Jesus said. Let go of all false security; do not lean on external things. Jesus wants to free your heart from all sin. Only those who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus will stand before God. ■

From the life of the Missionary Samuel Hebich—by Wilhelm Jörn

God’s Protection in the Greatest Danger

On another occasion, they used elephants to scare the preacher away. “First, the guide approached us with a small one as we were standing on an earthen wall preaching. The animal majestically refused, but the guide drove it closer to us by force. I hollered at him and frightened the elephant, which ran right into the wall and then slowly lumbered past me.

“The next day, four exceptionally large elephants appeared. One elephant without a rider charged wildly among the others. Many ran away, but then the animals turned on us. Two of them were still distracted; the other two just barely missed us. The Lord gave us grace, even while we trembled, to stand firmly at our post. This made an impression on the people.”

A Hindu Sister Recalled:

“Many people were gathered for a festival of their idols. The chief priest led a white elephant into the crowd. The Hindus considered this a sacred animal and offered sacrifices to it. In the midst of this great tumult, people suddenly turned their attention to the opposite direction when they heard a loud voice. It was the dear missionary Hebich, standing there with his assistants. He was appealing to the unfortunate, lost people and asking them to come to the Lord Jesus, Who would cleanse them of their sins. But when the heathen idolater heard him and noticed that the people were drawn away from himself, he became very angry. He had hoped to receive many gifts that day “for the elephant,” but really for himself. In his fury, he provoked the elephant to charge at the missionary. The elephant truly started heading in that direction. It stopped its run to

break a strong branch from a tree, as if it needed a weapon, and then lumbered toward the missionary. When Hebich’s assistant saw this, he prepared to scurry away. But the missionary held him back, saying, “Remember Daniel in the lion’s den, and fear not!” He then calmly continued preaching, knowing the Lord was protecting him. The pagans standing around him assumed that his God could not help and waited for the elephant to hurl its branch at the missionary. However, in complete astonishment, they watched the elephant carry its thick branch to the missionary, placing it close to his feet, and then turning back again without doing him the slightest harm. But what was the branch doing here? Missionary Hebich immediately recognized the handiwork of the Lord. He stepped up on the tree branch. He was now taller, towering over all those present, enabling his sermon to resound even further. Enraged by this, the priest again tried to set the animal on him, but it did not want to obey. The missionary cautiously raised his fingers in warning and shouted to the priest, ‘Since you are adamant to destroy me, be careful that the righteous God does not direct the anger of this beast towards you!’

“Upon hearing those words, the priest’s anger knew no bounds. Was he to appear completely powerless before his countrymen? No, he had to gain the upper hand. He bellowed mightily at the beast and even struck it. Now, this elephant was not accustomed to such treatment, so instead of running down the missionary, it turned quickly, throwing the priest on the ground and trampling him with its broad, heavy feet until he was dead.”

In such a manner, the Lord affirmed His servant and glorified His name in the midst of His enemies. ■

Total Commitment

My all I did not fully give you, Lord;
I wanted self to have a say as well.
You wanted full submission to Your Word,
That was too hard, as far as I could tell.

Completely Yours! That is my wish deep inside;
Prepare my heart for You to have Your way.
Now, I long to be completely sanctified,
No matter what all others do or say.

One day, when I will stand before Your throne, Lord,
I do not want to look away in shame.
Remove whatever hinders going forward
So I may fully glorify Your name.

It's my desire, so sanctify me wholly;
Renew me Lord, all turmoil in me still.
Prune the vine, that I may serve You fully;
I am Yours, do with me as You will.