

## GOD AND YOU

by Joe Slater

Paul's relationship with God enabled him not only to endure a fierce storm on the sea, but to encourage the others onboard the ship. "And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God, that it will be just as it was told me" (Acts 27:22-25). Note three key points:

Paul belonged to God (v. 23). He himself had written to the Corinthians earlier: "... you are not your own . . . for you were bought at a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). Paul described himself as "a (bond)servant of Jesus

Christ" (Romans 1:1). A bondservant (slave) is owned by someone else. Paul's owner was the Lord. Liberty-loving people like us cringe at the thought of being owned by anyone!

However, the sooner we accept that God owns us, and that this is a good thing, the better off we'll be.

Paul served God (Acts 27:23). As a slave, Paul's purpose was to do the will of his master, Jesus. We flinch at the idea of subjecting our own will to anyone else's! However, we ought to swallow our pride and follow the example of Jesus, Who "did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 20:28).

True religion isn't about doing whatever makes me feel good.

First and foremost, we are to serve God. If our hearts are right, faithful service will result in

abundant good feelings.

Paul believed God (Acts 27:25). For nearly two weeks the storm had pounded them. They had no idea where they were. "All hope that we would be saved was finally given up" (v. 20). Nevertheless, when God's messenger told Paul that he and all others aboard the ship would survive, Paul believed it. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

You belong to God. Serve Him! Believe Him! Doing so, you can endure even the worst of times.

— Springfield, IL

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

## ROARING LIONS

by Richard Dent

Samson was a judge over Israel for 20 years. In Hebrews 11:32 his name is listed with the heroes and martyrs of faith. He is remembered for his great strength. It was God-given and as long as Samson served God he was a mighty power. One of the facets of the Nazarite vow was not to cut your long hair off. Remember that Delilah used that knowledge about Samson's strength to deliver him to the Philistines and thus, he was captured by them.

One of Samson's adventures took him to a village named Timnah (Judges 14:5-9). To Samson's surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. He killed the lion and went on his merry way. He did not tell his father or mother what he had done. He went on down the road to see his girlfriend and she pleased him well. Samson's father went down to inform the lady that Samson was

pleased with his choice for a bride.

Life is a great journey for all of us. Have you ever had temptations arise suddenly as roaring lions? These young lions (temptations) may threaten our body and soul. Peter warns us to be sober and vigilant because our adversary, the devil, is as a roaring lion seeking to devour us (1 Peter 5:8). Even our Lord was not free from Satan's temptations (Matthew 4:1).

What are some of the "young lions" of our day? It could be the desire to be richer than we need to be (1 Timothy 6:9,10); or to enjoy the pleasures of this world for a season (1 John 2:15-17). We don't have the physical strength of Samson but we have something even better. It is the "sword of the Spirit." That weapon has slain many a lion. Samson's reward from killing the young lion was honey (Judges 14:8,9).

Our reward will be a crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

— Liberal, KS

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" (1 Peter 5:6-9).

# Old Paths

Vol. 49, No. 10 October 2025

"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

## OUR WORLD NEEDS KINDNESS

By Joe Dale Wilson

Ephesians 4:32 begins with "and be ye kind one to another." The inspired Paul added to that in 1 Corinthians 13:4, "love . . . is kind." Paul listed "kindness" as one of the qualities a new Christian is to "put on."

Glen Campbell had a real catchy song several years ago that suggested, "try a little kindness, then you'll overlook the blindness, of narrow-minded people on the narrow-minded streets."

Our world needs kindness. Kindness is the product of our love for others. Love and kindness make the world a better place to live. As Christians, we are in the world to change the world by our wholesome influence. We live with kindness radiating from our words and actions. We teach the gospel, which is God's expression of His loving kindness to mankind.

Hatred walks our streets, is seen in e-mails and other sources of communications, bubbles out in our political arenas, and produces wars. Many follow a god of bitterness and vengeance. The world needs the loving kindness of God to be personified in Christians today.

In our day to day dealings we need kindness. People will do things that will disturb us. We can either jump on them with spurs on or reply with kindness. Which one will have the greater influence for Christ? We are here to win them to Christ, not to condemn them to the devil. Our words and actions must be seasoned with the wisdom of kindness.

Every day in the news we hear of people who are unkind to their fellow man. But every day there are those who go out of their way to show love and kindness to someone who is not in a position to help himself. Christians should be the ones who are more prone to be kind; and in my experience, they are!

If your life has not been marked by kindness, try it - you'll like it!

— Seneca, MO

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing" (1 Peter 3:8,9).

## IDENTIFYING WITH THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

by Danny Tunnell

A person in the Bible with whom we can all identify is the woman at the well (John 4:13-19; 28,29). We are all in the same boat. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:23,24). None of us can make ourselves good enough to be saved. We need a Savior, just as she needed a Savior. If we were good enough, or if we could rely on our good deeds to be saved then we wouldn't need Jesus. He didn't have to come. No one is saved by their good deeds or by being a good person. Also, no one is lost because they weren't quite enough of a "good person."

We cannot be good enough, smart enough, or do enough good works to get out of the power of darkness and into the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13,14). We must be born again (John 3:7). And then we are to walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8; 1 John 1:7). It is by the grace of God we are saved (Ephesians 2:5). By grace we are saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8,9).

There is a misconception some have that people arrive at the pearly gates of heaven . . . and they are allowed entrance or denied entrance on how good a person they were. That is pure nonsense! If we enter heaven it is based on what Jesus did for us on the cross (Revelation 1:5,6). It will be because we, like this woman was offered, have partaken of the river of life freely (Revelation 22:17).

Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35). The woman at the well discovered that He was also the living water (John 4:10,13,14).

Someone may say, "This woman's life was deplorable and in shambles! She had had five husbands, and the person she was living with was not her husband" (John 4:18). That's true, but we were no better off. We all need the grace of God. Our sins may be different from hers, but they are just as real, and just as damning without the blood of Jesus washing them away.

To help us see things more graphically, there are two songs that beautifully portray the woman at the well and our identification with her.

In 1969, David and Max Sapp wrote, "There is a River": "There is a river, and it flows from deep within. There is a fountain, that frees the soul from sin. Come to this water, there is a vast supply. There is a river, that never shall run dry. And there was a thirsty woman, she was drawing from a well. Her life was ruined and wasted, and her soul was bound for hell. But then she met the Master, and He told her of her sin. He said, 'If you'll drink this water, you'll never thirst again!'"

In 1959, Richard Blanchard wrote, "Fill My Cup, Lord": "Like the woman at the well, I was seeking, for things that could not satisfy. And then I heard the Savior speaking, 'Draw from My well, that never shall run dry.' Fill my cup, Lord. I lift it up Lord. Come and quench this thirsting of my soul. Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more. Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole. There are millions in the world who are always craving, they crave pleasures earthly things afford. But none can match the wondrous treasure, the treasure that we find in Jesus Christ our Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:31: "He who glories (boasts), let him glory in the Lord."

— Miami, OK

**BEWARE!**

By Dalton Key

I once read of two unusual grave markers, hidden beneath the brush of an old, long-forgotten English cemetery. Over one grave, the marker bears the curious inscription, "She died for want of things." Alongside that stone is another which reads simply, "He died trying to give them to her."

Ours is an age of short cash, easy credit, and out-of-control covetousness. Confusing wants for needs, many of us are racing through life in a mad scramble for more and more of less and less, never satisfied and never content. We live in an age - perhaps like none other - governed by greed.

Listen to the Lord: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15).

Give heed to the inspired Apostle Paul, "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

Life is too short, death and judgment are too certain, and eternity is too endless for us to give undue importance to money and the things money can buy.

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

The world, "lying in wickedness," may be obsessed with material things, but "we are of God" (1 John 5:19). Our treasures are in heaven (Matthew 6:19,20).

"He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes? The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep. There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: riches kept for their owner to his hurt" (Ecclesiastes 5:10-13).

EDITORIAL . . .

**HEROES, REAL AND OTHERWISE**

by Dalton Key

Who do you look up to? Who are your heroes? A person's character, and a people's future, often comes down to little more than a choice of heroes.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once observed, "All history revolves itself around the biography of a few stout and earnest persons." In a similar vein, Thomas Carlyle said, "Great men, taken up in any way, are profitable company. We cannot look upon a great man without gaining something from him." And from the pen of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

*Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.*

So long as the ones we look up to are "stout and earnest"; so long as our heroes are truly "great," the future remains bright. But when we decide to make heroes of people devoid of integrity and decency, tomorrow's light - for all of us - goes dark.

Years ago, in what now seems like a faraway and nearly forgotten past, everyday citizens and ordinary Christians could easily recall the names of scores of men and women at work in government, in education, in vital fields of sacrifice and service, and - yes - in the church. Children were encouraged to look up to these heroes of courage and faith and taught to pattern their lives after the best of life's best.

But our world has come a long way since these bygone days; a long way in the wrong direction.

These days we are urged to admire those who, regardless of character or conviction, are nonetheless able to score touchdowns, amass a fortune, or create for themselves a ubiquitous, viral, online presence. Many of today's heroes are simply "famous for being famous." Many of us know more about the private lives of our favorite internet celebrities, movie stars, or sports figures than we do about the humanitarian and spiritual efforts of real people facing, and facing up to, the actual challenges of life. And sadly, those forgotten giants among us, those who protect and serve, who nurture and teach, who sacrifice and bear their crosses day by day - "of whom the world (is) not worthy" - are forced to take a backseat to the ubiquitous celebrities who offer little more to society than endless evenings of empty amusement.

Sadder still is this: our children and grandchildren are growing up believing the lie that celebrity equals success and that "any publicity is good publicity."

If you want to see real heroes, read your Bible. If you want see real heroes living heroic lives in real time, search for those souls brave enough to live their lives built upon the Bible's timeless principles. And always, carefully, choose your heroes wisely!

**SHINE ON**

by Dalton Key

The darker the night, the dimmer the day,  
As embers of memories flicker away,  
When the brightening goodness of life seems long past,  
When the worst from the best of us leaves us aghast,  
This truth I continue to settle upon,  
My choices are mine and I choose to shine on.

I know I can't turn all the darkness to light,  
I know I can't change every wrong into right;  
My voice is so feeble, my life is so small,  
Confronted by darkness confronting us all,  
But still this one truth I will settle upon,  
My choices are mine and I choose to shine on.

You can have all your glasses half-empty with gloom,  
Your hopeless despair draining hope from the room;  
The world, to a soul, may trade darkness for light;  
There may be none left yet to take up the fight,  
But still, here is truth that I'll settle upon,  
My choices are mine and I choose to shine on.

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

"For you were once darkness, but now you are the light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord . . . Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light'" (Ephesians 5:8,14).

"Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:14,15).

**PASSING FAITH FORWARD**

By Hershel Dyer

Leighton Pullen, with reference to the church in the second century, makes this observation: "As soon as men and women belonged to the Christian Church because their parents and grandparents had been Christians, and not because they had themselves to make the first break with heathen life, some enfeeblement of the Christian life almost inevitably displayed itself in certain quarters of the church" (The Church of the Fathers, P. 57).

Almost with unerring accuracy it comes to pass. One generation goes through the battle for the truth, the next takes the truth that has been won for granted, and by the third generation the truth is no longer prized.

That enfeeblement by the third or fourth generation may be expected, but it should also be guarded against.

During the first half of the 19th century, the call for a religious reformation was heard far and wide in this land. The greatly divided protestant churches were asked along with the Roman and Eastern Catholic bodies to return to the church as it is set

forth in the New Testament. The rapid growth of this plea to go back to "the old paths" and walk therein met with hostility in many quarters. However, even many within clergy gave up their denominational names and offices and doctrines in favor of Bible truth. On the part of both clergy and the common people this required agonizing choices preceded by intensive Bible study. The price they paid to walk with God knows no computation by man.

A few generations removed from these pioneers of the faith, we are losing the zeal to retain the ground they so valiantly won. Although the defense of the faith against enemy attacks will always be necessary, the faith is simply its propagation, the constant preaching of the gospel to the lost.

Every soul-winner is a defender of the faith, for every soul that is won to Christ becomes a token that the apostolic faith lives on! - (1925-2018)

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from

childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:14,15).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

**Old Paths**830 W. Fargo Drive,  
Broken Arrow, OK. 74012On a nonprofit basis.  
Published monthly and  
supported by Churches of Christ  
and individuals.Dalton Key Editor  
"Subscription Free;  
Prayers Requested;  
Contributions Appreciated."