

MANNA

True Jesus Church ISSUE 41 JUL-SEPT 2003 **The End Times**



God's Healing Hands
The **Sixth** Seal

Lord, This One Soul I Won For You



Dear Reader,

When we were planning the theme for this issue, we did not anticipate the war in the Middle East. And as we chugged along with the bulk of the work, we worried that there weren't enough testimonies to fill the pages.

The thought did cross our minds that perhaps the content of this issue would be a bit heavy. But as we put this issue together, we received testimonies about the help and healing of God in difficult times. And the last few pages of this issue talks about love and devotion for Christ—to proclaim the beautiful message of salvation and to shine for Him.

We've realized that God custom-fits His message for His children, and He always provides the right blend of instruction and encouragement because He knows best what we need.

Thank God for that.

THE EDITOR

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The End Times

“The goal of Manna is to inspire believers to live an active faith through mutual encouragement and the study of biblical truths.”

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The End Times



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TESTIMONY



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Overcoming Evil Spirits

Susan Lane—San Jose, California, USA

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I testify. This is a testimony about how my parents brought our family to believe in Christ.

Like most typical Chinese families, my grandparents were Buddhists, and its beliefs were passed on to my parents, as it had been for many generations. But neither of my parents were practicing Buddhists.

Then one day, my mom's aunt told her that she went to this temple where there were real gods. Many people who had gone to that temple had received spirits from the gods.

So as not to offend her aunt, my mom carpooled to the temple with her aunt and some other friends. When they got there, my mom saw people who

were possessed by the spirits, and they would talk about the past or about their previous lives.

After the gathering at the temple, when they were about to leave, they realized that the driver had locked the keys in the car. One of the passengers in the car who was also possessed by the spirits pointed her finger at the key hole, and she chanted some incantation and made an upward motion with her finger at the door lock. The door lock automatically raised and unlocked itself. From that moment on, my mom became a very fervent Buddhist.

My mom realized that there was more than just earthly life, and that there truly was a spiritual realm with spirits and gods. So, from that day on, she devoted herself to Buddhism.

A DEVOUT BUDDHIST

My mom purchased any Buddhist book that was highly acclaimed in the Buddhist society, and she would study them closely; literally following its instruction word-for-word.

She memorized all the chants and bought all the religious articles, including chanting beads, which look like rosaries, and robes. She had chanting beads of all sizes and robes of all colors for the different ceremonies and chants.

She even dedicated one of the larger bedrooms in our house as a mini temple. The bedroom contained a shrine of all the different idols and became the place where the family would do all the chants.

My mom chanted very religiously every morning and night. At that time, I was very young and did not go to school.



Although my mom was such a devout and fervent Buddhist, she never really felt peace in her heart.

However, I remember that my mother would make my siblings do their morning chants in front of the shrine even when they were late for school.

Aside from the chants, my mom also followed the Buddhist guidelines and teachings very closely. She was very active in donating to the temples, participating in their events and activities, and sponsoring the monks and building funds.

We also had to follow the Buddhist calendar and abstain from meat on certain days. I remember that there would practically be about twenty days of the month in which we had to abstain from meat.

Believing that every living thing had a spirit or soul, we would open the door and scoot the spider or cockroach out every time we found an insect in the house.

Although my mom was such a devout and fervent Buddhist, she never really felt peace in her heart. All the chanting and participation in the temples never really fulfilled her. However, at that time, she did not think much of it.

Then, in 1980, we immigrated to the United States. Being such fervent Buddhists, we couldn't possibly put the idols in the luggage. So, to show our respect, each member of our family hand carried one idol.

Now, when I say hand carry, I don't mean putting the idols in a carry-on bag and putting it in the overhead bin. I mean, we literally held it in our arms and put it on our laps during the flight. We

didn't even care that people were looking at us funny.

RECOGNIZING THE EVIL SPIRIT

When we arrived in the United States, my dad got in touch with one of his old colleagues, Brother Ke-Chi Chen, who was a member of True Jesus Church. Brother Chen and his wife would repeatedly ask us to go to church, and being Buddhists, we naturally declined.

One day, Brother Chen told us that they were having family service at their home and again invited us. This time, my parents said yes because they didn't want to offend Brother Chen, especially since we've turned down so many previous invitations.

My parents also figured that the service was at Brother Chen's house rather than at church, so it should be okay. However, to minimize contact with the Christian community, none of us children went.

The family service began with a sermon, after which everyone knelt down to pray. Again, not wanting to offend anyone, my parents also knelt down. But instead of praying to God in the manner instructed by the speaker, my mom prayed to her Buddha. She simply asked the Buddha to bless her and show her the way.

The next morning, my mom began to hear a voice, very clear and distinct, talking to her. In the beginning, the voice told her that it was one of the good Buddhist spirits and my mom should be honored to host it. Thinking of the spirits

at the temple to which her aunt took her, my mom believed this spirit. My mom believed that the spirit had come to her after all her fervency.

Initially, the spirit would just say simple things like, "Your son will be coming home late today." But gradually, the spirit started to badmouth each member of the family.

The spirit would cause many misunderstandings and arguments in our family; it was as if it was trying to turn each member against the others. Slowly, my mom began to realize that this was not a good spirit but an evil spirit.

FINDING HELP IN THE WRONG PLACES

My mom told my dad of her suspicions and my dad agreed. Immediately, my entire family drove to Eureka, which is north of San Francisco, where there was supposed to be a very famous monk and a temple of many Buddha.

The monk was very famous in the Buddhist society and he was well-known for having many powers. The first thing the monk told us was that each member of our family had to become his disciple.

There was a discipleship fee and since he was like a celebrity in the Buddhist society, the fee was quite high. Nonetheless, my parents faithfully agreed.

To become his disciple, we each had to take turns to kneel in front of him and recite certain chants. When it came to my parents' turn to kneel in front of him, he took a stick and started hitting my parents on the shoulders with it.

He claimed that he was rebuking the evil spirit and casting it out that way. After the ritual, my mom told the monk that the evil spirit was still there. The

monk told us that once we got home, the evil spirit would depart.

The monk also asked us to donate \$100,000.00 for a temple fountain. My dad informed the monk that he didn't have that kind of money ready, but he wrote a check for a few thousand dollars as deposit.

When we reached home, my mom's situation worsened. Not only would the evil spirit badmouth each member of the family, it would not allow my mother to sleep. At best, she would be able to sleep for two hours each night. Whenever she was about to fall asleep, the evil spirit would lift and drop her limbs to keep her awake.

The evil spirit not only spoke to her but controlled her body, too. Frequently, the evil spirit would make my mom run around the house in the middle of the night, screaming and shaking everyone up, making sure that no one else slept.

When people called, instead of saying what she wanted to say, the spirit would use her mouth and say something else. For example, when people called for my dad and he wasn't home, they would ask when he would return, and my mom would say something like, "It's none of your business."

During all of this, my mom was very lucid. She knew what she wanted to say or do, but it was like she had no control over it. You can also imagine how my mom looked, too. Here was a person who was chronically getting no more than one to two hours of sleep. When people looked at her, they would get scared.

It was really a very terrible time for my family. We asked for advice and sought help everywhere. As long as someone said, "Hey, this temple is very

famous" or "that monk is very powerful," we would go.

It didn't matter whether it was in the United States or Taiwan. We flew back and forth, just hoping to find a cure. The routine was always the same. The monks would ask us for money with the promise that my mom would be healed.

However, after giving them the money, my mom's condition remained the same. At one point, my dad also considered the possibility that maybe there was no evil spirit and that my mom was a schizophrenic.

He even tried to hospitalize my mom at a mental institution. After two full days of observation, the doctors could not find anything wrong with my mom and released her.

So, all this happened for over one year, during which my family had no peace. My mom became very scared. We tried everything and nothing could help.

RETURNING TO THE TRUE JESUS CHURCH

My mom began to think, "Is there really no God who can stop this evil spirit?" Then, she remembered the Holy Spirit from Brother Chen's family service.

My mom figured that maybe the Holy Spirit can kick out her evil spirit. So she contacted Brother Chen's wife and told her about her situation and that she would like to go to church with her. It so happened that a spiritual convocation was about to begin the next day.

My mom warned Brother Chen's wife of her fear that the church members would be scared because my mom did look quite scary. Brother Chen's wife simply replied, "Don't worry. True Jesus Church sees a lot of these cases and we



"Is there really no God who can stop this evil spirit?"

have cast out many evil spirits."

It also happened that the church encouraged people to lodge at church during the spiritual convocation week, so my mom packed up her things and went.

On the first day, the pastor who led the morning prayer laid hands on my mom, and she could hear him speak in tongues. Although she could not understand it, it was a phrase and it sounded like it was rebuking the evil spirit.

The afternoon prayer was led by a different pastor, and when he laid hands on my mom, the pastor also spoke in tongues and said the same phrase. After this experience, my mom began to put faith in God. Here were two different pastors at two different times, and yet, they were saying the same phrase to the evil spirit.

That night, when it came time for bed, my mom started to panic. She was afraid the evil spirit would keep her awake, and since it wasn't her home, she couldn't get up and walk around.

As she was thinking this, she dozed off and the next thing she knew, there was a sister ringing the bell and saying, "It's seven o'clock, time to get up for morning prayer." My mom could not believe it. This was the first time in over one year that she slept from night to morning, and she was able to sleep soundly for the entire week of the spiritual convocation.

Then, on Saturday night, the pastor asked my mom if she would be interested

in getting baptized the next day. Although my mom was beginning to sleep and was feeling better, she told the pastor that the evil spirit was still inside her. But he told her not to worry and that the evil spirit will usually depart after baptism.

Putting faith in God, my mom agreed to be baptized. The night before baptism, the evil spirit became very angry. It refused to let my mom sleep. It just kept talking to her, and it would lift up my mom's arms and legs and drop them to keep her up.

there is always hope, and it reminds me of a song I once heard, "Promise of Joy." Here are the lyrics to one part of the song:

*There is a rainbow in every teardrop.
There is a peace in every storm.
There is a stream in the desert.
Yes, there is hope in the Lord.*

May all the glory and praise be unto His name. ★



Finally, morning arrived and she was baptized. After the baptism, we never heard from the evil spirit again.

But my mom was not dissuaded. She relied on God and kept praying in her heart. Finally, morning arrived and she was baptized. After the baptism, we never heard from the evil spirit again.

In fact, to show how dramatic the change was, just about one week after the baptism, my parents met with some of their friends whom they saw practically every week.

My mom had not seen them for two weeks because of the spiritual convocation, and her friends were all amazed. They kept asking my dad which miracle doctor my dad took my mom to visit. And of course, my dad told them the testimony.

My dad is sixty years old, and even till this day, whenever he recalls this testimony, he cannot tell it without crying.

Truly, there was a time in my family's life when we had no hope. It seemed like we exhausted all options. But, in God,



In His Hands

Robert Kealiinohomoku—Maui, Hawaii, USA

In the name of Lord Jesus Christ I testify. I praise God that He has given me this opportunity to share about the amazing grace of His love in my life.

I used to play football in high school in beautiful Hawaii, but my love and ambitions for the game ended when I was severely injured in the neck with a concussion. I couldn't remember what had happened to me when I woke up at the hospital the next day.

The doctors were amazed that I was still alive and able to walk, because my condition was as severe as the one

Christopher Reeves, the actor, suffered. The only difference was the cause of the accident; Mr. Reeves fell off a horse.

At the time of my accident, my parents were away on the mainland, and I had no other family on the island. Fortunately, there were a couple of church members that were watching over the prayer house in Maui. They heard about my accident and immediately came to the hospital to see me.

The doctors basically told us that my football career was over. They also said that I was lucky that I wasn't paralyzed and was still able to move. During the week-long stay at the hospital, I prayed and thanked God for each additional breath He was giving me.

Even though my football career was

short-lived, God opened another road for me. After I finished high school, He allowed me the opportunity to go to the mainland to study culinary arts.

GOD PLANS OUR STEPS

After I finished college, God allowed me to come back to the island and work in a resort where I met my wife. In 1996, I moved to the main island to become the head chef, and from 1996 to 2001, I kept moving up the corporate ladder.

God definitely blessed me in my job by guiding me and protecting me. In August, 2001, I found out that my wife was pregnant with our third child. At the same time, I was invited to New York to do a cooking exhibition for the James Beard foundation.

My partner and I were supposed to attend this convention together and cook in front of the press, but the two of us were working through some disagreements about our work. As we got closer to the date, I got a bad vibe about the trip so I asked to be replaced.

I talked to my wife about it and she was very unhappy because we had planned to go to New York together. But I had already made up my mind. Lo and behold, the day we were supposed to return from New York was September 11—the day the terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York.

That morning, my wife called me at work and told me to turn on the TV, and I couldn't believe my eyes. I prayed for the people who went there and took my place, and I thanked God for not allowing me to go.

The chef and the other helpers who went up were stuck in New York for three weeks. They couldn't come back and their families waited anxiously back on the islands. When they finally came back, there was a difference in them. Some of the people were traumatized and had to get professional help.

TRIALS AND SUFFERING

In February 2002 I got into a minor car accident, and my neck problem revisited me again. The doctors found out through x-rays that my neck bone had moved one centimeter over and there was a gap between the first and second vertebrae.

They concluded that the first and second vertebrae had to be fused with a piece of bone from my hip. In April, we decided to schedule the surgery so that I could fully recover. Since it would be my first surgery, the neurosurgeon explained all my options.

He told me that I might be in a neck brace, and if worse, a halo. A halo is a metal cage placed on the head to support the surgery, and screws are inserted into strategic areas in the skull to help the bone grow and heal properly.

When I went into surgery, all the brothers and sisters in Honolulu were praying for me. I was very afraid. I prayed to God, and He gave me the strength to be positive and to think positive.

When I woke up after the operation, I discovered this cage over my head. Fortunately, two of the three procedures were successful. The doctor was right after all—I needed to be placed in the halo, and my wife told me I had to keep it on for twelve weeks.

I wanted to get out of the hospital as quickly as possible. The doctors said I couldn't leave until I could start walking, but thank God, I was walking the day after surgery, so I checked out of the hospital on the third day.



I prayed to God, and He gave me the strength to be positive and to think positive.

Closer to God

I rented a medical bed that allowed me to get in and out of bed more efficiently, and it also allowed me to sleep through the night.

One night, I was awakened by this sharp pain in my head. It felt both like I got hit in the head with a bat and was shocked from my electric medical bed.

My wife heard my scream and asked me what had happened, and I told her I didn't know.

Basically, the halo had shifted, and I was bleeding from the screws. I woke my mom up and she instantly gathered us together to pray. The pain was excruciatingly sharp and intensifying, so we rushed to the emergency room at 3:00 a.m. in the morning.

We had to wait until 7 a.m. before a doctor could see us. They gave me painkillers but they weren't helping. They tried to fix the halo but it wouldn't work either. So we came home and my mom had to drive very slowly. Every bump on the road was causing the screws to scrape against my skull.

After two days of insomnia, I had to go back to the emergency room because of the pain. Again, they gave me more painkillers. It got to a point where I told them I had had enough already. Since the neurologist in the hospital didn't know what to do, I had to fly to Honolulu. I prayed to God for a smooth trip.

I went directly to the doctor's office after I arrived in Honolulu. Thank God, they were able to fix the halo in less than five minutes, and I slept all the way back home.

Through this period of pain and suffering, I was able to draw closer to God. That June, we attended the youth retreat in Honolulu Church, and I made every effort to go. All the brothers and sisters were so glad that I made it.

It was during that retreat that I had one of the strongest prayers I. The two visiting pastors would lay hands on me, and I cried like a baby. I was encouraged that I should pray harder because I was acutely aware of God's love and His

desire to bless me.

I prayed fervently to receive the Holy Spirit, but it wasn't God's timing to give it to me.

HE IS THE GREATEST PHYSICIAN

During my twelve weeks of recovery in the halo, the halo shifted a second time. Three days before I could take it off, the doctors took an x-ray and it showed that the bone fusion didn't work.

They suggested that we wait a year and give the bone some time to heal on its own. So a year later, on May 2, 2003, I went to get another x-ray, and it showed that the bones still didn't fuse together. The doctors told me I had to go through the entire process again. In my heart, I wanted to put this matter in God's hands.

A month later, there was another youth retreat in Honolulu and we decided to attend.

During the first few days, my wife was moved to tears in her prayers and she couldn't understand why she was crying. Then later, a sister had a vision, and

fuse.

I was filled with joy. Everyone encouraged me to continue to pray and to say, "Hallelujah" to Jesus. The next day, I took their advice, and I received the Holy Spirit and started to speak in tongues. I truly thank God for His blessings.

During and after the retreat, I continued to pray and experienced a new body in me. My grandmother passed away while I was there, but God gave me the strength to go to the funeral and overcome my loss.

The days in Honolulu were too wonderful for words, and I felt absolute peace from God.

As I look back at my life and the path I took to reach this point, I thank God that He was always with me, that He healed my neck injury, and that He brought me closer to Him.

This has taught me that we must leave our lives in God's hands. His plan is the best plan. Sometimes in life, we don't know where we'll go or what we're going to do. We really need to pray and entrust

*Did You not pour me out like milk,
And curdle me like cheese,
Clothe me with skin and flesh,
And knit me together in bones and sinews?
You have granted me life and favor,
And Your care has preserved my spirit.
(Job 10:10-12) ★*



This has taught me that we must leave our lives in God's hands. His plan is the best plan.

she

saw heaven opening up and rain pouring down. Soon after, my wife received the Holy Spirit, and this greatly comforted and encouraged both of us.

That night, I prayed very deeply to God. I prayed and told God that He was the greatest physician. I told Him that if He could heal me I would entrust my life to Him, and commit myself to serve Him. Suddenly, I felt the vertebrae in my neck

our journey to Him.

Now that God has brought me back into the fold and given me the Holy Spirit, I'm here to give glory to His name, and I hope to be a useful vessel for Him all the days of my life.

The way His hands guide me reminds me of a beautiful passage that was inspired by Job while he was in great suffering:



God's Loving Deliverance

Au Pit Lin—Sabah, Malaysia

Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you and you shall glorify me. (Ps 50:15)

The Lord has assured us of His deliverance in times of trouble through the psalmist, Asaph, so that we may glorify Him. That is why I would like to seize this opportunity to tell of the mercy and loving kindness of the Lord Jesus and how He dealt kindly with me and delivered me from my afflictions.

This is a testimony about my late mother-in-law, Lee Nyuk Lan, and also about myself—how the Lord Jesus healed me from heart disease with a timely diagnosis and treatment.

COPING WITH GRANDMA'S ALZHEIMER

I retired from thirty-six years of employment in the civil service in December 1994. I was able to work until my retirement because of the untiring

spirit and hard work of my mother-in-law, who took care of our house and brought up our two children. I am truly indebted to her.

Sad to say, a few years before my retirement she began losing her memory. This loss of memory was accelerated one year, when she had to undergo two surgeries—one for gall stones and the other for her cataract—until she lost all recollection of her past.

At that time I was still working. Thank God, I had a good maid who came daily to do housework and care for my mother-in-law. Because my mother-in-law had always been hardworking and diligent, she became restless and irritable when the maid took up her work.

Her forgetfulness often created disastrous situations. She would forget to

turn off the gas stove and the water tap, and she would be disoriented and not recognize her own exhaustion. All day long she would pace around the house and take out her restlessness and frustration on the maid.

My maid began calling me almost daily at the office to complain about grandma and she would threaten to quit her job. Sometimes, when my boss was away, I would rush home to find out what actually happened and rush back to the office again.

I couldn't concentrate and often made mistakes at work, and my boss would rebuke me. The pressure became too hard to bear, and I was beside myself to the point of breaking down. I could only pray to the Lord to give me strength and patience.

In those days my husband, Deacon Yapp, was the executive councillor of the Southeast Asia Evangelical Centre. His pastoral assignments took him all over Asia three to four times a year, with each visit lasting at least two weeks.

Whenever he went on pastoral visits, I would worry that something disastrous might happen at home, and it would be impossible for me to contact him if he happened to be in a remote area. Every time he travelled, I prayed to God for his safe journey and for our peace at home.

In those days, there wasn't a lot of information about Alzheimer's disease, and we were not able to manage my mother-in-law well. I had to give up various church activities to care for her.

My mother-in-law's health continued to deteriorate. She could no longer recognize her two beloved grandchildren. Finally, she was bedridden, and it was very difficult to see her in such a sad condition. The days just seemed to pass by.



Looking back, I often marvel and consider it a miracle that God prodded me to exercise, which lead to the diagnosis of my heart disease early on.

DIAGNOSED WITH HEART DISEASE

During those six or seven years after my retirement and being at home all the while without doing any exercise, I began to put on weight. This was probably what contributed to the onset of heart disease.

In the beginning, I often felt very tired, and I lost interest in many things. I wouldn't be able to catch up with everyone else's walking pace, and I would be panting and sweating profusely going up a staircase.

Towards the end of 2000, I decided to get up early in the morning to walk. At first, a church friend got up around 5:00 a.m. to walk with me, but after a while, she stopped joining me and I was left alone.

What was I to do? Should I continue or give up? Walking alone that early in the morning was not much fun, especially when I had to brave the city council's smelly garbage truck and the barking dogs. I was very tempted to give up.

Then an amazing thing happened. I could always feel there was an inner voice telling me, "You must exercise, you must exercise, and don't delay further." This inner voice kept reminding me to exercise. I believe it was the urging of the Holy Spirit telling me to pay attention to my health. Thank God, I was able to get up early as usual for my morning walks.

Soon after, I started to experience pain in my chest. At first I thought it was gastritis, which I blamed on the excessive amount of water I drank before my walks. So, the next day I exercised without drinking water, but the pain persisted.

After three days of chest pains, I finally took a gastritis tablet hoping it would help, but still the pain continued. Then I knew something was wrong. It turned out that the chest pains were not as minor as I had hoped it would be.

Looking back, I often marvel and consider it a miracle that God prodded me to exercise, which lead to the diagnosis of my heart disease early on. Had I given up on my morning walks, I believe I

couldn't have made it this far.

I made an appointment to see the senior physician at the hospital who quickly arranged several tests for me. After the ECG and Stress Test, the cardiologist suspected that I had blocked coronary arteries. That was some time in February 2001.

After the Echo Stress Test in March, my suspected heart problem was confirmed. The cardiologist told me I had to go to the National Heart Institute in Kuala Lumpur for bypass surgery.

I requested to have my surgery in the local area because of my ailing mother-in-law. Since my husband was often away, I couldn't afford to be away from home. The doctor understood my plight and fixed a date for me in May, when the medical team from Kuala Lumpur would make their next visit in our area.

I went home after the Echo Stress Test, and that was when the chest pains came. This time, the aches lasted two hours and medication did not help. At that time Dn. Yapp was away in Taiwan attending the World Delegates Conference. I was at a loss what to do.

If the pain persisted I would have to be admitted to the hospital. But what about my mother-in-law? My maid was there to help, but she could not care for my mother-in-law by herself.

All I could do was pray to the Lord to help and provide for me. Thank God, the chest pains calmed after two hours. But from that day on, the chest pains came frequently, making me weak and short of breath.

Yet, I continued walking everyday. One morning, the chest pains hit within fifty metres of walking. I turned around and headed home straightaway.

I called the clinic after 8:00 a.m. to

tell them of my condition, and I was advised to go to the hospital for observation. I was hospitalised that morning, April 14, 2001, which was also the last morning I saw my mother-in-law.

LOSING MY MOTHER-IN-LAW

The next morning, while having breakfast in the hospital, my daughter came and told me that grandma had passed away. I broke down and cried. There were a lot of mixed feelings in my heart, and with my own heart condition, I became very emotional.

That morning, after her bath and breakfast, she passed away peacefully in her seat. Since I was hospitalised, a church friend took over many of my responsibilities around the house. I was very touched by her love.

I remembered the things that my mother-in-law used to say to me. The first was how thankful she was to have come to accept Jesus Christ and to be a member of the True Jesus Church.

She always felt that her relationship with the brothers and sisters in church were closer than her relationship with her relatives. And after the kindness and care that we received after her death, I share the same opinion with her.

Secondly, she taught me the importance of teaching my own children and not to wait until they are grown or have someone else teach them. Otherwise, I would lose out on so much as a mother. Even though my mother-in-law was illiterate, she was wise enough to appreciate the important things in life.

When the nurses at the hospital learned about her death, they came in to comfort me. One of the nurses hugged me and said, "Don't be sad, because God loves your mother-in-law more, and He has

taken her away."

I thought about what she said and realized that she was right. God had given her rest so that I could go focus on my treatment without worrying about her. This was really the wonderful arrangement of God. And even though I grieved, my grief was comforted.

Everything was according to God's good timing. He stretched out His hand and opened a way for me, and He ended the eight long years of physical suffering that plagued my mother-in-law.

With the help of many concerned brethren, friends, and relatives, grandma's funeral was carried out smoothly. My only regret was not being able to attend her funeral at the doctor's advice to minimize the onset of more chest pains. But knowing that she was called by the Lord was a great consolation to me.



Everything was according to God's good timing. He stretched out His hand and opened a way for me...

HELP AND HEALING

Hospitalized for four days, many ministers, brothers and sisters, friends, and relatives came to visit me. But I was not too afraid of the forthcoming heart operation I had to go through.

Twenty years ago, I had accompanied Dn. Yapp overseas for his heart surgery, and since then I've learned about heart ailments and treatment options, which prepared me mentally. Also, three others in my family also went through bypass surgeries.

My greatest security was knowing that I had full confidence in God, for I truly believed that God would surely lead me through the day of trouble, and He would guide me through the shadow of the valley of death according to His will.

After the funeral, a doctor came to see me and advised that I should go to Kuala Lumpur for my surgery instead of waiting another few weeks to do the operation locally. Since the funeral was over, I eagerly accepted his suggestion and was discharged the same day on April 18, 2001.

My husband accompanied me to Kuala Lumpur. Even though the chest pains persisted on the plane, the trip was smooth and we arrived safely. My niece, her husband, and another church friend met us at the airport and took us directly to the National Heart Institute.

Two days later, I had an angiogram, where a catheter was inserted into my thigh vein and slowly pushed up to my heart. This technique allowed the doctors to examine the artery blockage, and they concluded that I would need three bypasses.

On May 3 at 9:00 a.m., I was wheeled into the operation room. Right before I was anesthetized I said a last prayer in my heart, "Lord, I give my life into your hands. Please grant wisdom to the surgeon, and I pray that You guide me through this day of affliction." I lost consciousness shortly after.

I was told the operation lasted close to five hours, and I was given one pint of blood. Instead of three bypasses, I had four, but, thank God, the operation was a success.

If you ask me whether I suffered a lot after my heart operation, I would say it was not that bad. It was because of all the loving prayers from everyone that pulled

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me through the surgery and beyond.

During our three-week stay in Kuala Lumpur, Gombak Church was very kind and provided lodging and a car for my husband so that he could visit me at the hospital.

After two days of physiotherapy and other necessary post-operation examinations, I was discharged on May 10. We really thank Gombak Church for their hospitality, and on May 13, we safely returned home.

While I was recuperating, many ministers, brothers and sisters, friends and relatives showed much love and concern over me. I regained my energy and felt physically stronger everyday, thanks to the abundant grace of our Lord Jesus.

I have since resumed many of the church activities that I had to give up due to both grandma and my illnesses, and I know I can only do these with the opportunities that God has given to me.

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the ministers and church members in Sabah, Kuala Lumpur, and overseas for their loving prayers and care for me and my family.

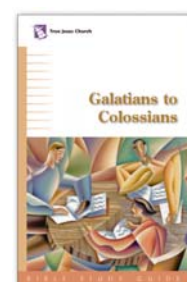
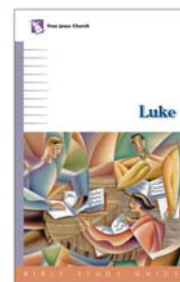
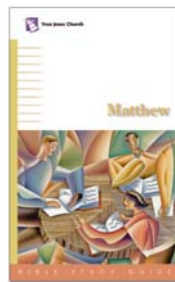
May the Lord remember everyone's love and shower His grace richly upon each person. And may all honor, glory, and power be given unto the name of our Lord Jesus. ★



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God's Role In The Process Of Israel's Liberation From Bondage

Yolanda Yang—Garden Grove, California, USA

For four hundred and thirty years, the descendants of Israel lived in the land of Egypt (Ex 12:40). They had been invited to live there during a severe famine by Joseph, the son of Israel, who was second-in-command to Pharaoh.

Joseph had gained the trust and respect of Pharaoh by implementing and overseeing a plan to collect food while the harvest was plenty, to plan for the long famine that would follow.

In those days, the Israelites grew in number and in strength in the land of Egypt. But as they grew stronger, a new Pharaoh who did not know Joseph forced the Israelites into labor, for he feared that they would overpower the Egyptians.

The Pharaoh made the Israelites' lives increasingly bitter by subjecting them to more tasks and by ordering that their

newborn sons be killed. But Pharaoh's plan to crush the Israelites was not successful.

The book of Exodus tells how God saves His people, the Israelites, from their oppressors. However, throughout the account of the misery of the Israelites in the first two chapters, we do not see God's presence.

It is only briefly mentioned that He provides for the midwives because they feared Him and spared Hebrew baby boys against Pharaoh's commands. Not until the very end of chapter 2 did God respond:

So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel and God acknowledged them. (Ex 2:24-25)

Although God hears the Israelites, He seems quite distant and passive. He does nothing to stop their increasing burdens. He apparently does not remember His promise with their ancestors until He hears the Israelites crying out, and even then, He

takes no action to save them, but merely acknowledges them.

GOD'S PLAN TO HELP HIS PEOPLE

Although God does not intervene right away, this does not mean that God doesn't care for His people. As humans, we may not always be able to understand God's purpose.

But we need to believe what God has planned is best, and that He will not forsake us. As we can see, God interacts with the Israelites more and more as the story progresses:

- He chooses Moses to be their leader (3:10), and Aaron to be Moses' spokesperson (4:14-16).
- He teaches Moses what to say and how to perform signs to prove that He is the Lord and that He has indeed appeared to Moses (3:15; 4:1-9).
- He not only sees the affliction of the Israelites from above (3:7) but also comes down to visit them (3:16) and

to free them (3:8, 17).

- He even meets with not only Moses and Aaron but also the elders of Israel (3:18), denoting a sort of equality between God and His people. God does not command the people what to do but discusses plans with them.

All these actions show that God is directly involved in the liberation of His people. Before visiting Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron gather the Israelites together. Aaron tells them everything God has told Moses and performs signs in front of the people.

So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped. (Ex 4:31)

We may not be in physical bondage, but like the Israelites, we may feel burdened, even oppressed, by problems and worries of life. It is comforting to hear Jesus' invitation: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

We gladly cast our care upon the Lord, for He cares for us (1 Pet 5:7) and sustains us (Ps 55:22). Only He can free us from the darkness of the world (Col 1:13-14).

When we first hear God's words, we may be drawn to Him—to the peace and joy He gives us. However, the process of liberation is not simple; we may encounter some unexpected setbacks, as the Israelites did.

In comparing chapters 3 and 6 of Exodus, we may notice several parallels and one startling difference. Both chapters begin with God telling Moses



Sometimes, right when everything seems to be going our way, challenges arise and hinder our progress.

that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (3:6; 6:3), establishing God's eternity and His faithfulness to all generations.

He knows of the suffering of the Israelites (3:7; 6:5) and has come to deliver them (3:8; 6:6) into a new land (3:8; 6:8). But whereas in 3:18 God says, "Then [the Israelites] will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt;" in chapter 6 it is written, "[the Israelites] would not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage" (6:9).

What brought about this complete change from hope to hopelessness, from courage and confidence to anguish and bitterness?

WHERE IS GOD?

In chapter 5, Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh bearing God's message: "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness" (5:1). Pharaoh, in mocking defiance, replies, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go" (5:2).

As if to punish the Israelites for their impertinence, Pharaoh orders the taskmasters to have the Israelites meet the same quota of bricks as they made before but not to give them any more straw. When this quota was not reached, the Israelites were beaten.

Instead of realizing their dreams of freedom, the meeting with Pharaoh backfires. The Israelites' hope of

deliverance is crushed by an impossible task. The Israelites turn against Moses and Aaron, saying,

Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us. (Ex 5:21)

Moses, too, is influenced by this unfortunate turn of events. He blames God for putting him in a difficult situation and accuses Him of doing nothing,

Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all. (Ex 5:22-23)

God had warned Moses that Pharaoh would not listen right away (3:19), but this does not lessen the pain of the Israelites. The disappointment and punishment are too much for the Israelites to bear, and their faith plummets.

The reaction of the Israelites is understandable. Sometimes, right when everything seems to be going our way, challenges arise and hinder our progress. Like Moses, we know that trusting in God does not mean that we will never encounter difficulties. The Bible even tells us that we may suffer for Christ.

Nevertheless, we may lose faith in God and question whether He truly cares for us. If He does, why would He raise

our expectations, only to allow them to be dashed? God may not act right away, but this does not mean that He will not act at all.

We need to be confident that God's plan is better than what we can foresee, for "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28).

HIS OUTSTRETCHED ARMS

I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. (Ex 6:6)

God knows what the Israelites have had to endure. Thus when He speaks to Moses in chapter 6, He speaks not to commission, as in chapter 3, but to assure:

- God asserts His power and authority by repeatedly saying, "I am the LORD."
- God stresses the uniqueness of this people by saying that, although He has been the God of the Hebrews from the time of their forefather Abraham, theirs is the first generation to whom He has made His name known (6:3).
- God reaffirms the covenant He had made with their ancestors (6:4, 5), a term that was not used in chapter 3, to show that He remembers His promise (6:5). He does not describe the land of Canaan by its physical characteristics, "a land flowing with milk and honey" (3:8), but refers to it in more lasting terms as a heritage of

the covenant (6:8), to prove that He will keep His word.

By chapter 6, we see that God is no longer the abstract figure He was in the beginning of Exodus, but is a very real, concrete God, who reaches out his powerful hand to strike Egypt and his strong arm to redeem Israel.

Despite the Israelites' discouragement, God is persistent. He has made up His mind to liberate His people, and no one can disrupt His plan. He proceeds by sending plagues upon the Egyptians.

For the Israelites, Pharaoh's saying no is a great obstacle. But for God, the stubbornness of Pharaoh is a way to manifest his power and to perform His wonders (3:20; 7:3).

If Pharaoh had allowed the Israelites to be set free from the beginning, they may have credited their liberty to good negotiation skills of their leaders, rather than giving glory to God.

The Egyptians would not have been able to witness the omnipotence of the one true God (7:5). If it were not for Pharaoh hardening his heart, there would not have been any plagues.

If there had not been any plagues, the Egyptians would not have been in such haste to send the Israelites away; the Israelites would not have received articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing from the Egyptians, thus plundering them (12:33-36).

At the institution of the Passover, Moses again tells the Israelites God's plan for their liberation. They again "[bow] their heads and [worship]" (12:27), as they did in chapter 4, but this time, with a faith that has been tested and remains true (Rom 5:3-4).



We need to be confident that God's plan is better than what we can foresee, for "all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom 8:28).

The story of the Exodus can be compared to our spiritual journeys today. Just as God freed the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, He frees us from the burdens of the world.

Liberation does not necessarily lead directly to freedom. Just as the Israelites had to travel through the wilderness before reaching the promised land of Canaan, we may continue to encounter problems in life after we believe in Jesus Christ.

God's presence may not always be visible. But knowing that God works according to His own time and plan, and seeing God's outstretched arm deliver the Israelites, we can be confident that, as long as we do not forsake Him, He will carry us through even the most difficult times, that we may receive His promise of eternal life.★

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. (Rom 15:4)

The End Times

In her song *In Times Like These*, Ruth C. Jones reminds us that we truly need God in this time of trouble and unrest. We need to cling to the Solid Rock to keep ourselves from falling away from grace.

Many people will come to us and teach us the way to go; some will speak the truth, and others will lead us astray. What is our destination in these end times, and how will we prepare ourselves for the kingdom of heaven?

In this section, we learn that the Bible contains the best instruction to prepare for Jesus' second coming. The book of Revelation reveals the true church from the East through the opening of the sixth seal, and it also contain spiritual blessings for those who walk according to Jesus' instructions.

To rise above the challenges we face in times like these, we need to rely on the Spirit of truth to guide us to the very end.



The Sixth Seal

FF Chong—London, United Kingdom

In the Gospels, Jesus has long predicted the signs of the end of the age (Mt 24:4-14; Mk 13:3-13; Lk 21:7-19). And we witness these signs in the current events that surround us.

Most recently, nations across the globe are being destabilized by outbreaks of the killer virus, SARS, and the conflict between the US-led coalition forces and Iraq.

In fact, the disorder and plagues that the world faces today realize Jesus' answer given to the third question that the disciples posed on Mount Olives:

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Mt 24:3)

It requires great faith on our part to remain calm at the rising severity of conflict within the family unit and that between nations (Mt 24:6-7, 9-10).

We trust in the mercy of God to help us get on with our lives, even as the spread of pestilences further compounds the already-chaotic global situation (Mt 24:7).

As the Bible predicts, the world is heading toward a complete conflagration. Devastation will culminate at the release of God's full wrath on the whole of humanity. Such is the finality of the world.

Is there a way out of this?

The sixth seal provokes readers into thinking seriously about their destiny at the coming of Christ: "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able

to stand?” (Rev 6:17)

The question is posed at the scene of unprecedented chaos on the day of God’s fury. It is, at the same time, rhetorical.

But take heart—there is an escape route in the midst of utter destruction.

THE ONLY TRUE CHURCH FROM THE EAST

Chapter 7 of Revelation is one part of the answer to the soul-searching question. In a vision, Elder John saw an angel from the east holding the seal of the living God (Rev 7:2), and the angel was given the authority to seal His servants (Rev 7:3).

Based on some clear indicators, this angel represents the church. He is unique, for, unlike the others, he ascends from the east. When he spoke he did so in a collective sense: “... till we have sealed...” (Rev 7:3). The church, the redeemed believers, is the channel through which the Spirit is given to those who come to believe and obey (Acts 5:32).

In the apostolic age, people received the Holy Spirit by coming into contact with the apostles and workers in the faith. The Lord did not confer the Spirit to Paul until he met Ananias (Acts 9:17). This was the same with Cornelius and his family, who did not receive the Holy Spirit until they assembled with Peter (Acts 10:44).

In the messages to the seven churches, the leaders of the churches are each addressed as an angel of the church. This prophecy is more relevant to us than to the disciples in the apostolic time, because Jesus will come immediately after the days of tribulation (Mt 24:29ff).

The prophecy was given to strengthen our faith in the end times, especially for



We must recognize that only those who are sealed through the true church can find protection in Jesus (Rev 7:14).

us who are still alive before the unfolding of the seventh seal—right before the outpouring of the complete wrath of God.

We must recognize that only those who are sealed through the true church can find protection in Jesus (Rev 7:14). The explanation is accurate and biblical: “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Mt 24:27). Luke provides a similar account but does not indicate the direction of the flashing lightning (Lk 17:34).

The verse in Matthew serves two purposes. First, it serves to guard against arbitrarily believing in anyone who purports to be Christ in a time of great deception (Mt 24:26). The deception can be so serious that even the elect could become ensnared (Mt 24:24f).

Second, the verse is a similitude used to denote the pace and unpredictability of the time of His coming (Mt 24:27).

To explain it in relation to the appearance of the true church in the end times, we have to focus on the first pointer. It is a sign which the disciples and we today use to identify where Jesus is, so that we may not be deceived.

Jesus, after His resurrection, was no longer in the flesh. He promised His disciples, however, that He would come in the Spirit (Jn 14:17, 23; 16:7, 16ff). If



the Spirit lived in them, they would know where He was (1 Jn 3:24).

So the church that has the seal of God must fulfill the prophetic requirement of coming from the east.

A NEED TO REPENT

Coming back to the US and Iraq conflict, be it out of curiosity or interest, some of us may try to find scriptural passages to correspond with the event. One passage that has been quoted is the sounding of the sixth trumpet (Rev 9:13-19), since the great river Euphrates, which is a key element of the prophecy, is within Iraq (cf Rev 9:14).

Assuming that such an interpretation is accurate, what can we learn apart from knowing that the prophecy has come to

pass? What is even more important here is to understand the reason why God would permit such an event to take place.

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.
(Rev 9:20-21; cf 16:9, 11)

There are two things we need to consider.

The first is to realize that there is an urgent need for us to change ourselves for the better. Our top priority should be to improve our spirituality, our service to the Lord, and our worship of God in Spirit and in truth.

Regardless of how biblical events unfold, His divine purpose is for us to foster an even better relationship with Him.

To some, repentance is a matter of the past, but its necessity and function continue to take effect long after our conversion. It is a reference point by which we ponder over our relationship with God, so that we might conform to His requirements.

Often in the Bible, whenever a sign of the end of the age appears, we are reminded not to focus on the event alone.

The other thing we need to consider is our obligation toward the unbelieving world. If the world is to repent completely, to change its wicked ways, the true church has to bring the complete gospel of salvation to it.

When it comes to preaching, the



Our own effort is no doubt essential but is often insufficient. For that reason, the writer of Hebrews stresses stirring up faith and love together as we prepare for the coming of the Lord

church must not neglect the importance of having the correct evangelistic attitudes, addressing the issue of backsliding in faith, and turning to biblical solutions to work out incongruent



views of the truth.

And this change could motivate the entire community of faith to accomplish the commission entrusted to us.

IN SEARCH OF THE LORD

The mark of genuine repentance is seeking the Lord in humility. Zephaniah prophesied how, in doing so, we can be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger (Zep 2:3b).

In Zephaniah's call of repentance to God's people, the people assembled together to seek the Lord (Zeph 2:1).

Seeking the Lord requires great resilience in any individual attempt, but we must also come together as one body of Christ for our efforts to be effective.

Our own effort is no doubt essential but is often insufficient. For that reason, the writer of Hebrews stresses stirring up faith and love together as we prepare for the coming of the Lord (Heb 10:25; 3:12-14).

We must recognize that we are inseparable from the body of Christ, and all of us must work on our relationship with one another to make searching the Lord a reality. And reality means applying our faith in our lives so that it is not merely knowledge.

"Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility..." (Zeph 2:3)

The Bond of Faith

There are three steps to strengthening the mutual bond of faith among the members of the church.

First, we need to be just. This means that we do not wrong others and that we are sure what we do is for the benefit of everyone at large. The underlying principle is to treat one another in a fashion that discloses the nature of God in a world desperately in need of justice.

We must also maintain an upright stance before God—a righteous status—because this will enhance our mutual bond in Christ with others. We have

probably experienced during our Christian journey that when our faith is strained, our relationship with others is also strained.

Justice and righteousness should direct our hearts. We can achieve this by welcoming with humility the word of God to be the sole guiding principle in every aspect of our life. And it is this humility in the truth that builds up our relationship with others.

The life of the 144,000 in Revelation 14 sums up the process of seeking the Lord: They are together with the Lamb. They share a common name on their foreheads. Wherever the Lamb goes, they follow.

They pursue the same course of action in perfecting themselves (Rev 14:3-5) with the same objectives in minds. They are fully prepared for the coming of the Lord. Their personal effort to be with the Lamb is perfected by gathering in unity on Mount Zion—the true church (Rev 14:1).

ARE WE IN THE TEMPLE?

We should not seek the Lord as a last resort, for our search begins with the acceptance of Christ.

The Old Testament Scriptures uses the analogy of meeting God in His temple to illustrate the close divine-human relationship. The ancient saints revealed their deepest longing to see the face of God in the temple, and they expressed their unquenchable desire to remain in His temple.

When the earliest form of the tabernacle was erected, it consisted of three rooms: the outer court, the holy place, and the holy of holies. The ark of covenant was located in the holy of holies; the golden lamp stand, altar of

incense, and the table of showbread were placed in the holy place.

The author of Hebrews describes a slight variation in the temple after the first coming of Christ, where the altar of incense is moved into the holy of holies (Heb 9:3-4), indicating that the New Testament is an era of priesthood for all.

In Revelation, there are only two noticeable sections of the tabernacle—the outer court and the temple (Rev 11:1-2). Before the outpouring of the complete wrath of God, the outer court is left out for the gentiles to trample on (Rev 11:2).

A careful consideration is needed here to understand the drastic measure God has taken to leave the outer court out, because the significance is great. It portrays the unchanging divine principle that God searches the heart.

Befriending the world severs our bond with Christ, and compromising the truth with extra-biblical views in worship infuriates Him. Assimilating secular values into service undermines the essence of servitude.

When the final wrath comes, God will not give any regard to those who are not in the temple. He will save only those who are in it. Christians and gentiles alike will suffer the full brunt of His fury if they are caught in the outer court or beyond on the great day.

Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the plagues inflicted by the seven angels were completed. (Rev 15:7-9)



Justice and righteousness should direct our hearts. We can achieve this by welcoming with humility the word of God to be the sole guiding principle in every aspect of our life. And it is this humility in the truth that builds up our relationship with others.

Jesus tells us that the day of great tribulation will come on us unexpectedly (Lk 21:34) if we do not take heed to ourselves.

It will come as a snare to all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Everyone in this world will be affected, with the exception of those who are not weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life (Lk 21:34).

While going about with our normal life, we must not forget to be watchful and prayerful (Lk 21:36). We need to remain in the true church and constantly build a better relationship with God by continually seeking to grasp Him in full.

By doing so, we distinguish ourselves from the world. Though we live in this world, our existence is in Christ, and we will unshakably remain in His temple till He comes again. ★



Seven Blessings Of The End Times

HH Ko—Heidelberg, Germany.

By definition, blessings refer to those things that bring us joy and fortune. The book of Revelations records seven blessings that will save us from the disorder and wickedness of the end times if we hold fast to the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So how do we obtain these seven blessings?

READ THE PROPHECY

Revelation is the last book of the New Testament, but there are also similar prophecies in the Old Testament, such as those revealed in the book of Daniel.

We can say that Daniel was probably one of the greatest men of prayer. He prayed in almost every aspect of his life—for himself, for his country, and for his nation.

Daniel prayed so that he might understand the word of God, and we can see how fervent he was to understand the visions that he saw. He fasted for three periods of seven days, and we can see the specific content of his fasting:

I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. (Dan 10:3)

We can ask ourselves, have we put in this kind of effort to understand the word of God? Perhaps we have fasted on this level for the sake of a serious illness or the sake of our marriage, but we have probably never heard of anyone who fasted in this manner because they did not understand the word of God.

Though Daniel sought after the word of God in this manner, did He reveal anything to Daniel? In chapter 12, God did not tell him how things would come to pass in the end days.

But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase. (Dan 12:4)

Seeing the situation, Daniel continued to press God to reveal the mystery of His word and said to himself, “Although I heard, I did not understand. Then [he] said, ‘My lord, what shall be the end of these things?’” (Dan 12:8).

Then God replied, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end” (Dan

12:9). And what is this time? It is the time in the age that we live in today.

The last verse of the book of Daniel says, “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days” (Dan 12:13).

In plain language, we can say that God was telling Daniel that he could die in peace and not worry himself over these things. God told Daniel not to try to understand the mysteries of the end times because the time had not come.

But our time indeed is the time of the end. The book that was sealed in the time of Daniel is now opened to us, and this is why God tells us to read it. Revelation 22:10 is the exact opposite of what God instructed Daniel:

And he said to [John], “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.”

This is to say that the revelation of the end times is now open.

Thus, the first blessing of the end times is an invitation to read the opened book of Revelation. So if you feel that you are lacking blessings in your life, you can begin by reading from the book of Revelations, because it is not only God’s promise but an invitation.

DYING IN THE LORD

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them.” (Rev 14:13)

The second blessing of the end times belongs to those who die in the Lord.



So think about the scene of your death. What kind of things will you take with you?

This is actually a very unique blessing because it is a thrice-confirmed promise.

First, a voice from heaven said that the blessing is accompanied by the attestation of God. Second, John was commanded to write it down, the act of which is an authentication of the prophecy. Lastly, the Spirit spoke, reaffirming the blessing.

It is very rare that a single statement of promise is followed by three forms of attestation or affirmation.

If you went out today to look for a job, and your employer offered you a monthly salary of a hundred thousand dollars, you would laugh because it is an outrageous amount. And let’s say the condition of this promise is that you will receive your salary only after you die.

I think none of us are so foolish as to take this job. But this is the case for many religions in this world. Most religions tell us to do good, be good throughout our life, and work hard—strive for this and that. Upon your death, you will receive all these great things.

Many people follow this motto in their lives. They believe that if they work hard they will enter whatever kind of blessed realm they believe in. But what happens if, after death, it is not what they thought and they have been swindled?

This is where Christianity stands out. We have a very strong assurance from

God, from the record of the prophet, and most importantly, from the Spirit that testifies that this is indeed the truth.

Many of us have received the Holy Spirit, and this is the greatest assurance we can have. Our hope of salvation is not one filled with uncertainty—the blind efforts of working our whole life long, not knowing whether we will receive our reward at the time of death.

Some people die for the sake of money or love, and some die for their political ideals. When we think of these people, we consider them to be noble, but when they die, they cannot take with them any of the things for which they died.

You may have easily accumulated a business empire, but can you take it with you when you die? Perhaps when you reach the gates of heaven, you may say to Jesus, “Lord, I am the CEO of such and such company,” but do you think it is enough to enter into heaven?

We often hear the phrase, “We come empty-handed.” It is true that we cannot take any of our material things with us; but the fruits of our labor, specifically mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15, are the things that we can take with us.

So think about the scene of your death. What kind of things will you take with you? What fruits have been borne of your labor within the kingdom of God? Do you have the fruits of disorder and chaos in the church?

So the second blessing in Revelations tells us that we need to die in the Lord. But we must also bring some things with us—the fruits of our work.

STAY AWAKE AND KEEP YOUR CLOTHES WITH YOU

Behold, I am coming as a thief! Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. (Rev 16:15)

By the time we come to this verse in the book of Revelations, the world has reached its most chaotic stage, and this is when the sixth bowl of tribulation has been poured out. When the seventh bowl has been poured out, then “it is done” (Rev 16:17).

We are now in the sixth bowl of tribulation, and the world is in a great state of disarray.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Rev 16:13, 14)

There are three powers which appear in the world.

The first power belongs to the dragon, and its main function is to accuse us, the believers (Rev 12:10). This is the work of Satan. It may be that such accusations will arise from within the church itself.

The second power is that of the beast. In both Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, we know that the beast represents the powers that prevail in the world. These powers are described as coming out of the sea, which warns us of political turmoil and instability.



The third power is the false prophet. We can read more of this in Revelation 13:11-15. We can say that the false prophet represents the authority of the religious world. So when we talk about false prophets, we are not talking about religions that exist outside of Christianity but also those various forms of Christianity that exist within the faith itself.

Satan knows that this three-fold power is something that is not easily broken. The combination of these three powers will bring much trouble to the true believers. As a church, we have to be even more aware and alert, because it reminds us that Jesus is coming again.

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?” And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed

their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev 7:13, 14)

We need to stay awake and take care of our garments. The white garments referred here is obtainable only from within the True Jesus Church (Rev 3:4, 7:13, 14)—these garments are the white robes that God has given to us by grace. We do not deserve them; rather, it is His love for us that we receive these white garments.

It is our task to guard them and make sure we don't lose or soil them. This also means that we need to stand firm in the



We do not deserve them; rather, it is His love for us that we receive these white garments.



Although we have been invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, we have to constantly prepare ourselves for this supper—preparing ourselves in terms of our righteousness.

church. Revelation 16:15 tells us that Jesus will come like a thief. Only God knows the hour of Jesus' second coming.

This is exactly why we need to stay alert and keep our robes clean, for He could come today or tomorrow.

These white robes are God's gift of love to us, and they are given only when we receive the baptism of the True Jesus Church.

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE MARRIAGE SUPPER

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb'" And he added, "These are the true words of God." (Rev 19:7)

Those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb will be blessed. We know that this marriage represents the final consummation of the end times. We can say that, in the end, the universe will result in this great wedding.

We know that when we go to a wedding, we do not take this occasion lightly. There was a sister who had a dream about her own wedding. At the time, she was weak in faith, and she dreamt that she was at home and heard

a voice saying, "The groom is coming!"

So she woke up and went to the window to see. There was a great crowd making a ruckus. She discovered that she recognized many of the people in the crowd, and when she looked at the groom, she felt like she had never seen someone who was more worthy of admiration. But she could not clearly make out the features of the groom.

Even though this sister was married and had grown children, her heart was moved, not out of the ordinary sense but in her spirit, when she saw the groom. So she went out and asked, "Who is getting married?" Quite to her surprise, the person said, "The groom is marrying you!"

In the dream, she was still wearing her pajamas, and she felt ashamed to be attending her own wedding in her sleep clothes. She thought to herself that she was old enough to be a grandmother, which puzzled her even more.

The dream tells us that the marriage supper of the Lamb has come and that all of us are invited to this banquet. But will we attend the feast wearing our pajamas and slippers, or will we be dressed in fine linen, bright and pure?

This white linen (Rev 19:8) is different from the white garments mentioned earlier (cf Rev 7:13, 14). When we are baptized and put on Jesus Christ, our white garments are a gift of grace, and all we have to do is preserve it.

In those days, fine linen was imported from more affluent countries—it was a

cloth even more valuable than the white garments. In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man always wore robes of purple and inner garments of linen.

Rev 19:7-9 tells us that we have been invited to the supper of the Lamb, and the fine linen we put on represents the righteous deeds of the saints. After baptism, God calls us justified, but the reality is that justification is maintained by our own works of righteousness. Although we have been invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, we have to constantly prepare ourselves for this supper—preparing ourselves in terms of our righteousness.

It is only after God has deemed us justified that we have the ability to pursue righteousness. Because it is only then that pursuing righteousness has any meaning at all.

There are many non-Christians who have done many good things. Their deeds, unfortunately, are not works of righteousness because they were performed within a sinful nature.

Our sins, on the other hand, have been remitted by the blood of Jesus. Having been justified, we can begin performing works of righteousness, which constitutes the period of our preparation. And this is so that we may participate in the marriage supper.

Sometimes, for the sake of going to a concert, opera, or wedding, we may begin preparing ourselves many days in advance. If it is your own marriage, you would be worrying about the veil and dress you would be wearing on that day.

But have we ever taken care to notice how well prepared we are for this wedding of the Lamb? If you have thought about this, you would know that

we should be clothed in garments of linen white and pure.

Therefore, this fourth blessing is ours if we prepare ourselves for the final banquet of the Lamb.

HAVE PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION

Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (Rev 20:6)

This is the fifth blessing of those who share in the first resurrection.

The first resurrection occurs when one hears the word of the Son of God, believes in him, and receives baptism. This means that we have been raised again in the Spirit and become a living being (Jn 5:24, 25).

Once, there was a man who told Jesus that he wanted to follow Him, but he had to first go and bury his father. Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead." How could the dead possibly bury the dead?

What Jesus meant was that those who have died in the Spirit but live in the flesh should be the ones to bury those who have died physically. If we look at this from a spiritual perspective, all the great people with their worldly accomplishments are dead in the spirit.

But we have been raised to life—resurrected in the spirit. Jesus tells us these are the people who are blessed. They are holy, and they are blessed because the second death will have no dominion over them.

The blessed will be given power according to their status. They will be

priests of God and of Christ. In the Old Testament, priests were the only ones who went directly to the presence of God to serve and administer His instructions, and they could be selected only from the descendants of Aaron.

Today, all of us have become priests. Have you ever thought of yourself as a priest? The job of a priest is to offer sacrifices day and night to God. When you got up this morning, what did you offer to God?

We shall be not only priests but also kings to reign with Christ. You may think to yourself, "How is it that I can be a king?" If you had never been a king before and you were suddenly thrust into this position, you may feel uncomfortable and not know what to do.

Very few people go around having this idea in their head. The kind of king

positions were never held simultaneously by one person. A king was forbidden to make sacrifices; in the instance that one did, such as King Uzziah, he was stricken immediately with leprosy.

Neither was there a priest who ever became a king. So the kingship referred to here is the one descended from the line of David. But Jesus Christ has connected the priestly and kingly statuses, meaning that in the presence of God, we serve as a function of the ministry to God. In this sense, we are priests. And when we look at ourselves in relation to the world of sin and the power of Satan, then we have become kings.

Since we have this kingly status, let us depart from the bondage of sin because we have already taken part in the first resurrection—we are kings and priests.



But the kingship is our ability to have control over all sin—to conquer Satan and to overcome him. This means that we are spiritual kings.

that is referred to here is not the king with which we are familiar. But the kingship is our ability to have control over all sin—to conquer Satan and to overcome him. This means that we are spiritual kings.

In the beginning of the book of Revelation, God made us a promise. Chapter 1, verse 5 leading up to verse 6, says that God has freed us of sin with His blood. God has made for us a kingdom over which we can rule.

We can see the same idea in 5:10, where God has made for us a kingdom—which infers that we are kings as well as priests. In the Old Testament, these two

KEEP THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY

Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book. (Rev 22:7)

When the Bible uses "Behold," it alerts us to the work of the Lord, which entails something marvelous and wonderful. It is also a warning to us that Jesus is coming. If we recall the first blessing, it is to hear and read the Word.

If we are still just merely listening or reading by the time we reach the end of



But we need to be careful, because this period of grace will be open for a limited period of time...

the book of Revelation, then the blessing has dissipated. Rather, the verse above says we have to keep and do the work of this book.

And this is very similar to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew 7:24: Those who hear must likewise do. Hearing is one act, where something you encounter is imprinted in your mind. If all you did was listen but not act, you would be a very imbalanced person.

This is the same for our spiritual state. We need to know as well as need to do. Otherwise, we would be some kind of strange spiritual creature. If we listen too much, our heads might figuratively grow too large for our body, and so we have to do according to its word.

WASH OUR ROBES

Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates in the city (Rev 22:14).

In this last blessing, we have been brought into a realm that is quite beyond our imagination.

We can say, as an example, that there are often cases where someone has grown sick in the spirit, meaning that they have become weak in some ways. If



we saw this happening, we would go and encourage them out of love.

Paul says in his letters that using gentleness and tenderness to exhort and encourage someone is a good thing. And we know and see these things within the community of the church.

But we need to be careful, because this period of grace will be open for a limited period of time, and this is the opposite kind of spirit that is found in the gospel books, in which is the commission that the Lord Jesus left for us to save souls and practice love.

Revelation 22:10,11 foretells a different time in the future where things will be very different:

And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be

righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

If you are sick in your spirit, we should just let you continue in your sickness. If you are dissatisfied with the condition of the church, then it's for you to continue onwards; this is a fatalistic view of things. If you don't want to believe in Jesus Christ, then this is your choice, go your way.

This is the spirit of this verse: just let people be the way that they are already are. The filthy—let them just be filthy. If someone has done wrong under this set of circumstances, let them continue in it.

Of course, we need to remember that this verse is taken specifically in the context of a future time, not our time. And if someone stops coming to church, we shouldn't let him or her go without admonishment; we should not follow that spirit in our time now.

But there will come a time when that

spirit will apply, and that will be the time when people reach the point where they are already set in their ways.

In a time of great tribulation and persecution, the ministers will be trying to save themselves from falling, much less worry about you or others. So it is in such circumstances that make one say, "Things have gotten to this point, just let things remain as they are."

At that moment, we need to take care that we don't fall sick spiritually and that we should not fain spiritual sickness. Let the righteous still do right, and let the

because that person said something that I didn't like" or "Some brother or sister in church slandered me in front of others."

Maybe that might still work today but in the end times, as written in the last chapter of Revelation, the situation is such that if you don't come back to church, then you will simply be left behind.

So, the emphasis here is that we have to wash our own robes and train and cultivate our own spirituality. We must be responsible for everything we do ourselves rather than looking around to see what other people are doing. If you are able to do this, then you will be blessed. This is an extremely difficult time in which to live.

Of course, we have not reached that time, so we should not take this verse and apply it to our situation just yet. We are still in the time when we need to heal and make strong those who are weak spiritually.

There will come a time in the future where someone who is weak or dying will be left weak and dying. If we can hold on to our own faith till the very end, then we will be blessed. ★



holy continue in holiness.

Those who wash their robes will be blessed. This is the last blessing, and it is given to those who wash their robes in this most difficult and darkest of times. And we will be blessed as we strive for spiritual perfection to wash our robes.

There will come a period in the future of such chaos and tribulation that you see people falling all around you, even in church, and there will be nothing you can do about it.

Sometimes, in our present situation, we might say, "I am not coming to church



The Spirit Of Truth Or The Spirit Of Error?

Stephen Ku—Pacifica, California, USA

One of the greatest dangers of the end times is the coming of many antichrists. The apostle John cautioned the believers in one of his letters:

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. (1 Jn 1:18)

John was writing to believers because he addressed the readers as “little children” or “beloved.” This means that even believers of the Lord Jesus Christ may fall for the deception of the Antichrist. Because of this alarming possibility, John taught us not to believe but to test every spirit to check whether it is of God:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 Jn 4:1)

Behind the works of the antichrists is the spirit of the antichrist, which John also calls, “the spirit of error” (1 Jn 4:6). The spirit of error, which comes from the

devil, seeks to deceive the world and lead people away from Christ.

But are not believers given the power to overcome the evil one? Doesn’t John’s epistle confidently assert that believers have the anointing in them and that they know all things (1 Jn 2:20)?

Does he not also say that the evil one does not touch those who have been born of God (1 Jn 5:18)? Why, then, do we need to beware of the antichrists and the spirit of error?

Indeed, God, who lives in us, has given us all that we need to overcome the forces of evil. “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1Jn 4:4).

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world... Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 Jn 5:4-5)

Nevertheless, believers may still voluntarily follow the enticement of the devil. The devil cannot touch us, but he can deceive us so that we relinquish the guidance of God’s spirit and willfully

carry out his desires.

Oftentimes, the works of the spirit of error may appear to be similar to the works of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, thereby confusing the world and believers who are not watchful. This is why John warns us not to believe in every spirit but to test the spirits to see if they are of God.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ERROR AND FALSEHOOD

It is interesting that John did not contrast the “spirit of truth” with the “spirit of falsehood.” Instead, he calls the deceiving spirit the “spirit of error.” The dictionary defines “error” as “an act, assertion, or belief that unintentionally deviates from what is correct, right, or true.”

Whereas “falsehood” denotes something that is outright wrong, “error” implies an innocent (or seemingly innocent) mistake or a deviation from what is true.

When a person makes an error, it is often not because he doesn’t know what is right. He may have been misled into thinking that he was doing the right thing. Or maybe he was simply not careful

enough.

It is this kind of deviation that we, as believers, need to look out for. While the result of an error may not always be fatal, those who make an “error” will certainly suffer loss.

This is why our Lord repeatedly reminds us to guard what we have received until He comes:

“And he who overcomes, and keeps my works until the end...” (Rev 2:26)
“...Hold fast what you have...” (Rev 3:11)
“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” (Rev 16:15)

Complacency and self-confidence easily open the door to error. That is why we have to test the spirits, guard ourselves against the works of the spirit of error, and obey the Spirit of God. Then we will not jeopardize our rewards at the coming of our Lord.

Spirits are invisible and intangible to us. So how can we test the spirits? We can do so by testing the manifestations of a spirit. Since a spirit works through people, we can discern the works of the spirit of error by looking at the thoughts, words, and actions of those who are under its influence.

John gives us three tests by which to do so.

WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?

...Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is

now already in the world. (1 Jn 4:2-3)

The work of the spirit of the Antichrist denies that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. In John’s days, false teachers preached that God could not have come in the flesh because all flesh is evil. This heresy undermined the fundamental Christian belief that God became flesh and dwelled among us (1 Jn 1:14).

As believers, we know that Jesus took on the same flesh and blood as us to destroy the devil and release those under the devil’s control (Heb 2:14). He offered his body as an atonement for our sins, through which we are sanctified (Heb 10:10). This is why John taught that if anyone denies that Jesus has come in the flesh, he is not of God but is of the spirit of the Antichrist.



Since a spirit works through people, we can discern the works of the spirit of error by looking at the thoughts, words, and actions of those who are under its influence.

In those days, the antichrists at first mingled with the true believers of God (1 Jn 2:19). They confessed that Jesus was Lord and went in and out with other Christians. But, as time went on, they began to question the incarnation of Jesus Christ. They did not challenge Jesus’ lordship but taught that Jesus’ coming into the world was merely a spiritual manifestation.

This was a subtle and seemingly logical shift from the original teachings of the apostles. Eventually, they left the congregation of believers because of this difference in belief and formed their own group.

Today, we may not hear of anyone who professes to believe in Jesus Christ proclaiming also that He did not come in the flesh, but the work of the spirit of the Antichrist is still prevalent—it has just taken on different forms.

In what ways does the spirit of error manifest itself in people’s beliefs today?

More than One Way to Salvation

The spirit of error can come under the guise of love and acceptance. “God is love. He accepts you regardless of what you believe.”

God’s love has somehow become a justification for not believing Jesus Christ. It has also given people the license to condemn those who preach Jesus as the only way of salvation.

Preaching that Jesus is the only way to God is considered “the wrong thing to do” in popular culture today. When we give such a message, we are immediately accused of judging and condemning other people and religions.

People want to believe and hear that God will accept you as long as you are a good person, regardless of whether you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Some may concede that Jesus was perhaps indeed God in the flesh, but they object the moment they hear that Jesus is the ONLY way to salvation. In the eyes of many people in the world, those who preach Jesus Christ as the only way are narrow-minded and judgmental.

The world hates those who teach the

truth of salvation but welcome those who believe, “We should agree to disagree,” or “All religions are true” or “What is true for you may not be true for me.”



As the children of God, we ought to test the spirits and see the error of those popular beliefs that are contrary to the truth.

Is this not the kind of half-truth that the antichrists confessed in the days of John? The spirit of error agrees that it’s a “good thing” to believe in Jesus, as long as you don’t preach that Christ is the only way to God.

While this type of belief appears to be noble, it is in fact the hideous work of the spirit of error because it misleads. It seeks to subvert the fundamental message of the gospel and intimidates us from speaking the truth.

Our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed unequivocally, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn 14:6). Besides Jesus Christ, there is simply no other way.

As loving as our Lord Jesus was, He told the people, “He who believes in [God’s Son] is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (Jn 3:17).

The apostles of the Lord also preached the same message faithfully: “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).

As the children of God, we ought to test the spirits and see the error of those popular beliefs that are contrary to the

truth. Let us hold fast to the Word that we have believed and boldly confess that Jesus Christ and His atoning death is the only way to God.

WHAT DO THEY SAY?

They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. (1Jn 4:5)

Those who are led by the spirit of error “speak as of the world.” What does this mean? “The world” is the unbelieving world, including all that is contrary to the will of the Father in heaven.

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1Jn 2:16)

The spirit of error is at work in this unbelieving world, for the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one (1 Jn 5:19). Those who are of this world speak the things according to the will of the evil one. What they speak or teach are things that appeal to our selfish desires—things that oppose the will of God.

This is not to say that everything we hear or learn in the world is evil. The human race has contributed much good to this world, such as science, medicine, technology, and the arts.

In our society, we also often see

people who set excellent examples or exhibit moral courage, diligence, wisdom, and self-sacrifice. All these are positive things for us to learn and imitate.

But the spirit of error often makes use of things that seem to be positive to inject certain philosophies, values, and attitudes that are actually contrary to the teachings of God.

The spirit of the antichrists may not necessarily speak out directly against Christ, but it may lead people away from Christ with false teachings that appear to be based on Christian beliefs. It can teach greed in the name of diligence, pride in the name of confidence, and lust in the name of love.

Self-help books and videos are everywhere nowadays. Book titles that carry instructions like “How to Lose Weight in 10 Days” and “How to Succeed in Your Career” have become bestsellers.

On infomercials, we hear testimonials of people whose lives have been changed by following the advice offered in similar videos or books. People attend motivational seminars to better themselves or achieve certain goals.

One common message in many of these products or seminars is “Believe in yourself.” People are taught to tell themselves that they can do whatever they set out to do, even in the face of the impossible. Those who are successful made their dreams possible because they believed in themselves.

Determination and persistence are positive values. In fact, the Bible encourages Christians to nurture such values. But when they are used to teach the pursuit of material wealth or personal ambitions, they cannot be of God.

Confidence is good, but when God is removed from the picture, confidence

becomes pride, for the Bible teaches us to put our trust and confidence in the Lord, not in ourselves.

So before we eagerly embrace the seemingly noble teachings that we hear, we need to test the principles and premises behind them to see if they are of God or of the world.

WHAT DO THEY OBEY?

One other way to test the spirits is to look at whether they are obedient to the truth. Those who are of God heed the teachings of Christ and of the apostles. But those who are under the sway of the spirit of error refuse to abide by the truth, even if they confess with their mouths that they are Christians.

Our Lord Jesus has warned us that not everyone who calls Him “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven. On that day, He will say to many professed Christians and workers of God that He never knew them because of their disobedience (Mt 7:15-20).

Ultimately, it is not just what a person professes or teaches that determines whether he is of the Spirit of truth, but whether he carries out the will of the heavenly Father.

Superficial Religion

Among the greatest deceptions of the end times is that of superficial religion. This is also the mark of the antichrists, who put on a cloak of religion but do not accept or practice the truth.

They are guided by the spirit of error, which attempts to fool Christians into having a form of godliness without yielding to the teachings of Christ.

Paul told Timothy that there would come a time when people would not be interested in hearing the genuine

teachings of God:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (2 Tim 4:3-4)

Those who follow the spirit of error have a form of godliness, but they have no intention to hear or obey God’s word. Rather than humbly accept the sound doctrine, they choose for themselves what they like to hear. We must not fall into this kind of false piety.

When I visited a country in Asia last year, I learned about a growing phenomenon there. Many people flock to worship services organized by preachers who choose not to associate with any particular congregation. These preachers, who are charismatic speakers, occasionally conduct services at very grand hotels.

People are attracted to such Sunday services because of the luxurious hotel settings, the refreshments that follow, and the eloquence of the speakers. Because of its popularity, such services also help generate a good amount of income for these preachers.

There is certainly nothing wrong with having worship services or teaching the Bible at five-star hotels. However, we cannot but wonder whether people are attracted to such events because they are sincerely interested in knowing God’s will and in obeying His word.

The work of the spirit of error can affect any believer—whether we are a new believer or a loyal minister. It can deceive us to into believing that we are good Christians, when we have not

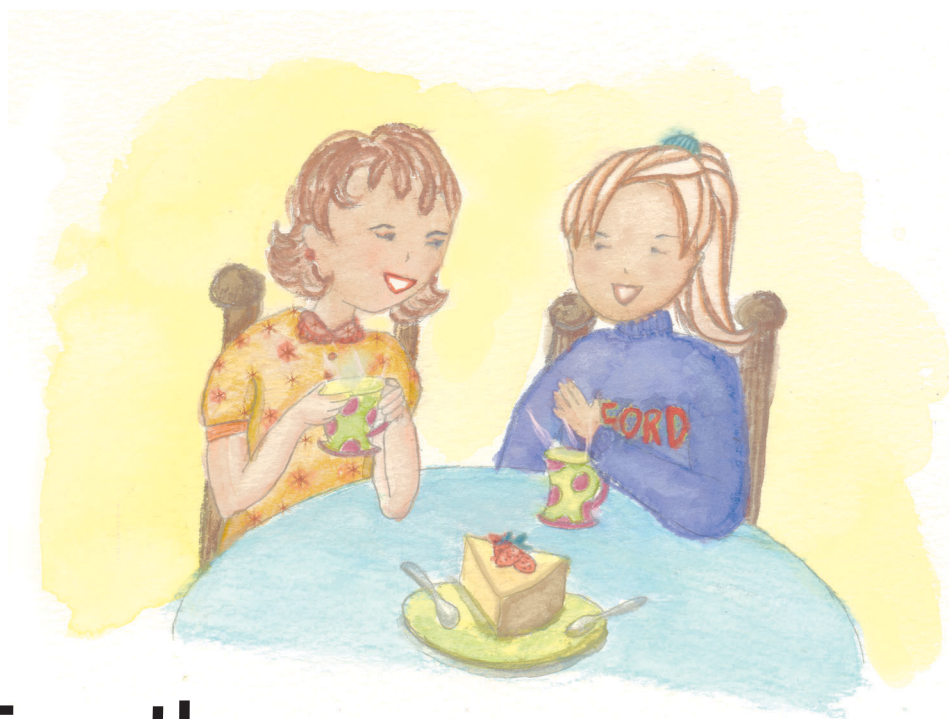
accepted the complete gospel of salvation or been truly born again. It can deceive us into thinking that we are actively serving the Lord, when our personal conduct is far from the teachings of the Scriptures.

The spirit of error deceives us into satisfying ourselves with superficial religion, so that we become too complacent with merely an outward appearance of piety. Without constant watchfulness through God’s word and His Spirit, we can easily stray from the truth while still believing that we are being fervent in the Lord.

But those who are serious about their faith are not content with just attending church or even preaching in the name of Christ. True believers hear the Spirit of truth so that they might truly know God’s will and walk according to it.

If our heart is inclined towards Jesus and we want to follow and obey His teachings wholeheartedly, His Spirit of truth will guide us into all truths through His Holy Spirit (Jn 16:13). This is how we can remain in the Lord and avoid falling into the errors of the antichrists.

May our hearts be always in tune with the teachings of the Lord and may our lives be ever responsive to the guidance of the Spirit of truth. Then, when the Lord appears, “we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (1 Jn 2:28). ★



Growing Together With My Parents:

How College Improved Our Relationship

A strange thing happened to me after I left home and went to college—I started getting along better with my parents.

Not to say that I had a horrible relationship with them to begin with, but over the course of my college years, I definitely noticed a change in both the quality and the content of our interactions.

Even funnier still, I found that the freedom I had once fought so hard for in high school was no longer the hard-earned result of parent-child warfare. Rather, by the time I graduated from college, my wish to be treated as a mature adult gradually and naturally

came true as I learned to behave like one.

What brought about these differences in the way I treated my parents and the way my parents treated me? A number of reasons can be identified, but most noticeable among them is the fact that, as my relationship with God improved, so too did my relationship with my parents, especially with my mother.

SOMEWHERE FAR FROM HOME

During my adolescence, I used to assume that beneath my parents' setting of rules and limits and behind their demands to know my every whereabouts was their actual intention to demonstrate control.

Never one who liked being told what to do, and never one to give up without

a fight, you might guess that arguing with my parents was not an uncommon occurrence throughout my adolescent years.

Regardless of whether or to what extent they were trying to make clear their authority over me, I was known for firing back full force with a "you can't tell me what to do" attitude.

Thank God that halfway into my junior year of high school I received the Holy Spirit during a student spiritual convocation. But by that time, I still had not developed a consistent or lengthy prayer habit.

Yet with God's Spirit living in me, I was able to receive the strength to gradually tone down my behavior, which, truth be told, had long ago crossed over

the border of proper Christian living into rebellion and sin.

As my senior year of high school and the prospect of college neared, I formed several ideas of what I was looking for in a university: somewhere near a True Jesus Church, somewhere near a city, and somewhere far from home.

While I was definitely drawn toward the thought of a fast-paced, crowded city life, I recognized that I was also pushed toward that direction by what I saw as my oppressive home environment.

After I had been accepted into a couple of schools and debated over which one to attend, thankfully, God helped me to realize that choosing the school closest to my home would be best for me because it would allow me to attend the youth Bible study nearby.

While that university also met my requirement of being located near a large city, my dream of moving far from home turned into the reality of a fifty-minute commute from my parents' home.



As we began to discuss our problems openly, we also began to address these problems through prayer

PROVIDING FOR ONE ANOTHER

While away at school, my parents would call me every few days to see how I was doing. Since they usually worried if we hadn't spoken for over a week, I was obligated to call and check in with them as well.

Because my dad isn't much of a phone person, my mom and I usually did

most of the talking. While my father and I were by far not the best of friends, putting my mom and I in the same room could be the most deadly of combinations.

Throughout my teenage years, my mother and I fought often, and we fought hard. Shouting matches that resulted in tears and slamming doors were a painful but common occurrence.

Needless to say, I hardly ever spoke to my parents about personal problems. Therefore, topics such as feelings and frustrations, faith and friends, were strictly off limits.

Regardless, the phone calls to and from home continued. At first, the conversations between my mom and I consisted mostly of what we had done that day, but they eventually evolved into discussions of how we had been feeling that particular day.

After a while, I found that I missed our talks if we hadn't had the chance to speak to each other. After a few semesters of living in the dorms, I realized with some shock that my mother and I had begun to communicate with and depend on each other as (gasp) friends.

My faith during this time was slowly building up with the help of attending the youth Bible studies and my own spiritual cultivation. It dawned on me that the fledgling friendship between my mother and I was also helping to strengthen my faith.

What's more, my mom's spirituality was improving as well. While we weren't necessarily always discussing specific Bible passages as such, we did start to speak openly about our own problems.

For the first time, my mother shared with me the many struggles and trials she encountered in marriage, church, and

work life. No longer was she just filling the role of my mother; I came to see her as a person, complete with human needs, weaknesses, and emotions.

As we began to discuss our problems openly, we also began to address these problems through prayer. Oftentimes we would end our long-distance talks by praying together afterwards.

On some mornings or before I would go to bed, I would make a quick call home and ask my mom to pray with me, and she often did the same.

Curiously enough, it often wound up that when my faith was weak, my mother's was strong, and vice versa. Consequently, there would be weeks when my mother would be the one lifting up my spirits, and the next month, I would find myself trying to encourage her.

In this manner, God miraculously provided a way for each of us to receive spiritual support by having us provide for each other.

Our prayers and makeshift testimonies helped me not only to see my mother as an individual, but also as a fellow sister-in-Christ. As stated in James 5:16, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

Helping to bear one another's burdens through sharing and prayer strengthened our relationship with each other and our individual relationships with God.

ACCEPTING DISCIPLINE

Of course, my parents and I still engage in the occasional argument. After all, perfect endings and perfect people are only the works of fiction, and I was reminded of this sobering truth on many

weekends or school breaks spent at home.

During those not-so-pleasant instances, the makings of an argument usually went something like this:

Scenario One: Parent asks daughter in a stern tone of voice to do something. Interpreting this as an attack on her newfound adulthood and independence, daughter responds back with an irritated tone of voice. Fight ensues.

Scenario Two: Daughter makes known her frustration with parent's seeming ineptitude. Taking this as an assault on parental authority and ability, parent responds back in frustration. Fight ensues.

The possibilities are endless.

Usually, what sets off an argument is not so much what is said but the way it is said. King Solomon was right on the mark when he wrote in Proverbs 15:1 that "a soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Yes, sometimes our parents may be wrong, but many times, they are in the right. And when our emotions get the better of us in an argument, it's hard for us to tell who's right and who's wrong.

What's more, no matter what the situation, we still should not act disrespectfully towards our parents. If we cannot even treat our earthly parents properly, how can we expect to please our heavenly Father? As written in Hebrews 12:9,

Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more



Four years of living on campus also showed me that the longer I lived away from home, the more I looked forward to going home.

readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

The same chapter of Hebrews also teaches us that God disciplines those He loves. Verses 6 and 7 read,

*"For whom the Lord loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives."
If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*

God sometimes trains us in painful ways. Likewise, we may think that parental discipline is too strict at times, but it is usually for our own benefit.

And if parental efforts seem less than perfect to us, we need to remember that our parents are, after all, only human. They are not God, but they are trying. Therefore, we must also try our best to repay their efforts with obedience and respect. Patience helps, too.

Finally, we need to examine the reasons why we're so offended by our parents' comments in the first place.

Most people don't like being told what to do, and most people dislike criticism even more. Unfortunately for them, our parents are the ones stuck with the job of having to dole out the bulk of these hard-to-give and hard-to-receive comments.

When we do hear these types of remarks, we must ask ourselves if our desire to retaliate against our parents is

actually a result of wounded pride. Proverbs 13:1 tells us that, "A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke."

Let us not be foolish, but wise children.

ALWAYS A CHILD IN THEIR EYES

Despite the fact that I'm now a college graduate and supposedly all grown up, I've realized that I'll always be a child in my parents' eyes.

No matter how old we are, whether we're working or starting families of our own, our parents will always be our parents. As a result, regardless of age or abilities, we will always be their children.

In Paul's epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians concerning how to treat parents, he addressed the believers as "children." For example, in Ephesians 6:1, Paul writes, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

While Paul's letters apply to believers of all ages, he probably wasn't directing this message solely toward toddlers and teenagers. As the apostle who guided them into God's truth and the one who nurtured their spiritual growth, these believers would always be Paul's spiritual children.

In the same way, God gave our parents their status as caregivers and guardians. And according to His will and the measure of love He has put in our hearts, we must strive to honor our parents throughout our lives. This is also how we are to honor God.

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Four years of living on campus also showed me that the longer I lived away from home, the more I looked forward to going home. Yes, absence does make the heart grow fonder, and I've found truth in the saying that we often don't appreciate what we have until it's gone.

However, the fact that I no longer minded but enjoyed going back home was also because my home was no longer the same as it was when I had left it. My lifestyle has calmed down considerably since my high school days, and I did some necessary maturing in terms of my behavior, my emotions, and my faith.

My parents saw these changes and did some adjusting of their own. Ironically, my parents actually encourage me to get out of the house more, whereas in high school, they seemed to be doing everything in their power to keep me at home.

During these four years, you might say that we all grew up together. Now that I've graduated and am living at home again, I really thank God for the changes that He has made in my life and in my relationship with my parents.

At the same time, my parents definitely still do treat me like a child in some ways, but I've learned that that's not necessarily a bad thing. While parents sometimes do need to ease their grip a bit, we shouldn't expect them to completely let go, either.

Sometimes, it feels good to be held onto. ★



MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

THE TRUE VINE

July 2003 Vol. 3 No. 1

- What's New:** Love and Covenant in Marriage
- Basic Beliefs:** Why is the Holy Communion so important?
- Christian Living:** Trust and Wait
- Testimony:** God Works in Mysterious Ways
- How to subscribe and unsubscribe

What's new

Love and Covenant in Marriage

Have you thought about the condition of your relationship with your spouse lately? Does your Christian marriage make a positive difference on the church and encourage loved ones around you?

Read more in our Discipleship column.

Basic Beliefs: Q&A

Question: Why is the Holy Communion so important?

Answer: FIND IT in our Q&A section

Do you have any Questions? Suggestions?

Submit your feedback at <http://www.tjc.org/contact/>

Christian Living

Trust and Wait

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. -Psalm 37:7

Trusting and waiting are virtues in the life of a Christian that need to be emphasized together. Resting in God without waiting for Him does not strengthen your faith, nor does it aid in your understanding of God's will. Likewise, waiting without relying upon God is as futile an effort as climbing a tree to look for fish. Trust can be likened to the unwavering center of a compass, while waiting can be likened to the compass itself. If your waiting is as steadfast as a firmly centered compass, your "needle" will be secure only then can you draw the whole direction of a successful life of faith.

We need to be still as we rely upon the Lord to find our direction in life. When the Egyptians chased the Israelites to the edge of the Red Sea, Moses said to God's people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today... For the LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:13-14). We manifest our reliance on God by remaining still and committing everything Him, without any doubt or fear.

We need to be patient in waiting. Once Jesus' brothers hastened Him to go to Judea. He said to them, "My time has not come yet." Waiting requires patience. Do not make haste. Do not lose heart. Watch how God accomplishes His will. There is a time for everything. As Jesus waited patiently for God's appointed time, we too, should wait upon the Lord.

The schemes of the wicked often succeed in this world, and their ways may often prosper. The way of the righteous, on the other hand, may be a thorny and perilous path. Yet the prosperity of the wicked can never last long. The plight of the righteous is temporary-Jesus is God who rewards goodness, and punishes wickedness. Jesus knows the ways of the wicked and the plight of the righteous.

People without a vision for the future often complain about God's injustice in letting the wicked prosper. So often do they perceive this injustice that some Christians even think that one is better off doing evil than do good-reversing their moral principles and integrity. But the faithful will be still and rest upon the Lord as they wait for Him patiently. For they know that God never fails and that they only need to wait for His appointed time.

reflections

If you would like for us to send you a monthly supply of spiritual encouragements, please subscribe to our TJC e-newsletter, The True Vine! You will find helpful articles and testimonies to uplift your faith, and this electronic version is both easily accessible and available for your convenience. So log on to www.tjc.org and join our online community today!



The Family Altar

Adapted sermon by Richard Solgot—Tampa, Florida, USA

The best of spiritual judgment tells us that every Christian home should establish a family altar because its effects have everlasting benefits.

Would you say that worshipping together is your family's most important function—the most needed get-together? Is there anything more vital than daily worshipping together as a family unit?

Families plan many things they would like to do together. If a planned trip to the mountains, or to Europe, or to the moon (if such plans ever become a reality) never materialize, it may not affect your family very much.

But if your plan to establish a family altar never materializes, it will affect your family much more.

THE NEED FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

The family altar must first be established in the hearts of the parents, for they provide the leadership needed to direct and guide the spiritual life of a family. This is a major project because the most important church is the church in your house!

Private devotional reading by each member of the family is commendable, but it will never produce the benefits and fill the need that is realized when the family worships together.

Although Jesus spent much time alone in prayer and devotion to God, and no matter how busy He was, He always had time for the little ones. By His example, we need to recognize the value of our children, and the importance of drawing them close to the Lord Jesus with every opportunity.

The family that worships together at home will have little difficulty gathering together to worship with other families, known as “going to church.” The home and church are dependent on each other, and worship should begin at home.

Establishing a family altar may not guarantee a problem-free life, but it will guarantee a place of refuge and a place for the sharing of family problems. Children will hear their names mentioned with the concern laid at the feet of the heavenly Father, and parents will hear their children pray for them in a way that no one else can.

The family altar is very much needed. A number of values grow out of the practice of family worship. And the quality of your relationship with the rest of your family is dependent on whether or not



Because children hold us accountable to the things we say, and if we say the truth about God's wise instructions, we will also raise spiritually wise children.

you are able to share your faith with one another.

Sometimes, we think that it's always the parents that give much to the children. But if we raise our children in the Lord, we will gradually realize just how much they teach us about God's love. And they teach us a lot—just ask your parents.

How much time they spend worshipping God is a reflection of how much time we spend with God, and how much they know to rely on God in their adult life depend on how much we rely on God as a family when they are young.

Setting an Example

Paul wrote, "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men" (2 Cor 3:2). Or, as Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mt 5:16).

Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:4)

We should let others know that we have a new life—a life that is set apart from the world. And the family worship time can be a means of letting our light shine, and when we put it to practice; it will serve as an incentive for others to try the same good habit.

REACH OUT WITH GOD'S WORDS

We also need to emphasize the importance of God's words within our family because it provides the best spiritual resources for our faith:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim 3:16, 17)

Sometimes, it is hard for us to reach out to our children, especially when they are in their adolescence because they may think we are incapable of understanding what they go through.

If we are able to inspire and encourage them by God's words, we may gain their respect and, at the same time, pass on the most important life instructions to help them learn to rely on God to resolve their own challenges.

Why is it that our children seem to have much respect for the pastors in the church? When they attend a church seminar or retreat, why do they come home feeling spiritually nourished? We need to ask ourselves, what is that missing link in our homes?

That missing link has a lot to do with whether or not we incorporate Bible reading and the studying of Scriptures within our family. Do we feed our children with the spiritual food that they may not know they are lacking?

In the early years of parenthood, we

need to instill the words of God and exalt the words of God within our children so that they learn to do the same. By paving their spiritual journey early on, we will run into a lot less trouble trying to figure out how and why our family unit has grown distant and apart.

Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law. (Deut 31:12)

One way to observe all the words of God is to speak to our children with God's words. Because children hold us accountable to the things we say, and if we say the truth about God's wise instructions, we will also raise spiritually wise children.

With God's commands as the guiding light for our family, we can walk into the unknown and face all the challenges that are ahead with faith and confidence that God is walking right beside us.

PRAY TOGETHER, STAY TOGETHER

The family altar is the private place where the family is able to pray about problems and matters the family would not pray about in the presence of others. It is like closing the doors about the family unit and having a sweet fellowship with God.

It is the type of prayer mentioned in Matthew 6:6—the closet type of prayer where only God's ears are welcome as the family prays for an answer to particular problems.

How wonderful it would be if our children learn from young that their house is a house of prayer (Isa 56:7), which God will graciously consider good and

acceptable—a pleasing offering and sacrifice.

We can begin with baby steps, starting from the initial understanding to give grace before each meal, to say the Lord's Prayer with understanding, to encourage them to pray before bed, and to pursue after the Holy Spirit when they are old enough to recognize its importance.

The act of prayer teaches our children to put their trust and reliance in the Lord; to focus on the promises of God instead of the limits of their parents. Slowly, our children will grow up to honor and communicate with us through the love of Christ.

Praying together will strengthen the relationship between parents and children, as well as children and their siblings. It will strengthen our trust in each other so that, with time, every member of the family will learn to open up and discuss their personal needs.

When the family's spiritual growth are in harmony with one another, we will notice that the spirit that bind us together only makes us stronger as individuals and as a member of the family.

Also, our children will appreciate and value their importance and spiritual contribution to the family. If we as parents are the only ones who are growing in spirit but our children are not, then it is time to examine the larger picture.

Invite Others to Join Our Family Altar

On the other hand, while the family altar is pretty much the private prayer life of the combined family, there is no need to shy away from the practice when visitors arrive.

When the prophet Daniel knew that

his daily routine of praying to God three times a day was decreed forbidden by King Darius, it did not stop him from worshipping and praying to God. Instead, he "prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days" (Dan 6:10).

I remember one time, as our family was kneeling in the living room praying, a neighbor boy who had come on the porch, noticed, and knelt on the porch until we were through.

The family that prays together stays together.

MY HOUSE WILL SERVE THE LORD

We may live in a time that does not value the importance of the family altar and worshipping God. Others may be raising their children to conform to the ways of society so that their children are not ostracized or made fun of.

But we are a chosen nation of God, set apart and holy in His eyes. What decisions are you going to make about the family altar that God commands us to establish in our homes?

In times like these, we need to faithfully adopt Joshua's determination to live for Christ—not just for himself, but for his entire household.

Now, therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt.

Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose lands you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve

the Lord. (Josh 24:14, 15)

One way to serve the Lord is to work tirelessly to raise God-fearing children. This is probably one of the hardest commission that Christ has entrusted to us—especially in the twenty-first century, where sin and temptations attract us in every shape and form.

The foundation of establishing the family altar must begin before children are born. It must begin in the hearts of young people who walk away from the marriage altar to establish a family altar.

The family altar will be a place where they will meet daily to quiet their hearts and strengthen their purposes to live out the covenant they made with God when they became Christians, as well as when they became husband and wife.

When family worship is a daily practice, the dedication of our children will not be a mockery or a mere formality, but it will be the dedication of our own lives passed on to our offspring as a heart-to-heart and soul-to-soul experience.

The family altar is a means by which Christians can grow in grace, and we need to pursue to be strong in grace. The daily reading of the Scriptures (God speaking to us), and the daily practice of prayer (our speaking to God), will strengthen our inner spiritual lives.

The family altar may not cure all the ills, but it will bring faith and trust and comfort and peace and hope and assurance to the family, in a way that nothing else will. There is no substitute for a family's gathering together and worshiping God within the doors of the home. ★



The First Year In The Workplace

Chloe Yang

I graduated from college with a degree in computer science during the time the dotcom boom was still alive.

I thank God for the numerous job offers I had, and the ease with which I found my current place of work. The company was located relatively close to a church, and allowed me to keep in touch with friends and church believers.

It was exciting to know that I was finally done with college and that someone would actually be paying me to apply my skills and intelligence (as opposed to the many hours I worked in college, and I had to pay the school!).

It was all fine and dandy until the first

day of work. That was when I realized that I was nervous about the new position and meeting up with my boss to decide on my role in their tight-knit team.

I think that the experiences I had during my first year of work are common for many newcomers to the workplace. I wanted to fit in with my coworkers, work to fulfill my boss' expectations, and use all the knowledge I had acquired in college to contribute significantly to the success of the company.

Doing all these things may be a little daunting, and perhaps reading about my first year at work will help take the edge off of working at your first full-time job. It all really comes down to doing your best, and entrusting the rest to God.

DILIGENCE PAID OFF

Even though I graduated from a top-notch university, during the first couple of months of my employment I found myself constantly worried about what my coworkers and my boss thought of the quality of my work. Was I working fast enough? Do they think I am stupid? Are they disappointed in my knowledge-base, and are now regretting hiring me?

Unfortunately for me, my company was small, and there was no regular schedule for performance reviews, so I was constantly insecure about the quality of the work I did. I just worked as hard as I could, and went the extra mile to make sure that the things I worked on were done right, and done on time.

Each morning, when I said grace for

my breakfast, I would also sneak in a request to ask for God's guidance for the day. I'd ask that I would stay focused and be productive, so that I would be able to do my work well.

The diligence and morning prayers paid off: I got a glowing performance review from my manager and my director. Later on, they entrusted me with more important projects that challenged me and helped me learn more about my line of work.

This brings to mind Paul's encouragement to the believers in the Colossian Church who were servants:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Col 3.23-24)

Diligence always pays off, whether you are diligent for God, or for your boss. Even if people may not acknowledge your work right away, eventually your consistency will be known to all and outright undeniable. It takes a lot of patience, but it is well worth the effort.

DON'T BE A BASHFUL CHRISTIAN

Don't be afraid to let your coworkers and boss know you are Christian. In most cases, people are tolerant of your religious beliefs, and may even embrace the same set of religious values as you.

When I was in college, I managed to find a summer internship, but I was determined to miss two weeks of work to attend the National Youth Theological Seminar. The weeks before the seminar were very tense for me, because I didn't know if my boss would be happy with my going, since internships last only ten

to twelve weeks, and missing two weeks would not be a trivial matter.

A couple of weeks before the seminar, I spoke with my boss, and told him that I would be going to a theological seminar, and to my surprise, he was more than willing to let me attend.

He said something along the lines of "Youth these days just don't do things like that anymore." And believed that young people should spend more time in character development and searching their souls.

This convinced me that I don't need to be bashful of my beliefs; if we consistently demonstrate that we are trustworthy and diligent, people will generally be very accommodating towards your religious beliefs.

PRAY WHILE YOU WORK

Prayer is important in the workplace and it works. I used to think, why would God care about secular matters like this project I am stumped on at work? It has nothing to do with my salvation, or His cosmic plan for the world.



God is over all, and everything—even our work at the office—is under His control.

However, this is where we can see God's great love for us: He truly cares for us, even when we fret over matters that concern only us, and not the cosmos. Jesus said our Father looks after the sparrows and numbers our hairs; of course He will help us with our difficulties

at work, as long as we rely on Him.

Once I was working on the tail-end of a project. If what I was working on did not go through, we could not complete and sign off the project. Unfortunately, the work required that I be attentive to it at odd hours.

Each iteration would take about eighteen to twenty-four hours to complete, which would mean I would be working on an experiment at 5:00 a.m., and then looking at it again at 10:00 p.m. at night.

This also took place during the month where we had a spiritual convocation at church. Between driving to church (which was about a forty-minute drive) and working very odd hours, I was worn out and desperate, because very little progress was being made.

In my desperation, I realized that I neglected to factor God in the picture. I didn't think that God would care about this project, since it's not a big deal to Him, even though it is a big deal to me.

Because of this attitude, I didn't pray to God and ask for His help, so as a result, I didn't get any help. After I realized this, I asked a few brothers and sisters to pray for my project at work, and I also prayed earnestly for this.

Somehow, all the problems were solved one by one, and the project successfully completed. My coworkers attribute it to the long hours I spent on it; I consider it a miracle from God.

From that experience onwards, I learned to entrust everything to God, even issues from work. After all, God is over all, and everything—even our work at the office—is under His control. If He wants something to happen, it will happen.

Unless the LORD builds the house, its builder labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves. (Psalm 127:1-2)

When we work, we have to remember our Big Boss, the one who is the builder of all things, even computer programs and whatever you have to work on. We should try our best to spend time with Him, and to know Him better, so that we are better aware of what pleases Him and what does not.

His participation in our life at work is very important. If God didn't look out for us, our efforts will be in vain.

overlooked by our loving Father. He sees His children struggling, and He won't leave them to struggle alone.

Finally, let us be encouraged with the following verse: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Phil 4:13).

And, as I have learned during my first year at work, that includes dealing with that stubborn project at work. If God watches over the sparrows, He will watch over us, too. ★



Prayer is important in the workplace and it works.

Being a little apprehensive about our first full-time job is a perfectly normal and natural reaction to such a large shift in lifestyle, but through relying on God and persistent diligence, everything will fall nicely into place.

Even though diligence does not guarantee instant success, consistently working and finishing projects on time inevitably gets noticed and rewarded (whether by our Father in heaven, or our boss on earth).

God will see our efforts and will help us if we are willing to rely on Him. We should remember to pray to Him whenever we need help; little prayers made throughout the day are not

Calling All *photographers!*



Have you ever captured an inspiring and evoking image? Now is your chance to submit and share your masterpiece with us. Please send high resolution images in 5"x 7" or 9"x 12" in 300 dpi, RGB on CD, and mail it to 314 S. Brookhurst St., #104, Anaheim, CA 92804, attention: Manna.

Thank you and happy shooting today!

Lord, This One Soul I Won For You

Esther Chin—Adams Road, Singapore

And Jesus came and spoke to [His disciples], saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Mt 28: 18-20)



As Jesus stood on the mount of ascension He once again reminded them,

But you shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

We often keep the last words of someone we love close to our hearts—especially if they leave us with a special request. For those of us who love Jesus, His last appeal before His ascension leaves a deep impression.

Jesus wants us to spread His gospel throughout the world and, after His resurrection, the forty days that He lingered on earth was to call us to this commission to spread His truth.

How will you answer Him?

Lord, This One Soul I Won For You

*Lord, we have come to the knowledge of
Your love
By Your sacrifice for souls unworthy as ours
We reflect upon the times we grieved You
With our callous disregard
Yet it is Your desire
That we should not remain apart
No greater love exists
Than that which You gave
Your life for ours*

*Lord, we want to grow
In the likeness of Your image
So we can be witnesses for You
Grant us
Humility, as You did Moses
Courage, as You did Joshua
Wisdom, as You did David
Love, as You did Peter, and
Strength, as You did Paul*

*Even as we face oppositions
Both from without and within—
For there is poverty, social mores, and political
issues we cannot control
There are skepticisms and scorn from those
absent of Your Truth
Give us the courage we need to testify for You
The wisdom to know what to speak
And the eloquence to speak it
Lord, we are ready to take up
Your commission*

*To fulfill Your desire to save all
We did wonder
If all the hardships and loneliness
In exchange for that one soul is worth it?
But as we turn to look at Jesus on the cross
We realize we have so much more to do
We'll make disciples of these people for You
Different though they seem
For You Yourself showed no partiality
Because they are Your children, too*

*Lord, we will love as You first loved us
For if we have faith but have not love; we are
nothing
Love without Truth
Is blind
And love without the Holy Spirit's guidance
and power
Is short-lived
By Your grace
We have the Truth
We have the Holy Spirit*

*Until that day
When we meet the Lord
We shall faithfully spread
The message of His love
And when it is our time
To face the Lord
We will be able to say—
Lord, this one soul
I won for You. ★*



Manna is looking for certain types of articles, or article genres. Each genre constitutes a different subject matter and writing approach. If you are planning to write an article (regardless of topic), please try to adhere to one of the genres below.

Christian Living

A *Christian Living* article gives practical biblical guidance on real-life issues and how to use Jesus' teachings in our daily lives. Article length: 1500-2000 words.

Bible Study

A *Bible Study* explores a passage or character from the Bible and draws out the teachings for readers to apply to their lives. Article length: 2000 words.

Doctrinal Study

A *Doctrinal Study* examines an aspect of True Jesus Church beliefs and may present it in comparison to other beliefs. Article length: 2000 words.

Exhortation

An *Exhortation* encourages and admonishes the reader in different aspects of the Christian faith. Article length: 1500-2000 words.

Testimony

A *Testimony* recounts an experience in the Lord that will encourage and edify the reader. Article length: 1000-1500 words.

Creative Writing

Creative Writing pieces include poems, parables, or short stories that illustrate a biblical teaching or idea. Keep in mind as you're writing: how will this edify the reader?

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Please email electronic files of articles (Word, Wordperfect, ASCII text) to manna@tjc.org, or send hardcopy and disk to:

Manna
General Assembly of True Jesus Church
314 S. Brookhurst St, #104
Anaheim, CA 92804 USA

Please direct any questions to manna@tjc.org or
Phone: +1-714-533-8808
Fax: +1-714-533-8878

In your submission, please include your name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number even if you wish to remain anonymous.

Call For Articles

Author Guidelines & Editorial Calendar

EDITORIAL CALENDAR

Issue #43

Theme: Holy Spirit

Articles due: Nov 30, 2003

This theme will focus on the promised Holy Spirit. What is the nature and role of the Holy Spirit, and how do we discern between different spirits? What does it mean to submit to God's spirit?

Issue #44

Theme: The Life of Jesus

Articles due: Feb 29, 2004

This theme will focus on the character and ministry of Jesus Christ. What are the seven "I am's"? How do we imitate Christ? How do we understand Jesus in the plan of God? And what can we learn about the example He set for us?

Issue #45

Theme: A Life of Servitude

Articles due: May 31, 2004

How do we serve in our respective roles, what are the attitudes of serving God, and how do we make service a life-long commitment? What can we learn from biblical exemplars of the faith?

GENERAL WRITING GUIDELINES

CONTENT

- Content should be biblically sound and adhere to biblical principles.
- Article should be organized and have a logical flow of thought.
- The main point or teaching of the article should be clear to the reader.
- Readers should be able to apply what they have read to their daily lives.

GRAMMAR/STYLE

- Use active instead of passive voice.
- Write concisely.
- Use concrete words and ideas instead of abstract concepts.
- Use "plain old English" instead of obscure, academic language.
- Use the NKJV version when quoting Bible verses.
- Use American spelling, if possible.
- Adhere to the IA Style Guide, except for He/Him when referring to God/Jesus.

True Jesus Church

Articles of Faith

Jesus the True God

The One True God was manifested in the flesh. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the redemption of sinners, was resurrected on the third day, and ascended to heaven. He is the only Savior of mankind, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the only True God.

Holy Bible

The Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible are inspired by God and are therefore the only authentic scriptures which testify to the Truth.

Church

The True Jesus Church was established by our Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (the Latter Rain) and is the revival of the True Church of the Apostolic Days.

Salvation

Salvation is given by grace through faith. However, it is necessary to rely on the Holy Spirit to pursue holiness and to keep the biblical teachings of honoring God and loving humanity.

Baptism

The Baptism of Water is the sacrament for the remission of sins and for regeneration. The baptist must already have received baptisms of water and the Holy Spirit. The baptism must be immersion in natural, living water and must be administered in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the candidate's head facing downward.

Foot Washing

The Washing of Feet is a sacrament which enables one to have a part in the Lord and teaches mutual love, holiness, humility, service, and forgiveness. The sacrament of the washing of feet must be performed in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ to all newly baptized members. Mutual washing of feet may be practiced when necessary.

Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a prerequisite for entering heaven; speaking in tongues is the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit.

Holy Communion

The Holy Communion is the sacrament to commemorate the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It enables us to partake of the flesh and blood of our Lord and to be in communion with Him so that we may have eternal life and be raised on the last day. This sacrament should be held as often as possible. Only one unleavened bread and grape juice should be used.

Sabbath Day

The Sabbath Day, the seventh day of the week (Saturday), is a holy day, blessed and sanctified by God. It is to be observed under the Lord's grace for the commemoration of God's creation and redemption and with the hope of eternal rest.

Judgment Day

The Lord Jesus Christ will descend from heaven on the Last Day to judge all people; the righteous will receive eternal life, while the wicked will be eternally condemned.

TRUE JESUS CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information on the True Jesus Church, contact us or visit us on our website. We look forward to hearing from you!

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<http://www.tjc.org>



WHAT DO THEY REMIND YOU OF?

Sanubari Budiman—Indonesia

*Listen. Have you heard the ocean lately?
Look. Have you glanced at the sky and marveled at a flower?
Think. What do they remind you of?*

*I am reminded of God's love.
His love allows me to appreciate the things He made.
I wonder
What should I do with the love He gives me?
O mighty God, I will follow you.
As always,
He hears my voice—
He answers the whispers of my prayer.*

*I am reminded of God's providence.
He watches over me all day and night.
I wonder
What have I done for Him?
O precious Lord, I will serve you.
As always,
He meets my needs—
He dwells forever in my heart.*

*Now—
Let the ocean listen to my voice,
Let the sky and the flower look at the works of my hands,
Let the people think about the Son of David whom I preach,
And let the beauty of my Lord Jesus shine through me.*

How You Can Help.

You are called to take action for the sake of worldwide evangelism and the spreading of the gospel...with **a dollar for every day**. If everyone could daily extend one dollar towards the International Assembly World Evangelism Fund, we could, together, accomplish the commission that our Lord Jesus Christ left behind. Your financial commitment will open up possibilities and resources that will lead us to save many souls.

Please take time to fill out the offering sheet available at your local church, to pass this message on to loved ones and family, and to pray for God's ministry. May the Lord be gracious to you!

To find out more about the dollar-a-day program and donation options, please contact ia@tjc.org.

