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God Speaks to Youth

By Johnny Ramsey

Any student of the Bible is certainly aware of many verses that pertain to young people. One of the haunting questions of Scripture is found in 2 Samuel 18:32 when King David asked about his son, "Is the young man safe?" Solomon wrote later about the course of true wisdom, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Timothy was blessed by having the will of God instilled in him early in life: "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Timothy 3:15). And he was also challenged by Paul, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example" (1 Timothy 4:12).

The thrilling message of Psalms 127:3 is "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord". A perceptive poet told the truth in these sentiments:

*The soul of a child is the loveliest flower
That grows in the garden of God,
'Tis a plant that is tender and
wondrously rare,
The sweet wistful soul of a child.*

In Ephesians 6:1-4 we learn the beauty of obedience by children and the power of parental guidance in the Lord! No language supercedes the hearty refrain of Proverbs 23:26 in reflecting the love of parents: "My son, give me thine heart." Parents like those of John the Baptist had blessed mankind, as Luke 1:6 affirms: "They were both righteous, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." In Zechariah 2:4 we read, "Run, speak to the young man." There are four basic lessons all young people need to hear if they will just slow down and pay attention to them. These are the things I share with teenagers often.

Be Spiritually Minded. The way of wisdom is shown in Romans 6:6, "Our old man is crucified with him, that the

body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin". Allowing the crucified Savior to dominate our lives will cause our example to be for everlasting good. As the poet said, "It may reach like widening ripples, down a long eternity." To be spiritually minded is "life and peace," is the message of Romans 8:6. But, when the cares and riches of life choke out God's word, we are fruitless in His service (Luke 8:14).

Be Respectful of Parents. The shameful sin of disobedience to parents is carefully spelled out in 2 Timothy 3:2, "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy." Obedience, on the other hand, is well-pleasing to God (Colossians 3:20). On the cross our blessed Redeemer made provision for His mother (Jno. 19:25-27), and we should do no less. As we grow older, we should continue to show loving respect and financial concern for those who brought us into this world (1 Timothy 5:8). No one has ever regretted being appreciative and loving toward Mom and Dad!

Don't Forget the Parable of the Talents. We dare not violate the principle of bearing fruit as servants in the vineyard of the Lord (Jno. 15:8). Elders, teachers, preachers and godly parents do not just happen - they are developed through spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:18). We must strive to do our best: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Then, "It is God who works in you" (Philippians 2:13) to the ultimate productivity according to His will. We must make proper decisions, lest we expend energy in useless activities (1 Peter 2:2).

Always Remember 1 Corinthians 15:33. If we had our days to live over, most of us would steer clear of worldly companions, for a very good reason: "Be

not deceived: evil companionships corrupt good morals" (1 Corinthians 15:33). As 1 Corinthians 5:6 also warns, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." We should, therefore, "Serve the Lord without distraction" (1 Corinthians 7:35). Young people in the church should marry faithful Christians, so that they can glorify God together in a holy union (Psalms 34:3). Purity of thought and action (Philippians 4:8, 1 Timothy 5:22) is maintained by constant loyalty to God (Lamentations 3:40). Let us be sure to share these thoughts with youth everywhere as we run to meet them more than halfway! A century ago Robert Browning urged older folk to "grant youth their heritage." Christians know that the greatest heritage, for old and young, is to know the joy of doing God's will!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING?

By Dean Fugett

When Philip the Evangelist confronted the Ethiopian eunuch on the way from Jerusalem to Gaza, his question to the eunuch was "Do you understand what you are reading?" The eunuch's reply indicated that he did not and that he needed help in doing so (Acts 8:26-31). When Luke records that Saul was persecuting Christians and making havoc of the church in Acts 8:1-3, the Lord's commentary on that action was that Saul was actually persecuting Christ (Acts 9:4-5). As Jesus breathed out his life on the cross, his prayer was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Paul said the princes of the world did not know what they were doing when they crucified the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8). With all these examples before us, it is not out of place for us to ask our readers if you really know what you are doing?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING WHEN YOU 'FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLING' OF YOURSELVES TOGETHER? You are forfeiting the involvement in the continuance of "fellowship", "provoking to love and good works in the exhorting", fail to judge ourselves
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DO YOU KNOW?

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properly before the Lord that we be not condemned with the world (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25; I Corinthians 11:30-32). The Hebrew writer stated it best when he judged those who forsake the assembling as being guilty of a "willful sin!" (Hebrews 10:26).

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING WHEN YOU SIN AGAINST A BROTHER OR SISTER IN CHRIST? We have oft times heard someone say, "I don't care what they think! I am going to do this. I have a right!" We have seen others spitefully retort with words that cut to the heart of a good Christian, when no just cause could be found for a sharp comment. Too many completely ignore the conscience, weakness, or sensitivity of another Christian. Paul addressed this careless attitude in his statement, "When ye so sin against the brethren, ye **SIN AGAINST THE LORD**" (I Corinthians 8:12).

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING WHEN YOU REFUSE TO SING DURING WORSHIP? In our position of opportunity at the front of the building just before the sermon, we have seen any number of Christians who never lift a voice to sing a song. Singing is for praise to God. Those not singing are failing in an opportunity to **PRAISE GOD!** Singing is for exhortation. Those not singing are refusing to take part in the admonition of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. The Lord must love singing. Note the numerous accounts of the activities around the Throne of God in those Books of the Bible using such figurative language. There is always **SINGING** in praise. Do you know what you are doing when you don't sing?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING WHEN YOU REFUSE TO 'GIVE AS YOU HAVE PROSPERED, AS YOU HAVE PURPOSED'? Some seem to think they are punishing the elders for a decision with which they have disagreed. Some seem to think they are getting back at the preacher for his sermon on giving. Some think that it doesn't matter to God. In reality, when one doesn't give back to God proportionately and purposefully of that which God has given him, he is not only failing to support the Lord's Work and contributing to the ineffectiveness of the Lord's body, **HE IS ROBBING GOD!** (Malachi 3:8).

Other items could be added to this list, but these will suffice to set the direction. We hope that in the future, we will all begin to think before we act whether it be as a congregation or as an individual. Our actions are eternal in their consequences.

1820 Cedar Grove Rd.
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THIS TIME OF YEAR *Please Remember*

1. The Devil doesn't take a vacation.
2. Standards of Morality do not change.
3. The Lord's Day still comes every week.
4. Financial obligations continue.
5. The Lord's eyes are in every place.
6. The seed sown in the spring and summer will be reaped in the fall.

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**Never let yesterday use up today.**

# God's Rights and Our Rights

By Bill Graddy

We do not have a scriptural right to decide to separate and divorce (God decided we "must come together again" (1 Corinthians 7:5); **because we are tired living with each other.**

Women do not have a Biblical right to decide to have an abortion which is murder. Life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11) and there is not any time between conception and birth as life is passed from cell to cell. All living things are in the process of dying, whether an unborn fetus or a ninety year old man (Ecclesiastes 9:5). Only time and distance separate the two. Thus, we do not have a right to make a "covenant with death" (Isaiah 28:10). "If the unborn child is endangering the life of the mother, is an abortion sinful/murder?" In the case of the life and death of either, the intent is to save one, will God show mercy as He did relative to the cities of refuge? (Numbers 35:6; 2 Samuel 7:15; Acts 13:34).

In physical birth we had no choice. In physical death we may **not** have choice; yet we could commit suicide which would be murder if we were sane at the time - God will know in judgement.

In spiritual birth and death, having freedom of choice, we **WILL** select one (Joshua 24:15). Obeying the gospel we exercise our option. Failure to obey the gospel we opt to deny God. The decision to live for God faithfully as Christians is ours. God will assign us to eternity based upon **our selection!**

The point is let us be careful not to forfeit our rights and to infringe upon God's prerogative!  
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## The Church

By Richard England

CHURCH is a word with which all Bible readers are familiar. It appears in the New Testament one hundred twelve times. The same word which is translated church is also translated "assembly" three times. It refers to "the called out". The word not always means a religious group. In Acts 19, assembly refers to those who had gathered to protest Paul's preaching. Stephen, speaking of the people who had been called out of Egypt, uses the word church. (Acts 7:30). Paul uses the term to refer to those gathered in a religious service. ( 1 Corinthians 14:34).

In that Jesus came to "call . . . Sinners unto repentance" (Luke 5: 32) He uses the word to refer to all who would believe Him to be the Son of God and obey Him. "Upon this rock I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18). Those who are "in Christ" are "the called". "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are CALLED." (Ephesians 4:1) ". . . . even as ye are CALLED in one hope of your calling. (Ephesians 4:4). "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are CALLED in one body." (Colossians 3:15) "Do not blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are CALLED." (Jas. 2:7) "Who hath saved us, and CALLED us with an holy calling . . ." ( 2 Timothy 1:9) Christians are referred to as "partakers of the heavenly CALLING." (Hebrews 3:1) "Whereunto he CALLED you by our gospel." ( 2 Thessalonians 2:14).

All those who obey the gospel's call by being baptized INTO Christ are children of God by faith. (Galatians 3:26, 27). They have been called out of sin and into Jesus Christ. They are "the called out", THE CHURCH, for which He died (Ephesians 5:25), which He purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:30) of which He is the head (Ephesians 5:23), which is His own body (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18, 24) and which He has sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word (Ephesians 5:26).

Jesus has ALL authority. (Matthew 28:18) Only Jesus can say what one must do to get into His church, His body. When we do what He says do to get into Him (as we had in our last lesson). He adds us to that great body of saints who have also submitted to His will. No man on the face of the earth has the power to vote us in or out of the church of Christ. They may keep us out of human institutions, but not the divine church of God which is mentioned in the Bible. If one is saved, he is saved by the power of God through obedience to the gospel. To say that he is saved is to say that he has been "called out" of sin and into Christ. HE IS IN THE CHURCH.

God has added His people together in this fashion from the day of Pentecost until now (Acts 2:47) If we do what they did, then we will become what they were. Then, we should want to continue in the same fashion of worship and work for the Lord that was characteristic of them. In this way, we can look forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ with great hope.

## WITHIN THE WALLS

By Ernest Loomis

In (Psalms 122:7) the Psalmist, speaking of Jerusalem said, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces". As Paul was being taken to Rome the ship in which he rode encountered a great storm and it was feared that the ship and all lives would be lost, however an angel appeared to Paul and said no lives would be lost, but Paul told the centurion and soldiers ". . . . Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). Peace, Prosperity and safety were where God placed them. Since the creation God's blessings upon mankind have been innumerable and a large part of them have been restricted to certain places and conditions. For example, The tree of life was placed IN the Garden of Eden, thus, when Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden they had no access to the blessing of the tree of life (Genesis 2:-). God placed the blessing of salvation from the flood IN the ark and all who were not in the ark perished (Genesis 6,7). God designated six cities, three on each side of the Jordan river as cities of refuge so those of Israel who killed someone accidentally or unintentionally could be protected from the avenger of blood. This protection though was IN the city and if they were caught outside the city before the reigning high priest died they could be put to death (Numbers 35:-). When the plague of death was brought upon the first born of every household in Egypt, God provided a way for Israel to escape the plague by remaining IN the house where the blood of the passover lamb had

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been sprinkled on the door posts. (Exodus 12:-). Rahab and her family were to be saved when the city of Jericho was taken by Israel if they stayed IN the house (Joshua 2:-). From these examples, is it not plain to see that God placed His blessings in certain places and in order to enjoy and profit from those blessings, the people had to be where God placed them?

Likewise many blessings God has provided for us are restricted to certain places and if we profit from them we must be where God put them. Consider with me some spiritual blessings and where God has placed them.

1. Forgiveness is IN Christ; (Ephesians 1:7) "In whom (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the FORGIVENESS of sins".
2. Redemption is IN Christ; (Colossians 1:14) "In whom (Christ) we have REDEMPTION through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins".
3. Newness of life or a new creature is IN Christ; (2 Corinthians 5:17) "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature . . . . ."
4. Salvation is IN Christ; (2 Timothy 2:10) "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the SALVATION which is IN Christ Jesus with eternal glory."
5. Eternal life is IN Christ; (1 John 5:11) "And this is the record, that God hath given to us ETERNAL LIFE, and this life is IN his Son."
6. In fact, Paul said ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSING are IN Christ; (Ephesians 1:13) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places IN CHRIST."

If "all" spiritual blessings are in Christ, then there are none outside of Christ and to profit from the blessings we must be in Him. How then does one get into Christ? There are only two scriptures which answers that question and they both say one is baptized into him (Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3). Of course one is brought to Christ by hearing the gospel (Romans 10:13-14); believing it (Hebrews 11:6); repenting of all sins (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3); and Confessing Christ (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10); Don't be led astray by the theories of men for IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHAT YOU BELIEVE!

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## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

## GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

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