

GOD'S

REVIVALIST

April 2018

Bible Advocate



IN THIS ISSUE:

MARITAL CONFLICT

a continuing series on
"Protecting Marriage"



about this issue

MARITAL CONFLICT

"I have no way of knowing whether or not you married the wrong person, but I do know that many people have a lot of wrong ideas about marriage and what it takes to make that marriage happy and successful. I'll be the first to admit that it's possible that you did marry the wrong person. However, if you treat the wrong person like the right person, you could well end up having married the right person after all. On the other hand, if you marry the right person and treat that person wrong, you certainly will have ended up marrying the wrong person. I also know that it is far more important to be the right kind of person than it is to marry the right person. In short, whether you married the right or wrong person is primarily up to you." —Zig Ziglar

Continuing the theme of "Protecting Marriage" from the January/February 2015 *Revivalist*, this issue contains four articles on "Marital Conflict." Julia Thomas argues for adopting a strategy that doesn't necessitate one person "winning" (p.5). Cathy Parker explains the mechanics of couples having a "good fight" (p.7). Renee Robinson notes that the way differences are negotiated can either ruin or reinforce relationships (p.8). Finally, although from a non-Wesleyan theological perspective, William VanDoodewaard shares a post from an anonymous couple as they identify key shifts in their thinking and actions that God used to transform their struggling marriage into one of His "greatest gifts" (p.10).

In addition, Pastor Travis Johnson explains how worship helps develop a proper focus, giving direction in three specific areas—upward, inward, and outward ("Thinking Out Loud on Worship," p.15).

And finally, the Alumni News (p.22) once again contains a tribute to a significant former GBS staff member who recently made "the crossing." Dr. Lottie Tryon and her husband Charles came to GBS in 2001 to help get the institution's distance education program started. As vice president for academic affairs at that time, I worked closely with Lottie and Charles. It was both fun and challenging to work with them—Charles had the big ideas and Lottie did the work in bringing them to fruition. They were a great team. Although we miss them, we are happy knowing that they both made it safely home. —KF

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God's Bible School and College does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national or ethnic origin, or against otherwise qualified handicapped persons in its admission of students or employment of its faculty and staff.

COVER PHOTO: "April showers bring May flowers," and GBS students Prilia Nareswari, Zach Crater, Julie Going, TJ Keaton, and Mari Hamada are well prepared for the harbinger of coming blossoms. Photo by Shane Muir.

the president's page



GOD PREFERS STRAIGHT-BACKED CHAIRS TO PADDED PEWS!

by Michael R. Avery, President

Occasionally I am privileged to speak to an audience that is composed primarily of older Christians. Recently, in one such gathering, a retired minister who was asked to lead in prayer recalled how God's presence was felt in years gone by when all they had were "straight-backed" chairs and not the nice padded pews of today. I smiled inwardly as he momentarily reflected on "the good ole days." In his mind he could see the old shoe-box shaped, wood-framed tabernacle filled to capacity with "straight-backed" chairs and every chair filled with someone hungry for a divine visitation. The scene in his memory was quite different from the one before him—one of a large sprawling sanctuary filled with an abundant supply of richly cushioned pews. As I continued to mull his statement over in my mind, it seemed that God said to me, "I do prefer straight-backed chairs." Now what took a nanosecond for me to see will take a page full of words to explain! That being the case, let me quickly make it clear that God was not voicing His preference in seating options, nor is that the point of this article. The point is far deeper than the foam on a padded pew and much more uncomfortable than the hardness of a straight-backed chair.

God was not voicing His preference in seating options. The point is far deeper than the foam on a padded pew and much more uncomfortable than the hardness of a straight-backed chair.

The "Straight-backed Chair" Years

When ministries are born, they often have small staffs, limited funds, inadequate facilities, and very little prestige. (These are the "straight-backed chair" years.) However, these deficiencies can serve as the soil out of which some very wonderful organizational attributes can spring to life.

- They create a humble dependence on God—the kind of dependence that builds faith and encourages prayer.
- They breed a determination to do the very best one can with what one has. God is pleased when we offer Him our very best.

Commissioning Weekend 2015

God's Bible School & College, Cincinnati, OH

Chris Cravens, guest speaker

Wednesday, May 13

8:00 PM Candlelight Celebration Service
Featuring graduating college and high school seniors
On the south lawn, weather permitting / Open to the public

Thursday, May 14

7:00 PM Evening with Symphonic Wind and String Ensemble

Friday, May 15

7:00 PM The Challenge

Saturday, May 16

10:00 AM Commencement (College)
7:00 PM Consecration

Sunday, May 17

10:30 AM Communion
2:30 PM Commitment to Ministering Now
7:00 PM Commission



Services will be live-streamed beginning Friday, 7:00 PM. Some services will feature "stories of transformation" in which graduates describe how God radically transformed their lives and gave them spiritual and vocational direction.

- They open a door of opportunity for people to offer themselves in sacrificial service—the kind of service that develops saints, attracts other followers, and builds loyalty to the mission.
- They tend to make the exciting part of ministry the "outward focus" rather than the "inward focus."
- They make for a strong sense of unity.

All of these are characteristics that attract God's attention, elicit His blessing, and provoke Him to give mighty outpourings of His Spirit.

The "Padded Pew" Years

As a ministry organization matures, some natural processes of organizational development can actually undermine some of the benefits of the "straight-backed chair" years. As the organization grows in financial strength, facilities are improved, volunteers are replaced by salaried professionals, a higher level of sophistication is expected (weeding out deeply committed but less talented people), and respectability is strongly desired and generally obtained from peer organizations. (These are the "padded pew" years.) None of these things are wrong in themselves and can actually be a sign of health. However, all of them hold the potential for undermining a culture of radical reliance on God. This development process is called "institutionalization"—a

process that is unavoidable for any developing organization.

Institutionalization

The good side of institutionalization is the forms and processes it puts into place that aid in making the ministry efficient and effective. The downside of institutionalization is the tendency to make the organization an end in itself—a thing to be performed, perfected, and promoted. Instead of the institutionalization providing a helpful skeleton to support the heart and flesh of ministry, maintaining the skeleton becomes the only point. Soon all that's left is the skeleton, the form. Then the ossified ministry can descend into an era marked by blandness, uniformity, mission drift, and preservation thinking. Rather than making an organization more useful, institutionalization has then actually taken away what made it

unique, attractive, and effective. Gone are some of the very things God delights in blessing.

When Has Institutionalization Adversely Impacted a Ministry?

- When preaching and teaching are used primarily to advocate our priorities rather than God's.
- When the focus on institutional preservation blinds us to ministry deterioration.
- When institutional traditions are more highly valued than Biblical truth.
- When institutional image is more important than institutional character.
- When the institution is driven by fear.

Can Dynamic Relationship and Radical Reliance Be Restored?

The churches at Ephesus and Laodicea stand as eternal witnesses to how quickly institutionalization can rob a ministry of their "first love." They also stand as perpetual guideposts for the way back to a relationship of radical reliance. The key is repentance—a sincere turning away, in both the mind and heart, from self-reliance to God-reliance! Most organizations do not turn around, but yours can. And you don't even have to sell your padded pews! ■



NO WINNERS

by Julia Thomas

Do we have to put up walls that close a person out or fling words that wound? I do not think so. While I agree that a marriage free from emotional blow-ups is unusual, it is attainable. In order to fix any “problem” we have, we must first discover its source. We can put a band-aid on an infectious wound, but until the contagion is checked, the infection will only spread. When I started this process of rooting out the infection that would make my marriage weak and anemic, I found two components that, if left unchecked, lead to the endless cycle of fighting and making up—a cycle that has come to be accepted and even glorified in our culture. Insecurity and a misplaced trust in our own opinions and feelings as a source of truth are the sepsis that we must identify and eradicate in order to have a healthy marriage that draws us closer to each other and to Jesus while reflecting Him to our world.

INSECURITY

Insecurity is something all humans deal with on some level throughout their lives. Finding our sense of worth in Jesus is not a one-time choice with smooth sailing afterwards. In one lifetime, myriad circumstances come that test our “self-worth.” In each of these, we must choose what we will embrace as the truth. Will we choose to take hold of the reality that our worth is not in what we do, how smart we are, or what opinions we hold, but is in the simple fact that we are created in the image of a God who loves us? Of course, we all know the “right” answer to that question, but living it out can at times be difficult. What we believe to be true is always reflected in our behavior. When our sense of worth isn’t grounded in Christ, our own ideas and opinions become sacred. If

The landscape flew by the window at 70 mph as I sat brooding in silence. “What is he thinking? Can he not see how wrong he is? Well, I know one thing, I’m not going to raise my voice. I’m not going to fight the way my parents did. We will have a civilized marriage. No, I will just sit here in silence, until it dawns on him that I am right and he is wrong.”

This is very much what our first marital disagreement looked like. I cannot tell you now what the source of our disagreement was. I just know that I held on to two ideas. First, I did not want to have a “yelling marriage.” Second, I thought that if he did not value my position, he could not really value me. So in my attempt to accommodate these two prevailing thoughts, I put up a wall of protection. I would use my desire for a “peaceful marriage” as an excuse to barricade my heart with silence. Fortunately, I married a wise, godly man who led our marriage in a very different direction. My wall

was quickly penetrated when his hand took mine and his gentle voice broke into my silent brooding: “Julia, we are not going to do our marriage this way. Don’t put up a wall; talk to me. Help me understand what you are thinking.” Out of that discussion so early in our marriage, we came to an understanding of how we would “do marriage,” and how we would handle the disagreements that were sure to come with our two wills together under one roof.

Disagreements are inevitable. But do we have to fight? Must we live with the extremes of either passionate yelling or cold, silent brooding?

our spouse questions us or disagrees with something we have done or a position that we have taken, we feel personally attacked. The very source of our value is threatened, leaving us reeling.

Of course, the natural reaction to such a feeling is to come out fighting. We use all sorts of tactics to reestablish our sense of worth. Sometimes we tear down our beloved with words in an attempt to make us feel better about ourselves. We might seek a friend who will affirm our position. You know, that friend...the only one who understands that while your spouse is a “good person,” he is pretty insensitive, and is lucky to have you. Or we simply block our spouses out. In essence, we negate the value of the person who is questioning us. If we make them invalid, then their questioning becomes invalid. However, when we commit to the process of finding our worth in Jesus, we can release the grasp we have on our own ideas. We can begin to see our opinions as something separate from our personal worth. This frees us to pursue truth in Christ.

MISPLACED TRUST IN OWN OPINIONS/FEELINGS

As Christians, we believe truth can be found. Of course, the source of truth is Jesus. While we say that with our mouths, however, we often fall into the trap of equating our own thoughts and feelings with the measure of truth. You may ask, “What about topics that are not expressly addressed in Scripture? My spouse and I agree on scriptural issues. We fuss about money and family, not theology.” While at first glance it may seem that Jesus is silent on many topics, if we look closely, we find that He is not. Sure, you may not find a direct statement from Jesus on where to spend Christmas this year, or how much money to spend on groceries; however, He does speak “loud and clear” about submitting our wills, first to Him and then to each other. He gave us principles by which we can live our lives and make decisions that will lead our families in the right direction. When we disagree with our spouse or cannot comprehend his perspective on a given topic, it is easy to jump into the mode of convincing him why he is wrong. We set ourselves up to “win” the argument. This never ends well. It won’t take long until we become emotionally invested in the task of “setting him straight,” and a big fight is sure to ensue.

BETTER STRATEGY—NO “WINNERS”

However, when a couple determines to pursue truth, no matter where it may take them, they leave personal opinion and a desire to “win” in the dust. When we separate our ideas and opinions from absolute truth, we are free to set those ideas on the table to be scrutinized under the light of what is really true. We no longer own the ideas: they stand or fall based on how they measure up to reality. As a couple, we can approach with unity any difference of perspective, anxious to figure out what is truth, and then to embrace it. There are no losers in this type of discussion. In fact, at the end of the discus-

sion you often forget which position was “yours” when you started. When the goal is to find truth and embrace it, the task of scouting it out becomes one that draws you and your spouse closer together.

Of course, this is all pragmatic, but when emotions are flying high, it is hard to think straight enough to make sure we are finding our value in Jesus and then committing to truth. If you have lived most of your life, as I did, giving free reign to whatever you feel and equating what you feel with reality, it will take some time to change that pattern of thinking. When Matt and I have a disagreement, I often say, “I need a minute to think.” This keeps me from responding with either harsh words or cold silence. Instead, I take that minute to pray that Jesus would help me to trust Him as my source of value and of truth.

I will leave you with a warning. If, as a couple, you choose to find your value in Jesus and then commit to the pursuit of truth at any cost, you will miss out on all the “fun” of having big fights and then making up. You will forfeit the right to the buying and receiving of flowers that are associated with guilt. You will have to dig deeper and be ready to understand yourself better. So, be prepared to see areas in your life that need to be conformed more into the image of Jesus. On the other hand, be prepared to experience a depth of relationship and oneness that you never thought possible with another human being. It is not easy, but it is worth it! ■

Julia Thomas lives in Salem, IL, with her husband Matt and two sons.

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FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

by Cathy Parker

Have you ever wondered what you can do to increase the odds of your marriage working? I know there are lots of factors in divorce, and some of them you have little or no control over. However, there is one tactic proven to help couples stay together.

Learn to fight well!

Researchers can now predict with 94 percent accuracy whether or not a couple will stay together based solely on how they fight. Not on *whether* they fight, but on *how* they fight.

In their book *The Good Fight*,* Les and Leslie Parrott tell us that there are differences between good fights and bad fights. "A good fight is helpful, not hurtful. It is positive, not negative. A good fight stays clean. A bad fight gets dirty. Ninety three percent of couples who fight dirty will be divorced within ten years."

So let's figure out the anatomy of a good fight. The Parrots use the acronym C.O.R.E.

COOPERATION. Good fighters start with the right attitude—an attitude that says, "If you win, I win too." Be committed to finding solutions that benefit both sides of a dispute. There's a sense of "we." When a "win-win" can't be found, then it's time to agree to disagree, albeit, agreeably.

OWNERSHIP. Good fighters own their piece of the pie. The blame game is for cowards. We may think that admitting any weakness, any mistake, makes us vulnerable to rejection. And it does. That's the

risk of taking ownership. That's why a good fight isn't for cowards. When you take ownership, you're instantly empowered to find a solution together.

RESPECT. Good fighters steer clear of belittling. As noteworthy academician A.J. Anglin has said, "Confrontation should always leave a person's dignity intact." There is one single quality most detrimental to a couple's well-being—contempt. Contempt is any belittling remark that makes your spouse feel small. It's often sarcastic. It can even be non-verbal, such as eye-rolling. On the other hand, an attitude of respect builds a bridge of trust between spouses even when they are feeling at odds. Respect helps us to listen before speaking. It drives us to understand before passing judgment. Respect keeps contempt at bay and it also creates safety within the relationship.

EMPATHY. Good fighters step into each other's shoes. Doing so helps them to see more accurately the world from their partner's perspective. That is arguably the most powerful and consistently rewarding action of love a person can ever take. Ninety percent of marital spats could be resolved if both parties would do one thing—accurately see the issue from the other's perspective.

But perspectives and perceptions are often complicating factors. Research reveals that most fights are driven by two fundamental and distinct concerns: perceived threat and perceived neglect. Perceived threat is when you feel threatened—when you perceive your partner as being critical, judgmental, controlling, demanding, attacking. Perceived neglect is when you feel neglected—when you perceive your partner as being uncaring, uncommitted, neglectful, selfish, or disengaged. When you properly identify perceived threats or neglects—your own and your partner's—you're getting to the heart of the matter, and you're well on your way to fighting a good fight.

Have a good fight! ■

Cathy Parker (BRE '78) is a speaker, writer, and pastor's wife in Westfield, IN. This article was adapted with permission from her blog, www.ajournalofthejourney.wordpress.com.

* Parrott, Les and Leslie. *The Good Fight: How Conflict Can Bring You Closer*. Worthy Publishing, 2013.



by Renee Robinson



When We **FIGHT**

do we ruin or reinforce relationships?

I'm amazed how, in a span of two seconds, a moment can turn from fun and laughter to anger and hurt. How quickly I can go from thinking positive and loving thoughts to ones I am ashamed to own. Seems the harder I attempt to avoid conflict, the harder it pursues me.

He said something. I said something. One of us took it the wrong way. One of us didn't like the tone the other used. One of us became defensive. The other followed the defense strategy. Something silly turned into something beyond ridiculous. Hurtful words were exchanged followed by feelings the enemy wants to become all too familiar.

Then the Aha! moment.

When we fight, we are not enemies. He is not my enemy. I am not his enemy. When we disagree or misunderstand each other—or whatever has happened that leads us down the path to conflict—we are not fighting against each other. We are for each other. There is an enemy that fights against us, and he loves when we get off-course and look at each other as the enemy.

I spoke those words to my husband, then sat in silence. And he reached over, grabbed my hand, and said, "I don't want to fight." Immediately the tension dissolved. It was like the moment you are driving through dense fog, straining to see the road, then suddenly the fog is gone; everything is clear.

Of course we don't want to fight. Conflict doesn't have to result in fighting and hurting the ones we love. A simple shift in our perspective can change everything. And save a relationship.

If I could have my way, my days would be filled with complete peace, free of any conflicts or dramas. I enjoy conflict-free relationships so much, I naturally avoid any that seem to be magnets for drama or misunderstandings. I'm not proud to admit this as I know this is not how God intends to grow me in holiness. There are parts of me that can't be refined when they aren't put to the test. Conflict is certainly a refining fire.

At the root of many of our conflicts is a desire to get our own way. We are naturally very selfish and think from our own perspective. We struggle to think from another person's perspective. This is human nature. We become defensive and want them to understand us so much that we fail to understand them.

When my husband grabbed my hand and told me he didn't want to fight me, the hard wall I was erecting around my heart crumbled. I saw him immediately for the person he is to me—my husband, who loves me wholly. He wasn't my enemy. Because he loves me, he is for me. How easy it is to lose sight of this in the heat of the battle. We forget that the ones we love are not our enemies.

I have two key verses that come to mind when the heat turns up.

Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. (Ecclesiastes 7:9 NIV)

The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered. (Proverbs 17:27 NIV)

I don't want to be a fool who is provoked easily. I want to be a woman of knowledge and understanding. Without the help of the Holy Spirit, this is impossible for me to attain.

There is a question we can ask ourselves when we feel conflict arising and we begin to fight: **Am I fighting to win or am I fighting to understand?** How we answer that question will change the course of the discussion. When we are trying to understand, we are open-minded, we are understanding, we are empathetic, and we remember this is a person we love very much. When we fight to win, our pride blinds us, we lash out, we are easily provoked, and we will say things that can never be taken back.

There is something else we forget in conflict: God created each of us uniquely distinct from the other; therefore, we will not always agree on everything. And this is O.K. It doesn't mean the other person doesn't love us just because we don't agree. It doesn't mean we think less of each other. We simply disagree. We tend to put up our defenses when someone doesn't agree with us. Pride loves that because we begin to dig our heels in, convinced we can convince them we are right.

Often we are very wrong. **In conflict, there can easily be two right sides that simply see things differently.** We don't have to fight to win, we just need to fight to understand. And love.

During a difficult time with one of my sons, I wrote about realizing who I was fighting against when I fought with my son.¹ I also wrote a letter to my boys about handling their bickering.² Both of these posts I turn back to for advice on how to relate to the ones I love in my life.

Lord, teach me to fight to understand when I'm in conflict. Put to death the pride in my heart that fights to win and be right. Give me wisdom and knowledge so I can be a woman of understanding who is even-tempered and not easily provoked in my spirit to anger. Above all things, let me put on love, for it covers a multitude of sins. 🙏

Renee Robinson is a speaker, author, and blogger. This article was posted at www.renee-robinson.com and is used by permission.

1. Robinson, Renee. *Know Your Enemy*. Posted 3/12/14 at www.renee-robinson.com.

2. Robinson, Renee. *When Sibling Bickering Escalates*. Posted 9/26/14 at www.renee-robinson.com.

Protecting Today's Ministries

seminar

Legacy Insurance Professionals, LLC, a GuideOne Agency, along with Christian Law Association, and God's Bible School and College, will be providing a seminar and resources to ministry leaders featuring the following speakers and topics....

Eric Spacek

*Risk Management and Loss Control
Senior Manager, GuideOne*

"New exposures churches are experiencing and how to protect against them"



David Gibbs, Jr.

*Founder and President, Christian
Law Association*

"How your church constitution and bylaws can protect against social/cultural changes"

"The importance of 'reasonable care or duty' on church policies and practices"



J. Luke Gibson

*President, Legacy Insurance
Professionals, a GuideOne Agency*

"Ascending liability from the local church's insurance decisions and how it can impact a denomination/association"



WHEN: Saturday Morning: May 9th – 9:00 to 11:00 (followed by free brunch)

WHERE: Adcock Chapel on the historic campus of **God's Bible School and College**
1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202

This event is free to the public.

Legacy Insurance is the agency for GBS; FEA Ministries; Hobe Sound Bible College; the Heartland, Alabama, and Great Lakes Conferences of the Bible Methodist Connection; and the individual churches within each conference. The goal of Legacy Insurance is to provide resources to assist ministries with their insurance and risk management needs through events such as this.

Change for Struggling Marriages

posted by William VanDoodewaard

This post is a guest piece written by a couple who were both Christians when they were married, but who had significant relationship struggles in the first few years. They hope that their story encourages other Christian couples who are facing relational challenges, especially if they are hiding those struggles from those who could help.

We were all huddled around a game at the dining room table. The snow was deep and the temperatures frigid; there was no better place to be than together in a warm kitchen. My husband patiently explained the strategy of the game (again) only to be hit with another volley of questions from confused kids. We grinned at each other over bowls of popcorn, content and filled with mutual enjoyment.

This peace in our marriage and home has been hard-fought. We never had that “year of bliss” so many refer to in the early time of marriage. Somehow we missed that turn and ended up on the crash-and-burn highway, struggling over big issues soon after beginning married life. We did have several things in common: we loved the Lord, each other, and were committed “till death do us part.” But many days that did not seem to be enough. It’s painful for us to look back. In fact, we do very little reminiscing of the early days and instead rejoice in God’s faithfulness to us and our relationship today.

There were minor issues which resulted from immaturity, as well as two very different sets of expectations of what it meant to be a husband and what it meant to be a wife. We clashed over differing levels of responsibility in the home, finances, and just about anything that seemed to be important. It wasn’t as if every day was awful, but a general tension overshadowed our marriage, one feeling like they could never do enough or be enough, and the other frustrated with the other’s actions or lack thereof.

On top of this, sin and my reaction to it began to cut seriously into our relationship. I learned quickly the temptation to make a spouse’s sin all about “me,” caring more about how it affected me than caring about my spouse at all. While sin did need to be dealt with and repented of, I was often less interested in reconciliation and more interested in justice, caring more that my spouse felt some level of my pain and grief. This led to nights of turned backs, cold beds, and silent spaces;

it was a cop-out and only produced shame, guilt, resentment, and more distance to be crossed.

And so there we were, falling apart and thinking there was no way forward, all the while looking like the happily married couple everyone expected us to be. We had strayed far from God’s intent for marriage, but with His grace there is no such thing as a dead-end marriage.

Change wasn’t overnight, and it wasn’t easy. We were on opposite mountaintops, wanting to end up at the same place but having no idea how to cross the hurts and differences between us. But change did happen, and over a decade later we consider our marriage one of the greatest gifts that God has worked in our lives. In retrospect I can identify key shifts in our thinking and actions that transformed our marriage.



Respect your spouse. If you're in a relationship in which you've been wronged, your hackles probably are already up, and you might be exasperated and thinking, "If he/she gave me something to respect, I would!" You're right: sometimes a spouse's actions don't merit respect, but their being and position do. Respect your spouse as a gift, not as property you are entitled to treat however your feelings dictate. When both a husband and wife regard the other as a unique person, not entitled property but a gift to be cherished, then both end up feeling their value.

Love your spouse now, rather than when he/she becomes what you want him/her to be. Nowhere in 1 Corinthians 13 does it say that our love is to be earned. It is to be given as Jesus loves, unreservedly to the undeserving. Ask God to write the words of 1 Corinthians 13 on your heart and let them spill into your relationship; meditate often on how Jesus loves us. Sometimes when we stop trying to change our spouses and instead show love, they may finally feel that they are loved as they are, rather than after they become what we want them to become. And that's when change can often happen—in both spouses.

Agree on where you want to go. When neither of us was happy where we were (we could at least agree on that), we identified specifics of what we wanted to become as a couple. We talked about marriages we admired and a couple who mentored us (without ever knowing it!). We wanted our life to be spent for God and others, and we imagined ourselves grey-haired on the porch swing with our Bibles open and fingers intertwined. Recognizing this common goal made us able to dissolve insignificant conflicts and persist lovingly in areas in which we had larger issues. We were willing to jump puddles and die to self in order to obtain the larger prize of peace and joy in a relationship that honored God.

Find your value in Christ. Your spouse is not your savior, Jesus is. Looking to your spouse to fill all your needs, affirm your worth, and fill your emotional tank is a set-up for failure and frustration on both parts. Free your spouse from the burden of supplying all your happiness and instead seek abiding joy in Christ. Then, patiently learn together how to communicate value and how to give each other great joy and affirmation in your relationship.

Form your own life together. This is the leaving and cleaving talked about in Genesis 2:24. For us, moving away from everyone we knew forced us to depend on each other and grow in companionship. It gave us the opportunity to share experiences that were ours alone. We discovered more of the joy and reason we had fallen in love in the first place. We explored together, missed "home" together,

and admired each other in a completely new context. We had fun together, something that had been woefully missing the first years of marriage.

Realize that each day you are moving your relationship in either a positive or negative direction. Each marriage has a culture that is formed by a thousand daily actions that either strengthen or weaken a relationship. People don't usually wake up one morning and have an affair or decide to be a jerk to their spouse; it happens as a result of a general wearing down or fraying of a relationship over time. The encouraging part is that God can give you the strength and desire to start moving positively today, even if everything is awful and miserable and you just threw a Subway sandwich at your spouse yesterday or tipped over the dining room table in a fit of anger (true stories from couples that look just like you).

Pray with and for each other every single day. Some relationship hurdles seem too great, exhausting, or complex to know where even to begin repairing. But if you can commit to one thing, do this: pray. You are limited in your ability to change yourself or your spouse, but God has the power to transform our thoughts, desires, hearts, and wills. Bring each other daily to the cross; humble yourselves, confessing your failures and shortcomings. God has promised to finish the good work he has begun in us; we can cling to His faithfulness and perfection in the midst of our unfaithfulness and failure.

I wish I could add that we sought biblical counsel from others, but we didn't. I was hesitant to speak to anybody out of fear of affecting their opinion of my spouse. We were close to our pastor, but the combination of not wanting to be a burden and our pride kept us from approaching him. In truth, we were afraid of disappointing those we knew well. Seeking the counsel of a godly pastor or counselor would have accelerated our journey back to a healthy thriving relationship.

After well over a decade of marriage, we've moved across continents, had a passel of kids (one with severe disabilities), endured months of sleep deprivation and hospital stays, suffered job loss and struggling finances, and became entrepreneurs. By God's grace and learned practice, each circumstance has strengthened our love and commitment to each other rather than tear us apart. We are not grey-haired yet and don't have a front porch swing, but each night I smile as the Bible closes, the light clicks off, we wrap each other up tight, and he whispers into my hair, "This is the best part of my day." ■

William VanDoodewaard is a preacher and teacher currently serving as associate professor of church history at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, and as the lead (interim) church planter at Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church. This post originally appeared at www.thechristianpundit.org and is used here with permission.



RECRUITMENT AND THE GBS HIGH SCHOOL CLASSIC

The 2015 GBS High School Classic was held on February 12-13. This recruiting event brought approximately 175 prospective students to our campus from various schools: Bird Lake Bible School (MI), Daystar Christian Academy (MI), Heartland Christian School (MI), Marion Home School (IN), Stone City Christian Academy (IN), and our own Aldersgate Christian Academy (OH). Between rousing games of basketball and

volleyball, our guests were presented with information about GBS and attended a wonderful chapel service in which GBS board member, Rev. John Manley, brought a challenging message.

Congratulations to the Marion Hawks who took first place in basketball and Stone City Christian Academy for first place in volleyball. We thank the Lord for safety, good attitudes, and a spiritual emphasis during the 2015 GBS High School Classic!



Kirsten Stroup of Stone City Christian Academy was named "Most Valuable Player" in volleyball.

COLLEGE CHOIR TOUR '15

by Courtney Fourman, GBS Sophomore, Port Clinton, OH

Fifty people joining together for the sole purpose of glorifying God through musical ministry is exactly what every GBS choir tour is about. There is a sense of excitement the morning the bus heads out of Cincinnati because everyone is ready to see how God is going to use these young lives over the 10-day tour, visiting 7 states and 14 venues! (Sadly, due to inclement winter weather, 3 out of the 14 services were canceled.) After each service, countless people came up to the choir members, testifying of the encouragement they had received.

One of the extra benefits of choir tour is an opportunity to reconnect with faithful alumni and friends across the country. In most services, there is someone present whose life has been directly touched by GBS. For example, Mrs. Mildred Louverne Stephens, an

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the "Revivalist Family," and brief news notes from across the Holiness Movement.

MARRIAGE



Christianna Baker (BA '14) to Matthew Clark (BA '15), January 24, 2015, at the Bible Methodist Church, Stanton, AL, with Rev. John Ingram officiating. Christianna is the secretary and a teacher at Bible Methodist Christian School in Pell City, AL, where they live. As he finishes his last few classes toward graduation in May through the GBS Aldersgate Distance Education Program, Matthew also works at Chick-fil-A. Christianna's parents, Rev. James and Sharonda Baker, both attended GBS.

BIRTH



To **Kendra (Tichenor) (AA '11) and Adam Sickler (AA '11)**, a son, **Asher Alan**, born February 20, 2015, in Jasper, IN, where he joins big sister, Amara (2). Kendra worked as GBS housekeeping coordinator in 2012 and is a stay-at-home mom. Adam worked on GBS maintenance (2011-13). He is now working for Digital Wood Carvers. The Sicklers live in Shoals, IN.

DEATHS

Reverend Glen L. Roberts, 87, went to be with the Lord on Sunday, January 11, 2015. Born in Cateeche, SC, he was a son of the late Gordon Guy and Esther



GBS alumni at the Centreville, Alabama, service



Mildred Louverne Stephens with Don Davison

alumnus from the 1940s, was in attendance at the Lakeland Holiness Camp; and John Rhodes, a long-time missionary to Haiti, Jamaica,

Samoa, and Brazil, worshipped with us at the Avon Park Camp. The list could go on and on!

This tour, the choir was challenged by one of its members to pray for five specific souls to come to Christ. At the end of the Friday night service in Locust Grove, OH, those five souls came forward to an altar of prayer! The choir had witnessed a miracle! An amazing tour was had by all, leaving no doubt as to God's faithful guidance and direction!

THOMPSON SCHOLARSHIP

The Rev. Robert and Bonnie Thompson Scholarship Fund was recently established at GBS through the generosity of Rev. and Mrs. Robert E. Thompson. The endowed scholarship was founded with a \$50,000 gift and is intended to aid

college students in their junior or senior year of study in the ministerial or missions divisions.

Rev. Robert Thompson was born in 1928 to Bruce and Julia Thompson of Washington, Indiana.



He married his high school sweetheart, the late Bonnie Thompson, in 1946, and together they were saved in 1950.

Shortly thereafter he felt called to preach and signed up for a three-year, home-study course in theology at GBS. He pastored several churches before moving to Columbus, Indiana, in 1968 to pastor an independent holiness church for over forty years. Rev. Thompson's ministry in Columbus was extremely effective. During his time there, he started a Christian day school, purchased 18 acres, and built two large school buildings and a brick parsonage. He also ➡



Baker Roberts. Mr. Roberts was married for sixty-five years to the late Evelyn Jamison Roberts. He was a Fuller Brush salesman and a Wesleyan minister. Surviving are three daughters, Carolyn, Glenda, and Lynn; three sons, Guy, Ronald, and David; three brothers, James, Jesse, and Earl; three sisters, Lucille, Guynell, and Bethel; ten grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held at Easley Bible Methodist Church, with interment following in Greenlawn Memorial Park.



Rev. John Dorsey, 99, Bible scholar, author, song writer, and well known evangelist, died February 23, 2015, in Florala, AL. Born in West Virginia in 1916 to James Dorsey and Anna Louisa Morton Dorsey, he was the seventh of twelve children. He grew up on the

family farm in Winchester, OH. John preached his first sermon in 1937. He enjoyed carpentry and hunting trips. He and his late wife, Hildred McClure Dorsey, enjoyed sharing their musical talents during their years of ministry. Many of the written articles and musical works he published are still in print today. He continued to minister to all until his health no longer allowed him to do so. He is survived by a brother, Paul; a sister, Anna Lou; and hundreds of nieces and nephews. Funeral services at the Evans Funeral Home were officiated by the Reverends Paul Dorsey, Carson Scarbrough, and Darrell Underwood with interment following at the Natural Bridge Cemetery.



Lottie Jean Tryon, 83, passed away January 30, 2015. She worked at GBS from 2001-05 as Director of the Aldersgate Distance Education Program. (See tribute and obituary on page 22.) ■

NEWS FROM THE HILLTOP continued

➡ maintained a weekly, thirty-minute radio broadcast for over thirty years.

In 1996 GBS handed over its mission work in Belize, Central America, to Rev. Thompson. He increased the size of the work significantly and added many new buildings and properties.

Rev. Thompson was the recipient of the God's Bible School and College Distinguished Christian Service Award in 2008.

NEWS FROM THE COUNSELING CENTER

Resident Director for Men Ryan Watters passed his National Counselor Exam and submitted his paperwork that will certify him as a "licensed professional counselor." Congratulations!

Also, this semester we welcome two new counselors to the center. Jacinda Cravens (BA '10) is completing her internship at Cincinnati Christian University (CCU) and will be engaged in both group and individual counseling on-campus. Gary Lee, a recent graduate of CCU, and long-time captain of the Cincinnati Police Department, will also be joining us. Both Gary and Jacinda are excited about the opportunity to serve here at GBS.

The GBS Counseling Center has been in operation since 2009 and is staffed by four counselors plus the two serving internships. Counseling is made available to GBS students. ■

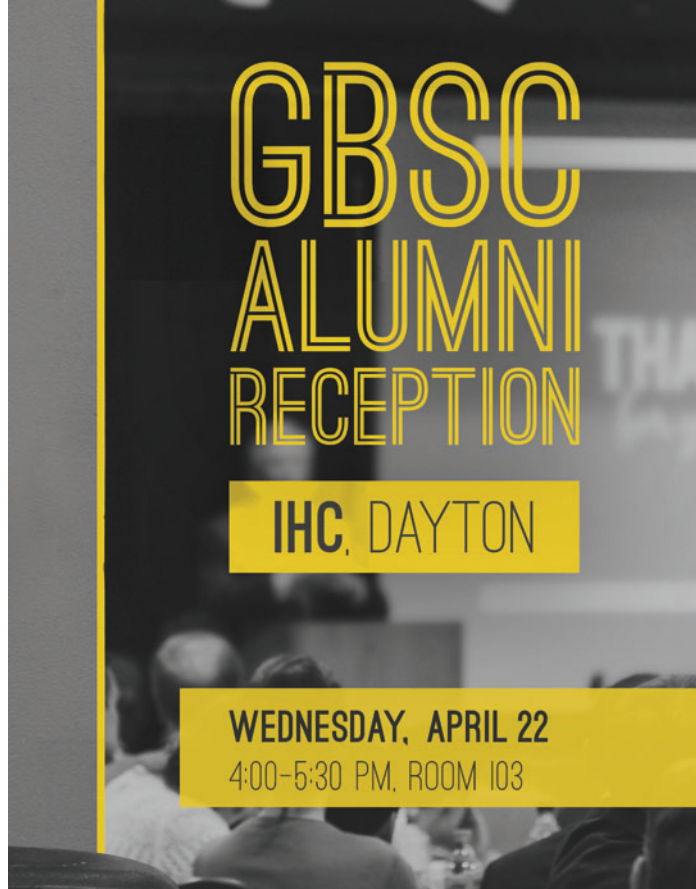
GBS Job Opportunity

An additional full-time **Digital Media Specialist** to begin work as soon as possible.

Responsibilities: **Graphic designer, webmaster, chapel media specialist.** Create graphic design and advertisements for campus events and promotions. Act as internal webmaster for website maintenance, updates, and changes using CMS. Run chapel media.

Qualifications: A good eye for design and layout; work experience and/or demonstrated skills in print design; knowledge of graphic design software (e.g. Photoshop or similar); ability to schedule simultaneous projects effectively, meet deadlines, and work on a team.

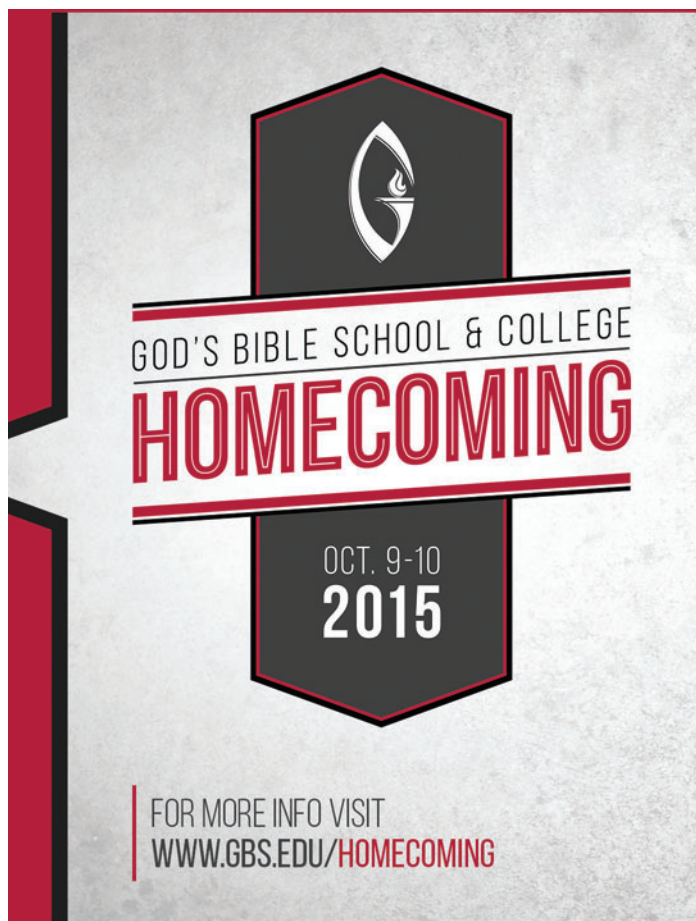
For More Information contact Director of Institutional Advancement Faith Avery at favery@gbs.edu.



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thinking out loud on

WORSHIP

“God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him
in spirit and in truth.” —John 4:24

by Travis Johnson

I wish that we could somehow go back in time and observe how the early church worshiped. If we could do that, it would change our lives, revolutionize our worship, and probably even convict us for our shallow, lifeless, half-hearted worship.

By definition, worship is ascribing worth to something or someone. But true worship is also a heartfelt expression of love, adoration, admiration, wonder, and celebration. It is something that happens in your heart and soul when you begin to praise God for who He is and thank Him for what He has done.

What happens when we worship? For some insights, let us look at the worship experience of the prophet Isaiah as recorded in Isaiah 6.

1. Worship causes us to look UPWARD.

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. (Isa. 6:1-4)

Worship refocuses our view of God. It pulls our affections off everything else and puts them onto God. It causes us to remember how good He is and how holy He is. We have made worship self-centered instead of God-centered. We have made worship preference-driven instead of God-driven. We lobby for what we want: “I don’t like the songs.” “I don’t like the volume.” “I don’t like standing.” It is as if we are worshiping worship instead of worshiping God. True worship directs our hearts upward to God.

2. Worship causes us to look INWARD.

And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” (Isa. 6:5-7)

In the previous chapter (Isaiah 5:8-22), Isaiah pronounced a “woe” six times to those who were sinning. But when he saw the Lord high and lifted up, his focus turned inward—he saw himself and cried, “Woe is me.” When you see God for who He really is, as Isaiah did, you start to see yourself for who you really are. You start seeing things in your heart and in your life that really did not bother you before. But notice that after Isaiah saw and confessed his sinfulness, he also experienced the mercy, grace, and forgiveness of God. That’s what happens when you really worship.

3. Worship causes us to look OUTWARD.

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.” (Isa. 6:8)

Richard Foster once said, “As worship begins in holy expectancy, it ends in holy obedience.”* Genuine worship is not just singing songs and getting a good feeling in your heart. Genuine worship is seeing God for who He really is—His power, His greatness, His holiness, His sovereignty, His love, and His compassion—and then giving Him your very best—the best of your time, your talents, your thoughts, your words, and your deeds. True worship is seeing afresh the tremendous worth of God and, in response, taking His message to others.

May God grant all of us a true revival of worship.

Travis Johnson pastors the Kenwood Bible Methodist Church, Cincinnati, OH. This article, used by his permission, first appeared on his blog (<https://pastortravisj.wordpress.com>).

* Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. HarperSanFrancisco, 2002.

Dear Phil

KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH, CERTAINTY (Part 2)

What is truth, and how can I know that I know it? —Gordon

Dear Gordon,

In the first part of my answer, absolute truth was defined as any statement that accurately reflects reality at all times and places. I concluded that when what we believe about reality is accurate, we believe the truth. When we can justify our accurate beliefs about reality, those beliefs count as “knowledge.”

Once we understand that all knowledge begins properly with belief, we can then proceed to the three avenues through which we acquire and justify our beliefs about reality: observation, reason, and authority.

When you observe the world around you, you aren’t observing all of reality, but what you are observing is real. This is why science is possible. Using the scientific method of observation, testing, and repetition, we learn much truth about the world God created. However, observation has its limits. It is limited by our finitude. We cannot be everywhere and observe everything. All statements based upon observation must be conditioned by this fact. Further, observation by itself cannot tell us how our observations are related. It can’t tell us the difference between cause and effect. To make such connections we must use reason.

Reason, a key part of the image of God in us, is the second avenue

through which we gain knowledge. Through reason we are able to evaluate and understand the relationship between events, ideas, people, qualities, and so on. We use reason to identify how an author connected his words and sentences into meaningful ideas. Most importantly for knowing truth, we use reason to draw conclusions from observations and to identify whether those conclusions are valid or invalid, necessary or potential. For example, Paul says that observation of the world leads to the reasonable conclusion that there is a Creator God who is eternal and powerful (Rom. 1:20).

Authority is the third avenue through which we obtain knowledge. Since each of us is limited in our time and opportunities to learn through observation and reason, we are largely dependent upon others who have acquired justified true beliefs and teach them to us. Much of what we “know” has been received from authorities: teachers, parents, literature, and pastors.

Our belief that Scripture is God’s word is rooted in all three of these avenues of how we acquire and justify our beliefs. First century men and women heard Jesus claim to be God’s Son (Luke 22:70-71), to be equal with God (John 5:18). They listened to Him predict that He would

suffer, die, and rise from the dead three days later (Luke 9:22). Over five hundred of them observed Him alive after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:6). From Jesus’ fulfilled prediction of His resurrection, they reasoned that He must be who He claimed to be (1 Cor. 15:20ff). Based, then, upon Jesus’ authority as the risen Son of God, we accept His instruction to believe “all that the prophets have spoken” (Luke 24:25), that “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35), and that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all the truth (John 16:13).

Knowledge of absolute truth and absolute certainty regarding such knowledge must never be confused. Some claim that one must have absolute certainty to know absolute truth. This is false. Infallible confidence based upon a comprehensive awareness of reality (absolute certainty) is possible only for God. In no sphere of life can we or do we have “absolute” certainty. Rather, we operate in all spheres of life based upon reasonable certainty. This is, in fact, the way God requires us to operate (Deut. 19:15-19; Matt. 18:16).

The Scriptures teach that God is the universe’s ultimate authority. He knows reality perfectly, and He has revealed to us much about reality in His word. Thus, it is through His word and upon the basis of His authority that we can have certain knowledge of absolute truth. Within His infallible word, God has provided us all that we need in order to have an unshakeable confidence regarding our knowledge of how to live a godly life that will lead us to His heavenly kingdom (Heb. 12:28; 2 Pet. 1:3). Praise God!

Blessings,
Philip

A. Philip Brown II is a member of the faculty in the Division of Ministerial Education at God’s Bible School and College.

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student focus

CHRISTIANOPHOBIA

Sociologists George Yancey and David Williamson have found a growing trend in America toward Christianophobia—fear of Christians. Research usually shows the low-income and low-educated tend to show up high on the intolerance scale. However, those guilty of Christianophobia tend to be “highly-educated individuals, wealthier individuals, whites, males,” Yancey reports. About a third of all Americans have some animosity toward conservative Christians.

PRAYER AT COUNCIL MEETING RULED CONSTITUTIONAL

The Supreme Court recently ruled that prayers that open town council meetings do not violate the Constitution, even if they routinely stress Christianity. The 5-4 ruling decided that the content of the prayers is not significant as long as officials make a good-faith effort at inclusion.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS PRODUCE BETTER CITIZENS

Research by Cardus Religious Schools Initiative at the University of Notre Dame says Christian schools produce better citizens than public centers of education. The study also found Evangelical Protestant students attend church more regularly, get married earlier, have more children, divorce less, and

widely contribute to the communities in which they live. Also, Christian schools do not foster an attitude of isolation as some critics claim. The full report can be accessed at www.cardus.ca/research/education.

CHRISTIAN MARTYRDOM SURGING

Open Doors claims that Islamic extremists killed twice as many Christians in 2014 (4,344) than in 2013 (2,123). Nigeria was the country with the highest number of Christians killed (2,484), followed by Central African Republic (1,088), Syria (271), and Iraq (60).

MINISTRIES CAN HIRE/FIRE ACCORDING TO BELIEFS

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship placed one of its employees on paid leave so she could reconcile with her husband. She was later fired because the organization had “not seen enough progress.” She filed suit against IVF claiming discrimination under the First Amendment’s free exercise clause. Her case was initially dismissed but was appealed to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, which affirmed the earlier decision confirming the ability of faith-based groups to make employment decisions consistent with the faith they espouse. The court recognized that this freedom extends to groups beyond just those that are directly run by churches and denominations. ■

“There is really no doubt that God led me here,” says **MIGUEL EGREMY**, a secondary English education major at GBS.

In Guadalajara, Mexico, Miguel attended Accelerated Christian Education schools from a young age. Upon graduation from high school, he worked in a Yokohama, Japan, ACE school for nine months before returning to Mexico as an English teacher in a homeschool setting for a year. Through these opportunities, he learned firsthand the need for English teachers around the world—particularly teachers with a Christian faith, willing to shape and mold children for God’s Kingdom.

Miguel aspired to pursue a Christian-focused education to become an English teacher. Through teachers and friends who highly recommended GBS to him, he found his way to the Teacher Education Division at the Hilltop, where he now anticipates graduating this spring with a BA in Secondary English Education. ■

Seventy-five percent of our students receive some form of financial aid which enables them to attend GBS. If you would like to support students with financial needs, you may send a gift to:

Student Fund
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or give online anytime at
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— Called Unto Holiness —

In this space we use writers both past and present to discuss various aspects of Christian holiness.

THE PERFECTION OF LOVE

by George D. Watson

And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.
—Deuteronomy 30:6

To love God with all the heart can occur only when it is circumcised—purified from all sin. It is not a perfect mind, but a perfect heart and a willing, teachable mind.

When we come to calm and candid examination of the Scriptures to find what is the true sphere and limitation of Christian perfection, we find that it is *exclusively and only* the perfection of the moral and religious nature. It is nowhere predicated on the body or bodily functions and powers. According to the Bible, no sort or degree of physical perfection will be secured till the resurrection of the just. Neither is it a perfection predicated of the mental powers. Mental perfection is promised us in the Scriptures only when “we shall know even as also we are known.” But it is a perfection of the heart, or spiritual being, embracing the heart, conscience and will; and whenever, in the word of God, perfection is predicated of or enjoined upon a man, it will always be found to be a perfection in relation to his heart or will; or, in other words, a species of perfection that covers only his moral nature, the sphere of his moral and spiritual relations.

Being cleansed from all sin is Christian perfection in its negative form. Entire yielding to all the will of God is Christian perfection in its receptive form; and being filled with pure love is Christian perfection in its positive form. When the heart is made pure, it is then in condition to be filled with the abiding Comforter, whose presence floods the soul with unmixed love. This perfection of indwelling love, according to the Bible, should be the normal life of every Christian.

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. —Col. 1:28

Christian perfection was a constant theme in Paul’s preaching and writing. So it ought to be of every gospel preacher.

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. —Phil. 3:12-15

Here are two kinds of perfection—one is perfection in glory in the future, the other perfection of love which Paul had. We are to put on love as a garment—wear it as a girdle around all the graces; for love is the perfection of them all.

But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. —1 John 2:5

Not God’s perfect love to us, but His love perfected in us. ■

George D. Watson (1845-1924) was a prominent Holiness Movement preacher and author.



HOW TO HAVE DAILY VICTORY OVER WILLFUL SIN

Understanding Who I am in Christ (Part 2 of 2)

by *Allan P. Brown, Chair*

GBS Division of Ministerial Education

Scripture: Romans 6:11-23

In the last sermon, I listed "Eight FACTS For Your FAITH" based on Romans 6:1-10. In this sermon, I will present action steps you as a Christian must take after incorporating those eight biblical facts into your heart and mind. There are commands to obey and truths to embrace when facing temptation.

Once a Christian understands who he is in Christ, he must then obey two commands: First, he must reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin; and second, he must yield himself and the members of his body as tools of righteousness (Romans 6:13). The first action is accomplished by faith; the second action requires a full surrender followed by an ongoing obedience.

1. I must really believe that I am dead unto sin, but alive unto God. (Rom. 6:11)

"So you also must reckon (consider) yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Do not misunderstand. Victory over sin is not achieved by our "reckoning" ourselves to be dead. Victory over sin is achieved through our union with Christ with His victory over sin. However, because of the reality of our union with Christ, we are com-

manded to believe and act upon this reality as our real condition. We must gain and maintain a full sense and conviction of it. Unless we keep in our mind that through our union with Christ we are actually dead to sin and alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord, we cannot serve Him as we ought.

The death to sin that Paul describes in Romans 6:1-10 is the actual experience of all regenerate persons and fundamentally distinguishes them from the unsaved, who are under the dominion of sin. While the saved person must still battle the temptations to sin, he is not under sin's lordship, and his fundamental disposition in life is toward holiness (Rom 6:4).

What is the method of reckoning myself to be dead indeed unto sin? By faith I receive the powerful and liberating Word of God as Truth for my heart. Once I know that I have made a full confession of sin to God and by faith have received the assurance of pardon, I can declare on the authority of God's infallible Word that I am set free from all sin and made fully alive to God in Christ Jesus my Lord. As the patriarchs in Hebrews 11 acted in faith, I am not to wait until I understand all about God's commands and promises, but I am to believe my death to sin and freedom from sin through my union with Christ to be real. Reckoning is not claiming a promise; it is acting upon a fact!

We are to believe ("reckon") and keep on believing that we shared Christ's death to sin, and that we are now alive unto God *in Him*. We are not told to die to sin, rather, because we are *in Christ* Who did die to it, we are declared to be dead to sin. Reckon it so! And since it has pleased God to call for our response of faith, let us follow His method. Faith says "Amen" to the facts of God's Word. Faith says, "Yes, it is true. I am dead to sin and I am living unto God! I rejoice in this fact!"

Once I have reckoned myself to be dead indeed unto sin, I must yield myself and the members of my body as tools of righteousness (Rom. 6:13).

2. I must not let willful sin have any place in my life. (Rom. 6:12)

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts (passions)."

3. I must not use the members of my body for sinful purposes. (Rom. 6:13a)

"Do not present [yield] your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness but present [yield] yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness."

Being “dead to sin and alive to God” is not only a matter of proper thinking (“reckon yourselves”) and faith, it also involves one’s choices and actions. A Christian must not allow sin to reign in his body. The command, “let not sin reign in your body,” clearly informs us that being dead to sin does not make a person impervious to temptation, nor does it remove the susceptibility of a Christian to wrong desires. But it does enable us to stop sinning willfully! This is what Jesus meant when He commanded people to “sin no more” (see John 5:14 and 8:11). Neither Jesus nor Paul expected the impossible!

A Christian must yield himself fully to God. The word “yield” (sometimes translated as “present”) means “to place at one’s disposal, to present, to offer as a sacrifice.” The same Greek word also appears in Romans 12:1, where it is translated “present,” and occurs in the phrase, “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service.” Notice that the person who is to do this “yielding” or “presenting” is said to be “holy” before such a presentation becomes “acceptable” to God. In other words, this is not the yielding a sinner makes to God at salvation; it is the yielding and full surrender a Christian makes after salvation as an act of gratitude to God for His mercies (Rom. 12:1).

Yielding oneself to God involves four steps: (1) a decisive act, (2) a transfer of control of every aspect of your life to God, (3) a finality of commitment, and (4) a moment-by-moment maintenance of that commitment. Therefore, a Christian must purposely and decisively yield himself to God, transferring to God full control of himself and his body and daily maintaining that surrender. This does not mean that there may not be further calls by God to demonstrate the reality and depth of one’s surrender. Abraham was called to go out to a strange country (Heb. 11:8) and he obeyed; he was later called to offer his son, his only son Isaac, as a burnt offering (Heb. 11:17) on Mt. Moriah and, again, he obeyed.

4. I am free from sin, and I choose to live for God in total obedience. (Rom. 6:14-18)

“For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you

were committed and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

Before we were united with Christ, we were “slaves to sin” (Rom. 6:17, 20). Now in Christ we have been freed from sin and are “slaves to righteousness” (Rom. 6:18) and “slaves to God” (Rom. 6:22).

5. As I once chose to live a life of willful sin, I now choose to live a holy life. (Rom. 6:19-20)

“I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present [yield] your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.”

The freedom from sin brought by God’s grace is to lead us to yield willingly the members of our body as slaves to righteousness. We now desire to grow and develop in holy living. Prior to our repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we used our bodies as slaves to impurity and unrighteousness. However, now that we are united with Christ, we are wholeheartedly to pursue growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must continually say to ourselves: “I am free to live righteously, and to pursue holiness. But I am not to yield to the temptation to sin. Through union with Christ, I can live righteously.”

6. Since I am free from the power of sin, I am able through grace to live a holy life, and victory over sin assures me of everlasting life (Rom. 6:22-23)

“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Apart from holiness there is no eternal life. The practice of willful sin (slavery to sin) results in death. The fruit of obedience to God and the practice of walking in God’s truth produces sanctification. And sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit in us whereby He takes the Word of God (such as Rom. 6:1-23) and transforms us into the likeness of the Son of God. To become as much like Jesus as is possible through God’s grace is the goal of our life on earth; and, after this life, we continue in fellowship with God and His Son throughout all eternity. ■

Following are brief "field reports" from missionaries around the world who are invited to send us their newsletters and other information about their activities. GBS alumni are especially urged to respond, but we also wish to include others who uphold our vision and commitment.

EGYPT. Evangelistic Faith Missions president, Steven Hight, reported on his December trip to Egypt, where he visited the work of Faith Churches of Egypt, comprised of 60 congregations with plans for more under the thriving leadership of Saied Ibrahim. In addition to visiting various churches, Steven Hight had the privilege of lecturing to a class at Faith Bible College in Cairo, which has 65 students studying for the ministry.



GHANA. One facet of the Church of God (Holiness) ministry in Ghana has been their work with the medical needs of the villagers. They treat a variety of ailments ranging from dressing wounds to giv-



ing medications such as antibiotics. In 2014, they treated about 2,000 people from the villages (about 70% were malaria cases). They also transport people with critical conditions to the nearest health center or regional hospital. The villagers—even those who have not joined the church—take note of their loving service. After a team from the US provided medical care last year, a Muslim chief said, "May God help the church for the love they have shown to us. They did not treat the church members alone, but us Muslims also."

MALAWI. Sarel and Lintie Pretorius (Bible Methodist Missions) report a blessed two months of teaching at Sola Scriptorum Bible School in Malawi, Africa. They testify to a real hunger for the Scriptures in the hearts of the 75 students there. The Pretoriuses are taking the steps to make this their permanent residence. First, the sale of property and some necessary legal work needs to be finalized. They ask for prayer that God's will and timing will be evident.



MEXICO. Bible Methodist Missions asks for prayer for the people and churches along the border, especially around Rio Bravo and along Highway Two. The violence among factions of the gulf cartel and the military is making the situation very dangerous. In fact, missionary Steve Stetler was recently caught in the middle of a blockade and shootout but was able to talk the police into letting him go on through to the Donna Bridge after checking his car. They request prayer that none of the church people will be hurt.



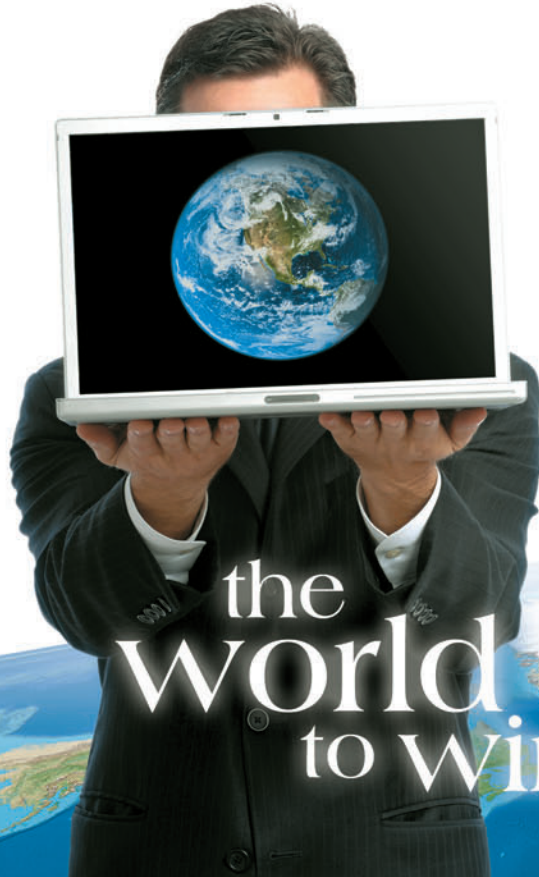
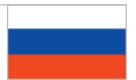
NICARAGUA. Raymond Shreve of Evangelical Wesleyan Mission asks for prayer and support for the people of Tamarindo who lost their church and parsonage late last year due to a severe earthquake. It will take about \$5,000 to build a basic structure that will be somewhat earthquake resistant. If you wish to assist with this project, contact EWM at 864.599.5800.



PHILIPPINES. Rev. David Yucaddi, along with the pastors and leaders of Gospel Light Bible Methodist Church, has launched a new FAITH project to build a large open-air auditorium to facilitate Gospel Light camp meetings. They have simply outgrown the Banaue Training Center and have found it more and more challenging to gather large crowds together for evangelism, teaching, training, and worship. Please help Bro. Yucaddi pray about the need as they seek to complete this project in 2015. Those wishing to contribute to the project can contact Timothy Keep, Missions Secretary at tbk@yahoo.com for further information.



RUSSIA. George and Sandra Kolva of Arms Around the World request prayer that God will guide them into what legal steps they should take in defense of religious liberty. Their camp for Sunday school children was stopped on the third day by officers, and the children were seized and bused to the prosecutor's office. Parents were called to get them. It was made clear that this was because of the Christian teaching. Please pray for the work in the Ural Mountains. ■



the world to win

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ALUMNI news



left to right: Lottie as a little girl; as a young woman; on her wedding day; with her husband and five boys.



LOTTIE TRYON, MOTHER OF ADEP

compiled by Ken Farmer

Lottie Jean Tryon, 83, passed away January 30, 2015. She was born in 1931 in Winchester, Arkansas. She and her late husband, Charles Sr., spent over 60 years in Christian service as pastors, music evangelists, and missionaries.

The providence of God and the need for preparation brought them together at Bethany Nazarene College. Love brought them together in marriage in 1950. Charles and Lottie pursued degrees and coursework for specialized training that earned them hundreds of college credit hours.

They were training themselves to be a blessing to God and His people, and indeed they were!

They pastored churches in Colorado, Iowa, and Oklahoma; worked as missionaries in the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Guam, Saipan, Japan, and Hawaii; opened Bible schools for training pastors and lay people; founded the International Association of Bible Fellowship Centers; launched the missionary outreach Asia-Orient Missions, for which Lottie was its International Association Coordinator; helped create the world's first Braille New Testament for blind Filipino students; went to Japan to work with an adult high school program at the request of the US government; and created educational centers and churches in the Philippines, Taiwan, Guam, Saipan, Korea, Japan, Papua New Guinea, and Hawaii. As a result, Lottie is known across southeast Asia and the Pacific as "Mom Tryon."

The GBS connection began at a regional Inter-church Holiness Convention in 2001. It was there that the Tryons shared with President Avery

their burden to educate workers for the Kingdom. "Lottie talked and Charles cried and I listened," remembers the president. Out of that discussion, Aldersgate Distance Education Program (ADEP) was born. The Tryons moved to Cincinnati and launched the program.

It began with a large collection of course materials that the Tryons had assembled over the years, and involved students participating in a combination of classes completed by correspondence and classes set up as "block sessions," in which students completed some work prior to a week of on-campus instruction by the professors, followed by additional independent study and assignments to finish the course.

There were 11 ADEP students the first year. As the program developed, online video instruction was added to the curricula and eight degree programs, fully accredited and completely online, were established. ADEP enrollment has now grown to 101. GBS has Lottie to thank for such a good start!

The Tryons were a highly educated couple. Lottie earned a BA in Business and an MA in Educational Administration, and she completed all of the course work for a PhD in Education. Similarly, Charles was at



top: "Mom Tryon" with Filipino "daughter" Gloria Pangilinan. Gloria has been the Asia-Orient Missions Coordinator since 2008.
 above: Lottie and Charles, facilitators of ADEP.
 right: Lottie receives an honorary doctorate during the 2005 GBS commencement.

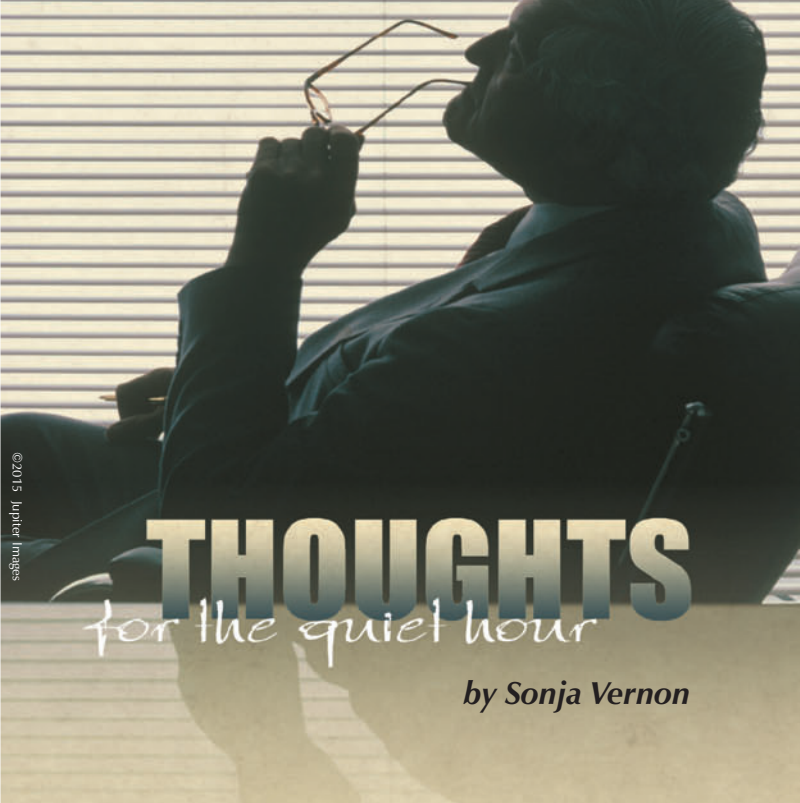
the same educational point—"all but dissertation" toward a PhD. At the 2005 commencement, GBS granted both Tryons the well-deserved honorary Doctor of Christian Ministries degrees.

That same summer, the Tryons returned home to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where they continued developing college curricula translated for use on mission fields. In fact, those materials are now used by 32 overseas missions in seven different countries and by Hispanic ministries in Florida.

Charles preceded Lottie in death in 2012. Lottie is survived by five sons, Charles, Henry, Mark, Thomas, and Stephen; thirteen grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. The memorial service was held at Floral Haven Funeral Home Chapel in Broken Arrow, OK.

Donations to the Tryon Memorial Project in the Philippines may be sent to IABFC Asia-Orient Missions, 3074 Sunset Rd, Mannford, OK 74044.

GBS has given a scholarship in memory of Dr. Lottie Tryon to Bethany Probst, a sophomore in the Division of Intercultural Studies and World Missions. ■



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THOUGHTS

for the quiet hour

by Sonja Vernon

LEARNING OUR LIMITS

"Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.'" —Ex. 18:17-18 NASB

It is so easy to have a superman complex in Christian ministry. We feel obligated to be all things to all people, to fill our days completely full with other-oriented activities, to fix all that ails everyone in our sphere of influence. We view asking for help as a sign of weakness and question how we could ever say "no" to someone who needs us. Moses fell into this same trap. His days were full from morning 'til night listening to disputes and ironing out squabbles. But Moses had a Jethro, an objective voice that spoke truth into his life; and Jethro's words to Moses have been a source of wisdom and caution to me over the last several years. I was a slow learner when it came to my limits. It took a heart attack at age 30 for me to begin placing appropriate boundaries in my life. I pray that you, my readers, will learn this lesson well before you tax your minds and bodies to the breaking point. If we do not care for these earthen vessels, these temples God has entrusted to us, we will limit the effectiveness and longevity of our ministries. No doubt you have watched it happen. God give us wisdom to place healthy boundaries, to ask for help, and to shun the spiritual pride that drives us past the red flags God places in our lives. ■

Sonja Vernon is Dean of Women at God's Bible School and College.

WHAT IF YOUR FUTURE BEGINS HERE?



APRIL 24, 2015

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