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The Heaven Bound Freeway

By Leslie Leonard

In the Bible common objects and events such as ships, journeys, roads, etc. are used to illustrate spiritual truths. If an inspired writer were writing today he would probably make use of our modern freeway system to get a point across.

If we are Christians we're on the heaven bound freeway, or the highway of the saved. This illustration is appropriate since Isaiah wrote, "And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not pass over it, and fools shall not err therein." (Isa. 35:8)

If you are a Christian, you didn't just accidentally wander onto this highway, as Isaiah indicated. We have to select it, and once we're on it, we have to make sure we stay on it.

To even begin to have a meaningful relationship with God, we must believe that he exists. Heb. 11:6 states, "And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." So we sail along down the highway of life. Then suddenly we come upon an interchange where the road divides. One route is for those who believe in the existence of God and the other route is for those who do not believe that he exists. If we take the route of unbelief we may never find our way back to the highway of life. But if we decide that God does exist, then we have to commit ourselves to the road that leads to him.

Before we get to the highway of life we must select the right lane as well as avoid several exit ramps and other roads that lead back to the highway of unbelief. We will also have to be careful that we don't get tangled in the complex series of curves of skepticism, which will keep us circling aimlessly until we end up in the junkyard alongside the highway of unbelief.

The situation is similar to an incident that happened to me. Several years ago I was driving through Kansas City with the intention of not stopping. I planned to avoid the downtown area, but I carelessly got into the wrong lane and the next

thing I knew I was on a freeway that said, "Downtown Kansas City and Stockyards ahead." A few weeks ago I attempted to drive downtown in Omaha, and again I got in the wrong lane. The next thing I knew I was on the Missouri River Bridge, and a few minutes later I was out of the state over in Iowa. To get on and stay on the highway of life demands that we make the right choices.

Our guide book, the Bible, tells us what we must do to get on the right road and how to stay on it. Of course, belief in God is necessary; so we must first select the lane of belief. We then are told that we must repent (which simply means that we must have a change of mind that will cause us to get out of some of the lanes we are following that are wrong.) If we refuse to repent we miss the ramp and sail off through the white oak sprouts and end up in the junkyard of the eternally condemned.

We are told that we must confess Jesus as the Son of God; so we're careful that we do that. Then we find that our guide book, not only tells us that we must believe and repent, but we are to be baptized for the remission of sins. Only the nice clean shiny ones are permitted on the heaven highway, and we find that this is the last turn we have to make before speeding out onto the highway of the saved.

Many come part of the way with us but turn off before they reach the main freeway. Some decide that this last ramp (baptism) is not necessary, and they miss the highway of salvation.

This is the reason that the first choice of belief must be an intentional choice. Those who don't really believe in God, nor believe that he has the right to require certain things of them, will not follow the guide when it interferes with what they think should be done. Their unbelief will cause them to take over and refuse to take this one last turn that will lead them to life.

Those who continue to follow the instructions find themselves on the

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The Beauty of The Church

By Harold Turner

A study of the New Testament reveals one of the most beautiful pictures in all human relations. The birth of the Lord's church, its growth, organization, and function pictures to us the infinite wisdom of God in meeting the needs in human relations.

Man is born with a need for companionship and fellowship with others. In his efforts to satisfy these needs, men have organized numerous social and fraternal orders. And while these may have provided opportunities for man to better his relations with others, they fall short of totally fulfilling his need for fellowship.

The church is designed to fulfill and meet every spiritual and social need. Social and fraternal orders can no more take the place in fulfilling this need than some club can take the place of the home.

One of the pictures of the church, relating its beauty in human relations, is where it is pictured as a family. God is our father, and we are his sons and daughters (2 Cor. 6:18). In relationship one to another, we are brothers and sisters. This is a relationship where love, concern, and compassion are openly expressed one to another. In 1 Cor. 12:26 Paul admonished the open expression of our feelings, saying, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." God's love grows in our heart, and is expressed in helpful ways toward others. Many times I have been astounded at the response of God's children when a need is reported. Frequently their response not only meets the need but abounds far beyond the need.

The gospel provides us with guidelines to help us grow out of the realm of selfishness into the realm of compassionate service to others. This kind of growth shines forth as a radiant light to a world of darkness. One of the contributing factors for the phenomenal growth of the early church was the beauty of their relationship one with the other. In Acts 2:44-45 the early Christians are pictured in a beautiful realm of love; "And all that believed were

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EDITORS: Erwin Cowen and Harrold Turner.

The Ingredients of a Happy Home

By James Knight

The home is under attack from several quarters at the present time. Homes are being destroyed by the thousands every year. In 1975 more than one million homes were broken by divorce. Just a few days ago I was looking through the court records of the Parish where I live, and was appalled at the number of divorces being filed continually. This indicates that there is a great deal of unhappiness in the home today. What can be done to change this? What does the Bible have to say about the home?

wives failing to do what God has directed.

Happiness can exist in the home only where there is mutual trust on the part of both husband and wife. God forbid, that Christian husbands and wives conduct themselves in such a manner that their mate cannot trust them out of their sight. Distrust brings jealousy, and no home can be happy where either husband or wife is jealous.

Another ingredient that will make a happy home concerns children and their relationship to parents. The Bible teaches children to be obedient to their parents (Eph. 6:1). This does not mean just when they want to, but all the time. Children are to honor their parents (Matt. 15:1-6, Eph. 6:2). It is sad when children are allowed to be disobedient and disrespectful to their parents. But, even worse, is the fact that it is displeasing to God.

The trend that is being set by the breakup of the home can only be reversed when husbands and wives are willing to live by the precepts given in the word of God. To every husband, wife, father, mother, and child let me say that if you intend for your home to be a happy place, you must give of your time and energy to make it happen. Happy homes are no accident. Is your home a happy one?

"If men can be found faithful in hard places they can be trusted in high places."

"A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in til afterwards." Prov. 29:11

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Prov. 28:13

"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Prov. 28:9

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Prov. 27:17

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Prov. 25:11

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth." Prov. 26:20

The home is not a human institution. The home was not started by man. The home originated with God and was designed for the happiness of man. In the long ago, God made man and placed him in the garden of Eden to dress and keep it. The Bible says that God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and God made the woman from a rib taken from the side of Adam. Thus we have the beginning of the home (Gen. 2:18-24).

God designed the home to be happy; he never intended for man to be unhappy in this closest of all human relationships. Since this is true, what are the ingredients that will make our homes happy as God intended them to be?

Homes will be happy when the husband and wife fulfill their God given responsibility in the home. What are these responsibilities? The Bible teaches that the husband is the head of the wife (Eph. 5:23). He is to be the director and decision maker in the home. He is to love his wife as his own body (Eph. 5:28). In marriage the husband and wife become one flesh, and when a man loves his wife, he loves himself. The husband is also to be the provider for the family (1 Tim. 5:8). The father is to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). When the husband does these things he is helping to bring happiness to the home.

The Bible has a great deal to say about the responsibility of the wife in the home also. In Eph. 5:22-24 Paul tells the wife to submit to and be in subjection to her husband as unto the Lord. The wife is to reverence her husband (Eph. 5:33). This means that she is to respect him as the head and leader of the home. In Titus 2:4-5 Paul gives several duties of the wife, which includes: being discreet, chaste, keeps at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, to love their children and husband, that the word of God be not blasphemed. One great source of unhappiness in the home is husbands and

The Heaven Bound Freeway (Cont.)

highway of salvation. Ahead of them is a sign which says, "Eternity Ahead - Drive Slow and Careful." This is only the beginning of the journey and they must be careful not to get confused and take a detour that will lead them to a wrong road. There will be many exits along the way where signs beckon for them to stop for awhile to rest and relax. Many will turn off and their moment of rest will stretch into a permanent residence: they will never get back on the road. Sometimes some will pull off for a few moments of fun and find themselves back on the old road of unbelief. The goal is only reached by those who are obedient in following instructions, and faithful in pursuing their goal.

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"Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." Eccl. 5:5

"Add thou not unto His words, lest ne reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Prov. 30:6

How Important is Truth?

By Ordell Heavin

One of the most crucial issues involved in the struggle between true Christianity and liberalism concerns the truth. Can men know the truth? And, can they know that they know it? Or, are we all destined to seek for the truth and never find it? In cases where people differ from each other in their views, can they ever know who has the truth? Consider the following illustration. One of your children becomes very sick. You rush the child to the hospital, and three doctors examine the child. The first doctor says, "Your child has a critical disease and must be treated at once; otherwise the child will soon die." The second doctor says, "Oh, your child has an upset stomach, I suggest that you take it home and try not to worry about it." Then the third doctor tells you, "We have two different opinions here. Who am I to say which is right? I think we should be guided by love and respect for each other's opinion." What would be your reaction? Everybody knows better than that. This illustration is a common situation among people today about religious matters. Liberal teachers say that we can never be sure we are right about anything. They teach people to do whatever they think (or feel) is right, and God will be pleased.

If we could not know spiritual truth the Bible would be useless. Let's go to the Bible and see what it has to say about the nature and importance of truth in religion. What is truth? In John 17:17 our Lord said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." What God's word sets forth is truth. When God made known the truth, he selected the apostles to whom he gave the Holy Spirit. Through these chosen men the Spirit would reveal all truth infallibly. (See John 16:13, Acts 1:2, I Pet. 1:21). What these chosen men wrote was to be recognized as the word of God. In I Cor. 14:37 the apostle Paul wrote, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I wrote unto you are the commandments of the Lord." Though this word was spoken by human mouths, and written by human hands, it was fully God's word. When the apostles spoke and wrote this word, they did not speak or write their interpretation or opinion of what they thought God meant by the revelation. They received the truth by revelation, they wrote it for us, and when we read it we are to recognize that it is God's word. It does not contain errors, false statements, or contradictions. It is truth, the complete revelation of all that

God thought necessary for man to know. In John 16:13, Jesus told the apostles, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." How much truth were the apostles to receive? What part of truth were they to receive? People, the Bible says, "All truth." This means that the Bible contains all of God's will for us. Jesus said in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth..." We can KNOW it, not just seek for it.

Friends, it is a reflection on the wisdom of God to suppose that he gave us a law essential to salvation, and made it so mystical that we couldn't understand it. Error is not the means to salvation. It is truth, and one's obedience to it that brings one into a saved relationship with God through Christ. In I Peter 1:22, the apostle Peter said, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth..." Is truth necessary? If you want freedom from sin by the purification of your soul through the blood of Christ it is necessary, for this is accomplished only by the truth. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32).

Not realizing the necessity of truth in religion many have fallen victim to falsehoods and lies of Satan. Notice the following doctrines that are so widely accepted by today's religious world. (1). "One's religious beliefs don't really matter as long as one is sincere." Does the Bible teach this? This is false, as we have already shown. Any number of people have honestly thought they were eating wholesome food, only to die from food poisoning. Their sincere intentions did not change the fact they were eating contaminated food. (2). "One church is as good as another." This is not true because it is not taught in the Bible. Jesus promised to build only one church (Matt. 16:18). No place did the apostles teach more than one church (Eph. 4:4-6). Despite the truth there are over 300 denominational church bodies in America. Christ has but one church, and it is not a denomination. (3). "One can be saved and not be a member of the church." The Bible denies this doctrine. Christ is the Savior of the body, the church (Eph. 5:23). Acts 2:47 shows that the Lord adds to the church such as should be saved. (4). "Baptism is not essential to men's salvation." The Bible teaches that baptism is essential to

salvation. (Read I Pet. 3:21, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 22:16.) Which will you believe?

These are but a few examples of the liberal views which contradict the word of God. Can these beliefs be wrong and still be acceptable to God? God has revealed the truth in his word, and will judge us by this truth in the last day.

You must be right to be saved. A man is not seriously trying to please God if he plays fast and loose with Bible truth. We are to walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). One can only walk by faith when he has the authority of the Bible (Rom. 10:17). We must believe, teach, and practice all truth. "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." (I Thess. 5:21.) The Bible labels all propositions and doctrines, which run counter to its absolute truths, as errors and falsehoods, and warns us of the evil consequences which befall those who accept them (2 Thess. 2:10-12). Can you see how important truth is?

Far too many people have not investigated their beliefs and practices in the light of God's word. Therefore many have believed and acted in error. Unless such people learn the truth, reject the error they hold, and act on the basis of truth, they will be rejected in the last day when men are judged according to the truth (Rom. 2:2-8).

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." Prov. 15:1.

"All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits." Prov. 16:2.

"When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. 16:7.

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Prov. 20:1.

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds: and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." Prov. 18:8.

"In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury." Prov. 14:23.

"Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom." Prov. 13:10.

To Visit The Sick

By Clovis Ragsdale

The teachings of Christ stand out in the history of man as being the ultimate in the area of love and mercy in man's relationship toward his fellowman. The heathen felt obligated to love only those who love in return. The teaching of Christ extended the need to love even our enemies.

In Matt. 25:31-46 Jesus explains some things relative to the judgment. He pictured the judgment as a great separation under the figure of a shepherd dividing his sheep from the goats. The sheep he set on his right hand. These represented the saved. The goats he set on his left hand. These are pictured as the lost. Those on the right hand were placed there; because, among other things, they had visited the sick. In James 1:27 we are told that, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

But, what does it mean to visit the sick? Many would likely reply that it means to call on the ill and spend time in conversation in their presence. This is only a part of the meaning of visiting the sick. In some cases this may do more harm than help. The nature of the illness dictates the social need for visitation.

The Biblical meaning of visiting the sick includes, not only the social aspect, but also the physical needs. Until recent years, hospitals and nursing care was almost unknown. When one became sick, it was up to their relatives or neighbors to take care of them, and usually without pay. Some were more gifted in caring for the sick than others. God alone knows how many good deeds have been done and how much love has been shown by those who have waited on the sick.

James said that pure religion included visiting the fatherless and widows in their afflictions. We visit them by seeing that they have the necessities of life; food, clothing, shelter, and etc. Their other needs, such as the spiritual and social needs, are not to be overlooked.

We live in changing times. Hospitals and nursing homes have taken over the care of the sick to a great degree. Government programs have placed the care of the sick and needy in the hands of specially trained people. We do not say that this is for the best, but it is a fact in our day. It relieves Christians from chances of doing many good works. It

should give the church more time and resources to preach the gospel. The world is sick in sin. Never before has there been a greater need for the gospel; because never before has there been so many people in the world. If the church is to meet its obligation to preach the gospel to every creature we are going to have to put much more time and effort into the work of bringing Christ to a world starving for spiritual food. If our duties have been diminished in one area, they have been increased in another. We need to open our eyes to these changes, and meet the needs of our day to the best of our ability.

"If you are looking for wholesome society, remember that the church is God's society—not a perfect people, but the best people on earth."

What Goes On Here:

In the 23rd Psalm, the first statement "The Lord is my Shepherd" commits the singer to God and so it should be with every song that is sung by His people. Singing is one of the oldest forms of worship known to man—yet we treat the song service as a means to quiet the audience or to cover up for those that arrive late or as merely a fill-in for other items of worship.

We stand proudly with song book in hand singing "I Surrender All" never understanding what is meant by "all to Him I freely give." Scripture tells us to "sing with spirit and the understanding", to "speak to one another", to "teach and admonish" and "sing in the Spirit and Truth".

We are guilty of singing the same songs over and over until the words come by memory only and never is a thought given to doing what the song says or understanding the message intended.

Every song written is an expression of worship to God. If we are to worship acceptably and as Christ's children, seeking to make the song service a vibrant part of our worship to God, we should consciously make an effort to "Sing, Teach, Speak and Understand every song we sing every time we sing it!

Quote: We are proud of ourselves for being on the right track but unless we move there is a danger of getting run over!

-Wayne Stell

The Beauty of the Church (Cont.)

together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." In Acts 4:34-35 this picture continues; "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." It is little wonder that the church grew so rapidly. These people were "Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47).

Isn't this picture of the early church the expression of what Jesus meant when he said, "Ye are the light of the world, a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid, neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt 5:14-16)

The gospel of Christ is the power of God to save the lost, but men are deeply attracted to the gospel by the example and beauty of it's message being lived out in the daily lives of the followers of Jesus. Each of us should awaken to the need of keeping the lamp of our life trimmed and burning brightly so that those living in darkness may see the beauty of Christ living in us.

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