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## **Bulletin Digest, Volume 10, Number 8 (1991)**

Jim R. Martin

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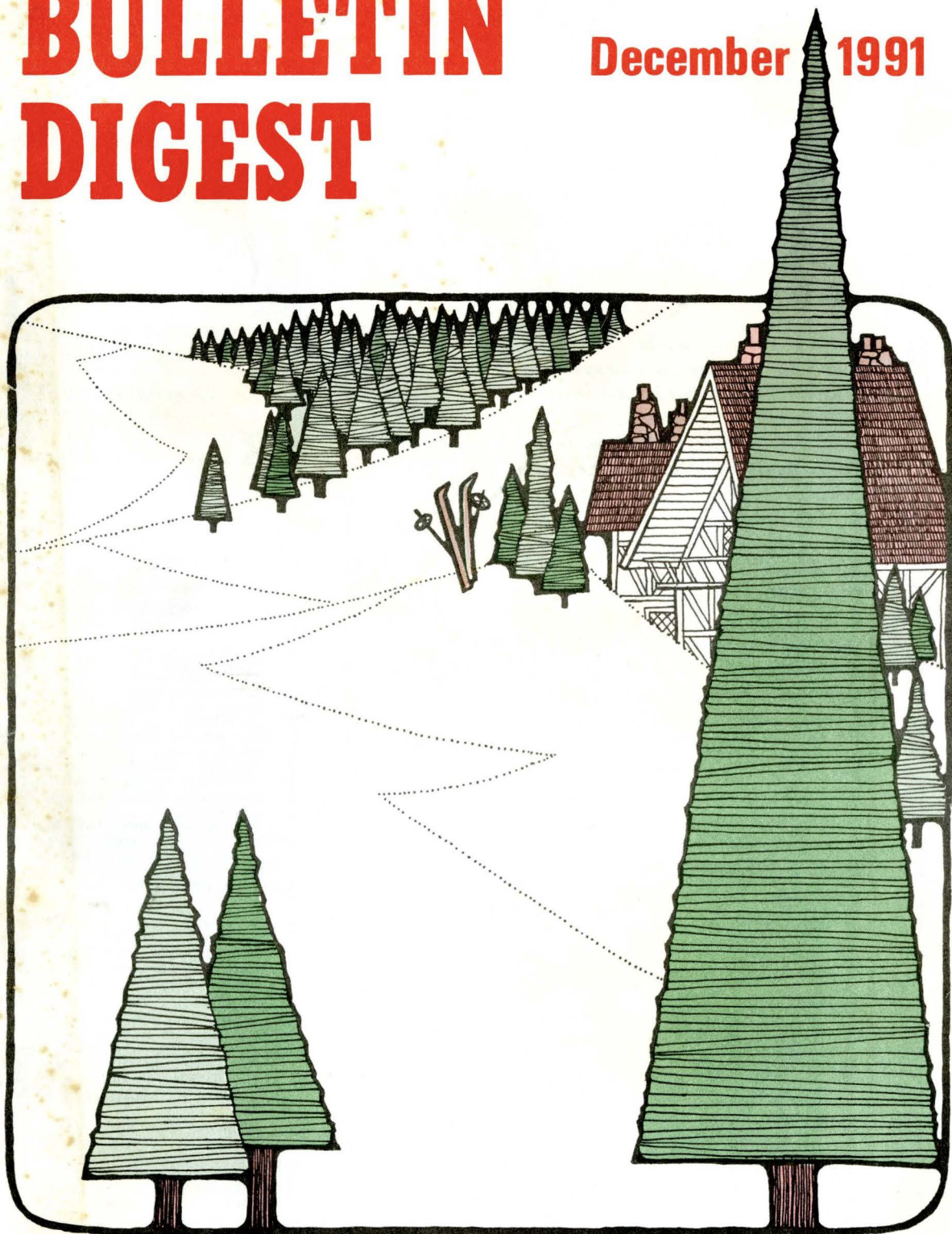
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# BULLETIN DIGEST

December 1991



"that which is good to the use of edifying . . ." *Ephesians 4:29*



# BULLETIN DIGEST

*Vol. X No. 12 December 1991*

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# THE NEW YEAR IS A TIME FOR:

## **Reflections and Examination**

Just as businesses take inventories of stock, so must we examine ourselves and our relationship with God. Self-examination must be done regularly. Each Lord's day provides a special time for this as we partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:28). **"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"** (2 Cor. 13:5).

And what measuring device must one use to determine "whether he is in the faith"? Feelings or emotions by themselves will not suffice. One is often heard to say, "I know that I am a Christian because I feel it right here (striking his heart)." But feelings may be misleading. The apostle Paul had a good conscience even when he was rebelling against God (1 Tim. 1:13).

Nor can we safely judge our relationship with God by the standards of men. This was done by the hypocrites of Jesus' day, yet they found themselves condemned before God. Standards set by men may make one a part of a human organization, but they cannot save a lost soul, nor make one a part of Christ.

Man must not use the Law of Moses as a standard of judging one's relationship with God. Not even the Ten Commandments were designed to make one a child of God. The Law of Moses justifies no man (Rom. 3:20). It was nailed to the cross and died with our Lord (Col. 2:14).

We must not attempt to determine our relationship with God by comparing ourselves with others. From the earliest of days, this has been a favorite and futile exercise of man. Because I am not the kind of sinner that another is, or because I do some good

things that another does not do, does not make me acceptable to God. **"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they measuring themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise"** (2 Cor. 10:12).

There is only one completely reliable measurement to determine my standing with God, and that is the Word of God. Only the Bible is a true mirror of the soul (James 1:22-25).

## **Reconciliation and Restoration**

Broken relationships with God need mending. Unforgiven sin makes it impossible to be at one with God (Isa. 53:61; 59:2). It is only by the grace of God and the blood of Christ by our obedient faith that we can become one with God. The alien sinner needs to obey the Gospel of Christ (Mark 16:16). The prodigal needs to return to Him in repentance, confession and prayer (Acts 8; Luke 15).

Broken relationships between men need mending. We should sincerely strive to mend relationships where others have offended us (Matt. 18:15-17). All of our actions should be carried out in love.

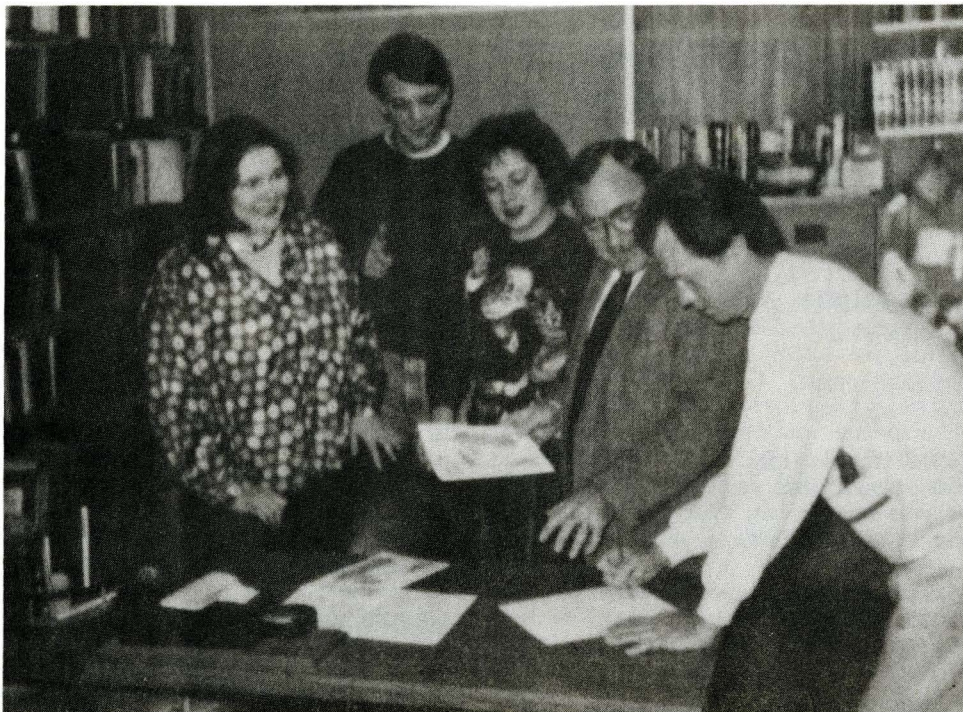
## **Resolutions and Determinations**

The New Year is an ideal time for a new beginning. Let us strive to make Matt. 6:33 a guide for our life: **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."** And we should permit Daniel's attitude to be ours: He knew right from wrong; he determined to shun wrong, and he determined to pursue right (Daniel 1:8). It is not enough just to shun evil, we must follow right. True Christianity involves both a putting off and a putting on (Col. 3:8, 12).

Let us strive to be closer to God as the New Year begins and then pray that we will be closer to him as it ends. **"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof"** (Ecc. 7:8).



Charles L. Brown  
Manchester, TN



(L to R) Nancy Kinsey, Computer and Mailing Records; Jason Mahkovtz, Production; Teresa Martin, Circulation Manager; Jim Martin, Editor and Publisher; Randy Lance, Graphic Artist.

### Holiday Greetings:

To our long-time subscribers . . . our loyal friends of years standing . . . and to our newer subscribers, who in the course of coming years, we hope will become long-time subscribers and dear friends . . . to all whose friendship and prayers have helped encourage us at *Bulletin Digest*, we say thank you . . . thank you sincerely and heartily. We wish you a real Merry Christmas and a bright, happy and prosperous New Year.

May God bless,

Jim Martin and all the staff  
of *Bulletin Digest*



Well, I've been patient—waiting for it to happen—it always has before, but this year it seemed somehow tardy. Perhaps I allowed the press of a busy schedule or the inevitable materialism of the season to detain it, but it's finally here—the "Christmas spirit!" I am moved to pen these words having just returned from the town square. There I was gloriously entertained by troops of children from the first grade (my own daughter among them) as they filled the court house with the delightful sights and sounds of the upcoming holiday. Their colorful, custom-made costumes, their bright, innocent faces, and their enthusiastic, untrained voices created a sweeter melody than could have been produced by the mellifluous strains of the most seasoned troubadour.

Following their musical program the watchful teachers carefully guided the children across North Main Street to the Post Office where each child meticulously, and with hopeful expectation, deposited into a festively decorated mailbox their letters to Santa. O, how I hope he receives and responds to each and every crayon inscribed note!

Well, that did it. Witnessing these precious events of the morning instilled once again within my heart what I want Christmas to always mean to me—the spirit and joy of giving. You see, I have enjoyed Christmas at three different levels (most of us have). As a child of six or seven Christmas was a time for receiving and tearing open beautiful, ribbon-wrapped packages of red, gold and green. As an adolescent I enjoyed exchanging gifts with classmates, friends

and family. Strangely, I found myself gradually becoming more concerned that they be pleased with their gifts than I with mine. Then, as an adult, I learned that the greatest joy came to me at Christmas from the grace of giving.

Receiving gifts was thrilling. Swapping gifts was fun. But giving gifts brings blessedness! Finally, I am beginning to more fully appreciate the words of our Lord, as recited by Paul in Acts 20:35. He said to his beloved Christian brothers from Ephesus: **"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"**

Dear brothers and sisters, let's bring this spirit—the spirit of our precious Savior—into our worship. Our gifts and love offerings bring food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, shelter for homeless children, and the message of salvation to a world of lost souls. As we give upon the first day of the week, may it be a response of joy and love. That's why God gave. **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."**

The children, with the aid of their teachers, preached a marvelous sermon this morning. "Thanks! I needed that!"



**BULLETIN  
DIGEST**

Johnny Hester  
Kennett, MO

### **Things Easy to Forget about Mercy**

*Ps. 107:1; Mt. 25:40; Mk. 9:41, 11:26; Acts 20:35*

1. Without God's mercy all are spiritually homeless.
2. All that we are and have belongs to God.
3. There are many who are in need of our compassion.
4. It is more blessed to give than to receive.
5. Our mercy must be continuous.
6. Our eternal destiny depends upon continuous acts of mercy and compassion.

## WISDOM and FOLLY

I recently talked with a fine young lady who works in a business where I often go. We have become friends, and since she knows I am a preacher, she often speaks of the Bible and spiritual things. She told me of a class she was taking at the university. The teacher was belligerent toward the Bible and those who believed in it. He often challenged the students to defend it. His belief was that it was filled with inaccuracies and was composed of myth and fable.

That same week on public television, I saw Bill Moyers interview Dr. Joseph Campbell, noted professor at a leading university, who has written a number of books on myth and the origins of man's religions. Dr. Campbell thought that all religion came from the mind of man. Man invented all gods, moral codes and spiritual beliefs. Moyers did not ask penetrating questions. He dealt in generalities. He seemed impressed with Campbell's credentials and his seeming expertise in this area of study.

We are often over-awed by someone who speaks well, is well-traveled, and has several degrees. An expert in a field is sometimes not challenged by his colleagues, and certainly not by the uninitiated.

Paul wrote almost two thousand years ago about this phenomenon. He said, *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.'"* (1 Cor. 1:18, 19)

The real truth is that God has spoken to mankind. We did not create Him; He created us. We have not revealed what He is like. He has revealed Himself to us. This is hard for a rationalistic person to accept. Faith is a lost commodity in an empirical society. The teaching that does not fit into man's mode of reasoning is not accepted. It is true that the cross does not fit man's way of thinking. God would die for sinners! Nonsense. God would love us when we were totally unlovable! Folly. And what is

this about "loving your neighbor as yourself?" It is unnatural and will never work. Don't even suggest that it is possible for a man to "love his enemies." Any fool knows that will never work.

Let it be said that the historical sections of the Old and New Testaments can be verified for those looking for proof that the Bible is set in human history. Ur of Chaldeans was really a city. Jerusalem was there in the time of Abraham. Merenptah, pharaoh of Egypt, did indeed record that Israel was a people in 1220 before Christ. And Thebes, Nineveh and Babylon, the largest, most powerful cities of their day, all fell and were never rebuilt, just as the Bible had predicted.

The Book of Books is not myth and fable. It is the only one of the 800 religions of the world that is based in history and could not have come out of the imaginations and creativity of man's mind.

It is still true! "The intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Why should some think that the educated can not believe in spiritual things. Why should some sophisticates scoff at those who believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

The battle is not just for what is true; it is for the salvation of the human family. We are not just trying to win an argument. We are trying to win a soul, an educated one.



BULLETIN  
DIGEST

Harvey Porter  
Albuquerque, NM

"I suggest we restore the church as it was in the New Testament days, rooting it firmly in the pattern set by the early disciples. With its roots there, it can sway and bend to adjust to the times, but fundamentally it would always be the same. A strong tree is still a tree whatever winds blow. And the church would still be the church despite men's opinion blowing about it."

—Barton W. Stone

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## Spiritual Success

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For us to have **Spiritual Success**, we must follow the "Perfect Example." **"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."** (1 Peter 2:21-22)

We must follow in his steps. Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did, 1 John 2:6.

There are five C's that are easy to remember, and if we follow them, will help improve our Spiritual Well Being.

**Commitment To Christ**

**Confidence In Christ**

**Compassion Like Christ**

**Cooperation With Christ**

**Contentment Thru Christ**



BULLETIN  
DIGEST

Charles Soden  
Anderson, IN

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## 5 Things to Forget

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The New year should be a time for forgetting. If we are to accomplish anything worthwhile in the days ahead, we must cultivate the art of forgetting. There are things which must be laid to rest in the past before we are ready for the future. Paul had this in mind when he wrote, **"Forgetting those things which are behind . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."** (Phil. 3:13-14)

What are some of the things we need to forget in order to make a success of the Christian life?

**1. OUR SETBACKS.** We are too prone to brood over our losses—especially financial and material losses. But Jesus taught that the only loss which should truly concern us is the loss of the soul! (Matt. 16:26) Losing friends, or health, or job, or property, or position are minor inconveniences compared to the excellency of gaining Christ. (Phil. 3:8)

**2. OUR SLIGHTS.** We must not dwell on past grievances or injuries. Indwelling hatred or resentment poisons a person's whole perspective on life. There is not much room for anything else in a heart filled with bitterness. **"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."** (Eph. 4:26)

**3. OUR SUCCESSES.** Many a good man has been ruined by success. Saul of Gibeah was a noble man until he was elected king of Israel and then his life turned to tragedy. **"For I say to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think . . ."** (Rom. 12:3) Let us remember that without the mercy of God we could do nothing, have nothing, be nothing.

**4. OUR SORROWS.** We must not allow our sorrows to imprison us in the past. As one old preacher used to say, "We must look for life's pearls!" **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."** (Rom. 8:18)

**5. OUR SINS.** We must not allow our sins to defeat us. With God's help, we can put them behind us. Sin can be cleansed from our lives. The blood of Christ is more powerful than sin! Let us, therefore, **"lay aside . . . the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."** (Heb. 12:1)

God grant us both the wisdom to know what needs to be forgotten and the will to do it in the coming year!



BULLETIN  
DIGEST

Bobby Dockery  
Fayetteville, AR

## Twelve Simple Rules for Marital Satisfaction

1. Never both be angry at once.
2. Never yell at each other unless the house is on fire.
3. Yield to the wishes of the other as an exercise in self-discipline if you can't think of a better reason.
4. If you have a choice between looking good or making your mate look good, choose your mate.
5. If you have any criticism, bring it up lovingly.
6. Never bring up a mistake of the past.
7. Neglect the whole world rather than each other.
8. Never let a day end without saying at least one kind or complimentary thing to your life's partner.
9. Never meet without an affectionate welcome.
10. Never let the sun go down on an unresolved argument.
11. When you are wrong, make sure you talk it out and ask for forgiveness.
12. Remember, it takes two to quarrel.



via Mobile, AL

## What I Want my Children to Remember about our Home

That their father and mother loved each other.

That our home was a happy one because we all worked to keep it that way.

That each child was given every possible opportunity to develop his own personality.

That each child's personal possessions were sacred to him if kept in their proper place.

That the books in the house were to be read (and handled rightly), and that none were under lock and key because of questionable contents.

That absolute truth abided there; no earnest questioner, however young, was put off with evasion and excuses.

That we practiced hospitality, and that our friends loved to visit us.

That Sunday was the happiest day of the week, one which we all looked forward to because it was the day when we went to church together.

That although father and mother worked hard and long at their respective jobs, they found time every day to keep informed on current events, to read good books, to have fun with their children, and to pray.



via Mobile, AL

### Communion Meditation

*It is the duty and privilege of. . .*

THE LORD'S PEOPLE	(2 Cor. 6:16)
on	
THE LORD'S DAY	(Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10)
to gather around	
THE LORD'S TABLE	(1 Cor. 10:21)
to eat	
THE LORD'S SUPPER	(1 Cor. 10:20)
in remembrance of	
THE LORD'S DEATH	(1 Cor. 11:26)
discerning	
THE LORD'S BODY	(1 Cor. 11:29)
until	
THE LORD'S COMING	(1 Cor. 11:26)
all linked together in	
THE LORD'S NAME	(Col. 3:17)



via Sweetwater, TX

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# I Can

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**"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"** (Philippians 4:13). What a positive attitude! What an encouraging expression of faith! Some folks erect barriers that prevent their having such delightful aspirations. A list of "Mind Binders" will illustrate how common the barriers are which hinder the "I Can" attitude suggested in Philippians. Have you ever said, "I can't remember peoples' names," "I'll never be a wealthy person," "I have a poor memory," "I just can't seem to get along with . . ." "Oysters make me gag," "I'm not as smart as most people," "I can't lose weight," "I get nervous around strangers," "I never had a chance," "I don't really have any special talent," "I can't think of things to talk to people about," "Kids get on my nerves," "I worry a lot," or "I just can't seem to get going in the morning?" Each of these statements represents a negative attitude which can be overcome by thinking of a possible solution and trying to transform the solution into actions.

John Henry Jowett (1863-1923) said, "Don't let us think that we need to be 'stars' in order to shine. It was by the ministry of a candle that the woman recovered her lost piece of silver" (Luke 15:8-9). A noble life of service may be sometimes interspersed with heroic deeds but is more often characterized by careful attention to small details. Jesus said, **"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much"** (Luke 16:10). Someone has observed that Sir Winston Churchill was always on the lookout for "finest hours" in which to make speeches. Be that as it may, he always seemed to find them! Whether the call to service is great or small, be ready to "brighten the corner where you are" by possessing an "I Can" attitude.



Gary McDade  
Memphis, TN

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# He Married a Better Woman

---

**"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready"** (Rev. 19:7).

His wife had become an habitual drinker, so the story goes. She was usually contrite and penitent after a spree, promising to do better. You know how it goes with alcoholics. One night she said to her longsuffering husband, "You know, John, you're a smart person, educated and clever. You should have married a better person than I." Whereupon, looking at her and remembering the sweet young woman she had been, he said, "I did, I did!"

This little story suggests rather vividly to us the plight of many professed Christians today. Paul tells us that we are the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-32). When we became Christians we became better; or is it possible that we have become worse? (Rev. 19:7).

A responsible Christian life—just as in the case of being a responsible wife (or husband)—can never be one of going backward morally or spiritually. It must be a life of constant progress, development and growth. Peter said we must add to our faith such characteristics as virtue, knowledge, self control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

There are many Christians who used to be more diligent about attending Bible school and worship, about giving, and about partaking of the Lord's Supper than they are now. There are others who used to pray more, worship more, and serve their fellow man more than they do now. They, as the "bride of Christ," were better when they first became His bride than they are now.

How about you? Do you strive to be better than you were when you first became a Christian, or is your story the sad story of the bride who became worse?



Leon Jones  
via Charleston, SC

**BALD-HEADED MAN:** *One who came out on top and still lost.*

**HAIRBRUSH:** *Cure for unruly heirs.*

# Hair

(or the lack of it)

## On The Lighter Side

### SAVE MY HAIR

A worried man entered the doctor's office. "My hair's coming out pretty fast, Doc," he announced. "Can you give me something to keep it in?" "Why, certainly," replied the doctor obligingly. "Here, take this plastic pill bottle."

### MAN OF FEW WORDS

"How would you like your hair cut, sir?" asked the barber, eager to please. "Off," replied the customer, heading off all further attempts at conversation.

### PRACTICALLY BALD

Customer: "Does a man with as little hair as I've got have to pay full price to have it cut?"

Barber: "Yes, and sometimes more. We usually charge double when we have to hunt for the hair."

### DIPLOMACY

Customer: "Have you anything for gray hair?"

Conscientious Druggist: "Nothing, madam, but the greatest respect."

### COMFORTING WORDS

"Can you give me some medicine for my hair?" a patient asked a dermatologist. "It's beginning to worry me." "Oh, don't let it worry you, old fellow," comforted the specialist. "It'll all come out all right."

### CONFUSED

"Why doesn't Daddy have hair on his head?" asked the little boy.

"Daddy thinks a great deal, dear."

The child mulled this over and then wanted to know, "But, Mummy, why do you have so much hair on your head?"

"Hush—and eat your breakfast!"

### TOO EARLY

A customer went into the barber shop. "What's the idea of your hands being so dirty?" he asked the barber.

"Nobody's had a shampoo yet today," confessed the barber.

### SLIGHT EXAGGERATION

"Is this hair tonic any good?" a thin-haired man asked the druggist.

"I would say so," he replied. "I spilled some on my comb last week and now it's a brush."

... next week ...

"Say, this hair restorer you sold me didn't grow one hair on my head."

"Well, maybe not, but it has a nice cooling effect when it runs down around your ears, doesn't it?"

### MY MISTAKE

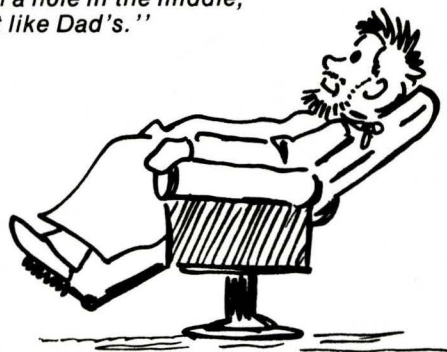
A college student, obviously in need of a haircut, walked into a barber shop.

"Your hair needs cutting badly, son" said the barber.

"No, it doesn't," retorted the student. "It needs to be cut nicely. You cut it badly last time."

### DAD HIS IDOL

When asked by the barber what kind of haircut he wanted, a little boy replied: "One with a hole in the middle, just like Dad's."



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## Keeping WHICH Commandments?

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When an enthusiastic young man came to Jesus to ask about eternal life, he was told to "keep the commandments." The young man might have responded, "Yes, sir, I'll do my best," or "I've been trying to do that, but sometimes I fail; is there some way I can be forgiven for my failures?" Instead, he wanted to know WHICH commandments he was to keep.

How much we are like this young man. It appears to be very important to us to restore New Testament Christianity with regard to the first principles of the gospel, the plan of salvation, church organization, and the essential elements of worship. But other principles of New Testament Christianity seem much less important. What about some of the following; are they optional?

"Greet one another warmly"

"Do everything without complaining or arguing."

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another."

"Practice hospitality."

"Be willing to associate with people of low position."

"Get rid of anger, rage, and malice."

"Do not neglect meeting together."

"On the first day of each week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income."

Are these and other similar matters peripheral, unimportant, non-essential? Do we unconsciously follow the pattern of the 1st century Pharisees who were careful to follow those precepts of the law which were outwardly observable, but neglected what Jesus called "The more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness."

Let us give our attention to those inner qualities which distinguish the true disciple from those who simply say, "Lord, Lord!" We should never compromise or neglect the basics, the first principles: faith, repentance, baptism,

the resurrection. But we should not deceive ourselves into thinking we have restored New Testament Christianity by simply restoring some of its forms. True discipleship is much more than the observation of a few outwardly discernible practices. We ought to practice the one without neglecting the other.



BULLETIN  
DIGEST

Keith Robinson  
via Huntingdon, TN

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## Three Loves

---

"IF LOVE" is conditional love. It says, I love you . . .

if you run with the right crowd.

if you let me borrow your car.

if you let me see your answers when I'm stumped.

if you don't bother me with your problems, but listen to mine.

if you love me.

"BECAUSE LOVE" is easy love. It says, I love you . . .

because you were the MVP in last week's game.

because you voted for me as class president.

because you tell good jokes and make me laugh.

because you throw good parties and like rock 'n' roll.

because you have a nice body and pretty hair.

because you love me.

"ANYWAY LOVE" is hard, unconditional love. It says, I love you . . .

anyway, even if you ignore me when I talk.

anyway, even if you judge me unfairly and gossip behind my back.

anyway, even if you don't have a car.

anyway, even if your interests are not my interests.

anyway, even if you grew up on the wrong side of the tracks.

anyway, even if you don't understand me.

anyway, even if you don't love me.

Yes, I love you anyway . . . because that's how God loves me.

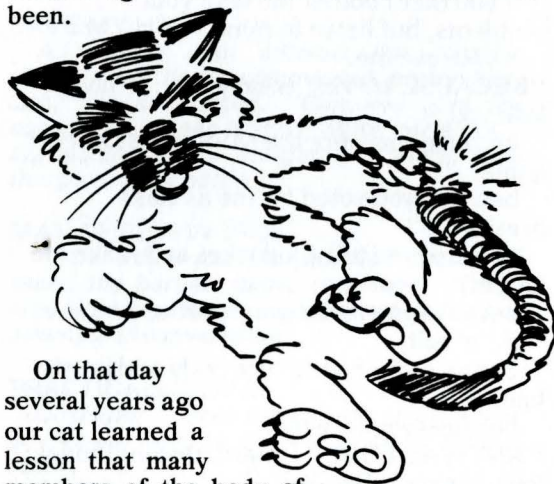


BULLETIN  
DIGEST

via Springtown, TX

## You are Only Hurting Yourself

MEOOOOWW!!! The loud moan came from the living room! I knew it would happen sooner or later. Misty, our seven-month old tabby, Siamese kitten had been chasing her tail ever since she could walk. On that particular day, she finally caught it! To her dismay she discovered it was attached to the rest of her body! In her moment of revelation, she looked up at me as if she were saying, "Well, I'll be. That thing is a part of me!" After that day she still had a few rounds with her tail but she was not as rough with the rest of herself as she had been.



On that day several years ago our cat learned a lesson that many members of the body of Christ need to learn: you can't hurt a member of the body of Christ without hurting the whole body. As a part of the body, you are actually hurting yourself. When any part of the body hurts, the pain is felt by the head.

Saul of Tarsus learned that he could not hurt the members of the body of Christ without inflicting pain upon Jesus, the head, and upon himself. After Saul fell to the ground on Damascus Road, Jesus said to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you doing these bad things to me? You are only hurting yourself by fighting me." (Acts 26:14) Saul, in his zeal for God, actually became an enemy of God and of him-

self. Too many members of the church are in the same predicament today.

The only thing more ridiculous than a cat trying to bite its own tail is a Christian trying to bite and devour another member of the body of Christ. Paul warned the Galatian Christians, "If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other." (Gal. 5:15) There is absolutely no Biblical basis for the unkind, unloving, un-Christ-like attitude manifested by some who profess to be defending the truth. The same Bible that gives us the faith of God to contend for (Jude 3) gives us the attitude of love to contend with (Jn. 13:34-35). We are to have a FAITH that WORKS by LOVE (Gal. 5:6). We may have all kinds of ability, know all truth, and have a faith that can move mountains, but all of our efforts are worthless without LOVE (1 Cor. 13).

The real damage to the body of Christ does not come as much from false teachers as it does from those in the body who display an unloving attitude toward their brothers. Jesus proclaimed, "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (Jn. 14:35). I have seen too many turn their backs upon truth because of the lack of love with which it was presented. The church has never been built up by tearing others down even when the person tearing down is right. Although we may feel that we are always on the right side of every issue and never wrong about anything, we need to demonstrate the same love and compassion for the lost that Jesus did. Jesus wanted to destroy sin and not the sinner. Some just want to destroy.

Whether you are a cat biting your own tail or a Christian spewing out venom on members of the body of Christ, **YOU ARE ONLY HURTING YOURSELF!**



**BULLETIN  
DIGEST**

Riley L. Walker  
Alton, IL

### Attention Churches:

IF YOU SEND OUT A BULLETIN,  
Please make sure **Bulletin Digest** is on  
your mailing list.

**THANKS!**

## Brotherly Love

Somewhere I found the following story which also powerfully illustrates a sacred situation involving brotherly love. "Once upon a time there lived two brothers on adjoining farms. One single, the other married. It chanced that in a certain year drought cut the wheat crop short. Each would be hard pressed to have enough for basic needs. One night the married man lay awake thinking of his brother: 'The poor fellow is single, and does not have the comfort and happiness of home as I do. He is worried about his harvest. I will get up and carry some sheaves into his field and he will feel better and happier.' On the same night the bachelor was also sleepless—thinking of his brother. 'The poor fellow is married and has a host of burdens and cares that I do not have to bear. Without doubt he is worried about his small wheat yield. I will get up and carry some wheat from my field into his and make him happier.' From the darkness of the night the two came, each lugging wheat from his own field into that of his brother. As the moon came from behind the cloud, these two stood facing each other with wheat-sheaves under each arm!" What a power is brotherly love. It has power to move men to kindness, to bring them together, to supply each other's needs.



BULLETIN  
DIGEST

via Palestine, TX

## ME?

When the church seems dead  
and the work is slow  
When the attendance is off  
and songs too low  
When the prayers of the saints  
lack fervor and power  
When the preacher's sermons  
seem stale and sour  
Why not pause with self-examining eye,  
and ask . . . "LORD, IS IT I?"

## Wash the Garbage and Use it Again



Do you wash your garbage? Do you save it and set it apart? I do! Since our city began its recycling program, I separate the glass jars and bottles, aluminum cans, and newspapers. I wash the glass and the cans to clean them and then put them in a special container. The idea is to take that which has been used, clean it up, reform it and make it useful again.

We have lived in a throw-away society so long that we tend to forget that this is not a new idea. The church has always been in the recycling business? God takes lives that have been used, that have become spotted and dirty with sin, and then he cleans them up and makes them useful again.

Remember David's prayer, "*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*" (Psalms 51:2) When sin enters, all of humanity has the need to be cleaned up and made useful again.

Isaiah explained God's plan for the recycling of humanity. Once sin has stained and dirtied our souls:

*"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."* (Isaiah 1:16-18)

The environmentalists say that recycling will save the planet. They seem to be making converts by leaps and bounds. My prayer is that we might realize how much greater the need is to recycle the human race and see the great need to save the world!



BULLETIN  
DIGEST

Keith Ellis  
Crestview, FL

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## WORTH IT?

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The young woman was nervous. It was her first day on the job and somehow she mixed up the order for this young couple. The young man was in a rage. He sternly reprimanded her and informed her that he just might complain to the management. She went into the back room sobbing.

How impressive this young man felt. He was right in what he did. If she is going to get paid for this kind of work she must be able to do it correctly. At the end of the meal he left a tip of one cent. He knew she would remember him and give him excellent service should he ever eat in that restaurant again.

He went back home and pulled out the study guides he intended to use in the home Bible study he was to teach that evening. One of the members in the congregation had set up a study with a new family in town. He and the member arrived at the appointed time and was met at the door by the young husband. He escorted them into the den to introduce them to his wife. He told them she had endured a difficult day at work. It was her first day and some uncaring customer totally humiliated her.

A few minutes later, as they walked back to the car, the question was asked, "Was it worth it?"



**BULLETIN  
DIGEST**

Robert T. Oliver  
via Flintstone, GA

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## *Open and Closed Doors*

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Several days ago, I was to meet five Christian sisters from Canada in Manhattan. I elected to take the train into the city rather than drive. As always, I spent some minutes looking for a parking space (parking spaces at the train stations have never been adequate). At last, an open space was found. I parked the car, finally found enough quarters for the meter and walked to the station. The train arrived on the upper tracks just as I arrived at the lower level. I quickly raced up the

steps. Just as I reached the platform the warning chime sounded and the doors began to close. I ran to the nearest doors. Too late! They were closed. I looked up toward the head of the train and saw a ray of hope. Two cars up, the conductor was still on the platform and the one door was open. I took off. I darted in the open door close on the heels of the conductor. I made it!

As I sat on the train, out of breath, I reviewed the past few minutes. I thought about a statement that the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in his second letter. "Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me . . ." Paul's statement was fresh on my mind for I had recently reviewed it in preparation for the beginning class of our study of Philippians. The history of the Philippian church is found in Acts 16. Paul and Silas had departed from Antioch with the intention of spreading the gospel throughout Asia. God closed the door to Asia through a vision. Paul and Silas then prepared to go to Bithynia, but once again God closed the door. Through a vision of a man from Macedonia pleading for help, God opened the door for the spread of the gospel throughout middle eastern Europe. God opened the door for Paul, Silas and the writer of Acts, Luke. Luke records that they "immediately" passed through the open door.

God still opens doors. He opens doors for us to teach the gospel, serve a friend or neighbor, speak a word of encouragement to a brother or sister, silence the gossip, lift the fallen, be good stewards of our time, talent and monies, train-up our children, study His Word, assemble in worship to His glory and etc. Let us take advantage and immediately enter in the doors God has opened.



**BULLETIN  
DIGEST**

Jim Stamatis  
Danbury, CT

**It is infinitely better to rock the boat contending for the truth, than to wreck the boat through compromise with error.**

# Teacher's Workshop

## A Semi-Open Letter . . . To the Teachers of my Children

Two or three times a week I trust you with my most prized jewels, and those two or three times a week, you live up to that trust and return them to me—though not quite the same. Somehow you manage to take them and gradually, week by week, polish them to make them shine a little more than I sometimes think possible. That, or you are patient and wise enough to see the potential for riches in what others may see as only rough ore.

I know you spend much unnoticed time in preparation to teach my children about Jesus. I've seen the literally hundreds of objects they bring home to remind them of your object lessons. you always win when I prematurely suggest discarding certain Bible class memorabilia. Much of it has a lot of your TLC, not to mention time and creativity, behind it.

I saw a note one of you wrote to one of my children, challenging her to be the great Christian leader and example you expect her to be. You even promised to pray for my daughter and reminded her that you are always there if she needs to talk. Thank you for the time, the love, the prayers, the expectations and the support you devote to my children. And thank you for being a constant reflection of Jesus. They notice. And when they do, so do I.

Please resist the temptation to feel unappreciated. You're not only appreciated but needed . . . and not just by my children but by me. And please don't underestimate your influence or your teaching role . . . on them . . . or me as a parent. My children echo much of what you teach them, probably more than you think they hear. In fact, they remember some of your stories and illustrations long after they're promoted to another class.

As a Bible class teacher, you give my children Christ and yourself. You can't give a greater gift. I can't give you enough thanks.



Tim Bruner  
via College Church of Christ  
Searcy, AR

**Teacher's Workshop** is a regular monthly feature of Bulletin Digest. It is dedicated to all those who serve the Lord as teachers. We welcome your comments.

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." (Mt. 5:38-39)

## Escaping the Retaliation Trap

I was amused to hear of an older man's story about an experience he had while jogging. He was running around a track that encircled the high school football field while the team was conducting their practice. When the football players began running their sprints up and down the field, the man said to himself, "I'll just keep running until they quit." So they ran. And he ran. And they kept on running. So he kept on running. Finally, in total exhaustion the man had to stop. When he stopped an equally drained football player walked up to the jogger and said, "Boy, I sure am glad you finally stopped, Mister. Our coach told us that we had to keep running wind sprints as long as the old man was jogging!"

Ken Durham in his excellent book, *Speaking From The Heart*, relates this amusing story and goes on to note that sometimes we find ourselves caught in just a stalemate when it comes to anger and conflict. Neither side wants to be first to give in, to stop speaking in anger. They stay mad. So we stay mad. And on we go, eventually finding ourselves emotionally and even physically exhausted by the ongoing animosity.

Have you ever noticed how angry words almost always provoke more angry words in response? One raised voice is met with another ("Don't shout at me!" "Shout! Who's shouting?"). One insult is countered by another ("Who are you calling an idiot, you jerk?"). But Jesus calls us to a better 'higher' plane of living. Not only are we not to retaliate, Jesus tells us to "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you." (Luke 6:27-28) May God help us to escape the retaliation trap!



Craig Culbertson  
Nitro, WV

## "It Really Happened!"

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** We solicit your items for this feature. We are grateful again this month to a frequent contributor, Kenneth Jowell, of Vallejo, California. If his story reminds you of some incident in your past that "really happened," why not sit down right now and let us hear from you.

This is not one of those "Snappy Stories that Preachers Tell." It was told to me by a preacher's son though.

Brother Carter preached in Ozark country in Northwest Arkansas and Southeast Missouri. He was holding a meeting. The meeting was about to close.

This was the period when flour companies made sacks of flour with pretty patterns on the sack, which induced the wife to buy. Bro. Carter's wife saved her flour sacks and pieced together a dress. Wearing this new finery, she joined her husband for the last day of his meeting.

When the time came to pay the preacher for the meeting, the brethren told Bro. Carter they figured if a preacher's wife could afford a new dress, then he was well off, too well off to get paid for his meeting work.

There just has to be a Judgment Day.

Share with us some amusing or embarrassing incident of a religious nature and if we print it we'll give you a six-month's subscription or extension to *Bulletin Digest*. Send items to: *Bulletin Digest*, P.O. Box 525, Sesser, Illinois 62884.

## Ten Ways to Become Your Own Best Friend

1. Start watching the way you talk to yourself.
2. Learn to accept yourself as you are.
3. As a Christian, know who you are.
4. Recognize your special talents and uniqueness.
5. Learn to accept responsibility for your life.
6. Keep your promises.
7. Learn to forgive yourself.
8. Learn to accept reality.
9. Learn to forgive others.
10. Learn to become a "people builder."



Willard Tate  
Burlington, NC

# Sky Diving

It takes courage to go up in an airplane. But it takes a lot *more* courage to *jump out* of one at 15,000 feet!

What is the difference between two men falling toward the earth, one with a parachute and the other without? They appear about the same during free fall. Both men are alive. Both are destined to reach the earth. But one is prepared for the end of his jump, and the other is not. Therefore, one can enjoy the view of the earth and the sensations of the fall, while the other cannot. The approaching impact with the earth strikes terror in one, but not in the other.

What is the difference between two men going through life, one living in Christ and the other living without Him? They appear about the same outwardly. Both men are alive. Both are destined to return to the earth (Heb. 9:27; Eccl. 12:7). But one is prepared for the end of his earthly journey, and the other is not. Therefore, one can enjoy a clear view of life and its blessings, while the other cannot. The approaching rendezvous with death strikes terror in one, but not in the other (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:54).

There is one other kind of sky diver: the one who does not realize he is unprepared. Some time ago, it was reported that a photographer jumped with a group. After taking some pictures, he reached for his rip cord, only to find that he had completely forgotten to put on his parachute. He had given his attention to other things which seemed important, but neglected the most important of all. Other people have put on faulty parachutes and enjoyed *most* of the jump, realizing too late that they were not really prepared after all.

There is no reason for you to go through life unprepared. You can be saved eternally by putting on Christ and remaining faithful to Him (Rom. 6:3-5; Rev. 2:10). Sinners "put on Christ" by being "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27). "...God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5:11).

 **BULLETIN  
DIGEST**

Royce Frederick  
Center, TX

# Life in the Ordinary

Television has a way of making life seem more dramatic than it really is. Law officers go from one major crime to another; doctors face life and death situations; families go from one crisis to another. The truth is that policemen spend most of their time on routine calls; doctors treat minor illnesses; family life is mostly routine.

Most of life is not lived in great events, but in the day-to-day routine of events. An occasional crisis that we remember the rest of our lives keeps life from being dull. But most of life is regular.


Being a Christian involves occasional major decisions. But we don't face life-changing events daily. If we're going to apply Christian principles to our lives, they must be applied to ordinary things. Like how we treat our spouse, our children, our parents, how we perform on the job, how we treat store clerks, etc. It's the little things that count, because there are so many of them.

When we apply the principles of Christ to the day-to-day things of life, we are better able to apply them in a crisis. The person who waits for a major decision in which to apply the rules of life will find that he has no experience in applying these rules. If daily decisions are Christ-centered, we will be better able to face the big things.



**BULLETIN  
DIGEST**

via Humboldt, TN



**Savior, grant me rest and peace,  
Let my troubled dreamings cease;  
With the chiming midnight bell,  
Teach my heart that "all is well."**

— Grace Glenn

## Read through the Bible



Recently while driving through the intersection of Harvard & 21st street, I noticed a spark plug laying in the street. I chuckled a little inside for I thought how strange that someone lose such a thing from the motor of their car. Can you imagine what happened to the car? I'm sure it started missing and making strange noises. Then I thought that it must have been loose for some time for it to become unscrewed long enough that it fell out, which indicated grave neglect.

I can't recall any time previously that I had seen a spark plug in the middle of the street, but I can remember seeing Bibles which have remained in a pew, a class room or on a shelf for some length of time.

Just as a car fails to operate properly without a plug, so a Christian can't live properly without his Bible. Each individual could ask if it would make a difference if he lost his Bible? Behind that question exists a test if we answered it truthfully or not by answering another question. Do I read it, when I have it? Too many have settled for an appearance of Christian living, when in reality they rob themselves of true Christian living by not reading and practicing what the Bible propagates.

Don't be guilty of neglecting to maintain your spiritual life. If it becomes a habit sooner or later you'll know because you can't remember where your Bible is. Your life will become like that car which lost its spark plug, misfiring and soon to be left beside the street in need of repair.

Join in reading through the Bible in one year . . . Set a goal and maintain it, you'll be glad you did.



**BULLETIN  
DIGEST**

Mike Schroeder  
via Columbia, TN

## Dad's Been Shot

Sometimes I wish children weren't so perceptive. Especially young ones. Young ones who think they're "zinging" Big Brother but

are really "zinging" Dad are especially obnoxious.

The morning hadn't started that great. Mom wasn't feeling all that well; Dad got home late and needed about an hour and a half more sleep; Brother had been sent to bed the night before in the bottom of the ninth before the Braves scored the winning run; Little Sister was wanting to be gripey and Big Sister doesn't see the need for morning conversations. Ever.

At breakfast, it's Brother's time to select and read a brief Scripture passage. He can't find one. "Then you'd better just open up the Bible and hope that what you see is a good Scripture for the family," says Dad. That's what Brother does. He starts mumbling; something about the mercy of God, but no one can hear. Dad's had all of that business he can take. "Give me that Bible," Dad demands, turning, with irritation, to Ephesians 6:1,2. That's when Little Sister delivers her line.

With perfect timing, and sarcasm not befitting a six year old, she aims her words at Brother. "Oooo," she says, "let's watch \_\_\_\_\_ (the name by which Big Brother is called) get squashed."

Mom tried not to laugh. Dad held off only slightly longer. Even Brother cracked a smile. It was not until after the laughter died down that Dad looked down at his heart. He was bleeding. How could that be? Wasn't the shot aimed at Brother? What twist of fate turned the bullet, in midair, a full 90, hitting, not Brother, but Dad?

Say Dad, wasn't that just what you were going to do? Squash him with the Word of God, teach him a lesson without laying a belt on him! Probably a quite inappropriate use of God's Word, what with Dad's mood and all. I hope Dad will remember that lesson and respond in a somewhat better fashion the next time something like that happens.

By the way, after order is restored at the table, Mom asks Brother to read his Scripture again, this time where everyone can hear. Brother does, from Psalm 56:1. "*Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up.*"



**BULLETIN  
DIGEST**

Tom Chapin  
Little Rock, AR

## THE CROSS OF JESUS

### The Cross is Central . . .

- of all times—it is the turning point.
- of all love—it is the highest point.
- of all hope—it is the starting point.
- of all faith—it is the strongest point.
- of all worship—it is the central point.
- of all salvation—it is the crowning point.

### The Cross from Eternity to Eternity . . .

- in eternity—the work foreknown before time began.
- in the past—the Lamb slain (He died. He arose).
- in the present—the Savior proclaimed and honored.
- in the future—the Lord coming in glory.



BULLETIN  
DIGEST

Ron Bryant  
Phoenix, AZ

## Commending Jesus

The inscription on John Wesley's statue in Bristol, England, is "O Let Me Commend My Savior To You." How much of our Christian obligation and privilege is summed up in that phrase.

We are to commend our Savior to others. We are not to force, manipulate or coerce them to know Him. Our motives and methods must be pure. Paul said, "On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God." (2 Corinthians 2:17)

Rather than being high pressure salesmen, we should work like a fragrant aroma. (2 Corinthians 2:14-16) Instead of endless sessions of pleading, let's work like leaven. (Matthew 13:33)

Even with an attractive life, we must still commend Him in word and work. Our message and song should be:

Do you know my Savior?  
Do you know my Friend?  
Do you know He loves you  
And He will abide to the end?

Lakey and Ellis



BULLETIN  
DIGEST

Ancil Jenkins  
Miami, FL

## A Sweet Pain in the Neck



I bought my two little girls Bibles for Christmas. They found them two weeks before Thanksgiving. I haven't regretted it.

Marta, our fifth grader got *The Student's Bible* and Rachel, our first grader, got *The Adventure Bible*. They love the charts, study helps, maps and goodies. But most of all they love to lay in bed at night with their mom and dad and read. Marta is a great reader devouring chapters at a time on her own. Rachel determinately reads every word of the seventh grade level NIV text. Her will is stronger than my neck muscles as I lay at an angle beside her helping with most words. Her eagerness in reading the Bible is the sweetest pain in the neck I've ever had.

I'm wondering about you and your Bible reading. If that makes you feel guilty, well, I'm not even sorry. Maybe you ought to feel guilty enough to do something about it. you might say to yourself, "I ought to read the Bible. Here I am, thirty-eight years old. I've read books on golf, novels about high-tech warfare, and manuals on buying the right computer. Still, I know nothing about what Allan Bloom, in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*, calls the source of my culture. I owe it to myself to read it, don't I?"

Don't be satisfied with generalized guilt. Make it specific. Be realistic about the amount of time you're going to allocate. Don't exaggerate. Instead of saying that you're going to read the entire Bible this month, say you'll read the gospel of John. Break it down more. Write the chapters you're supposed to read in your appointment book. There's nothing like an appointment book to make you feel healthy guilt about what you really want to do. Take your Bible reading a step at a time and you will restore some of the hope that has been dissipated by the years. You can probably even do it without getting a pain in the neck.



BULLETIN  
DIGEST

San Antonio, TX

"what think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" Matt. 22:42

## *Jesus Christ, Son of Seven*

1. **SON OF DAVID** "Oh Lord, thou son of David"  
Matthew 1:1; 9:7; 12:23; 15:22
2. **SON OF ABRAHAM** "the generation of Jesus Christ,  
the son of David, the son of Abraham" Matthew 1:1;  
Galatians 3:16
3. **SON OF ADAM** "which was the son of Adam"  
Luke 3:38; cf. I Corinthians 15:22,45
4. **SON OF JOSEPH** "being (as was supposed) the son  
of Joseph" Matthew 13:55; Luke 3:23
5. **SON OF MARY** "they saw the young child with Mary,  
his mother" Matthew 2:11; Luke 2:7,16
6. **SON OF MAN** "for the son of man is come to seek and  
to save" Matthew 9:6; Mark 9:9; Luke 19:10; John  
1:51
7. **SON OF GOD** "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living  
God" Matthew 16:16;  
Mark 1:1; John 3:18



—Jim Martin

## **PAST**

FOR  
A THOUSAND  
YEARS IN THY  
SIGHT ARE BUT AS  
YESTERDAY  
WHEN IT IS PAST,  
AND AS A WATCH  
IN THE NIGHT.  
Psalms 90:4

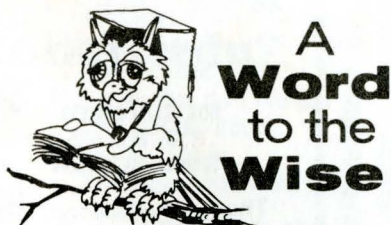
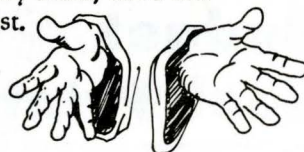
FOR ALL OUR  
DAYS ARE PASSED  
AWAY IN THY  
WRATH: WE  
SPEND OUR YEARS  
AS A TALE THAT  
IS TOLD.  
Psalms 90:9

WHOM  
GOD HATH  
SET FORTH TO BE  
A PROPITIATION  
THROUGH FAITH  
IN HIS BLOOD, TO  
DECLARE HIS  
RIGHTEOUSNESS  
FOR THE  
REMISSION OF SINS  
THAT ARE PAST,  
THROUGH THE  
FORBEARANCE  
OF GOD.  
Romans 4:25

AGAIN, A NEW  
COMMANDMENT I  
WRITE UNTO YOU,  
WHICH THING IS  
TRUE IN HIM AND  
IN YOU: BECAUSE  
THE DARKNESS  
IS PAST, AND THE  
TRUE LIGHT NOW  
SHINETH.  
1 John 2:8



COME UNTO ME, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.



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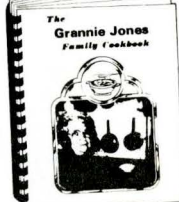
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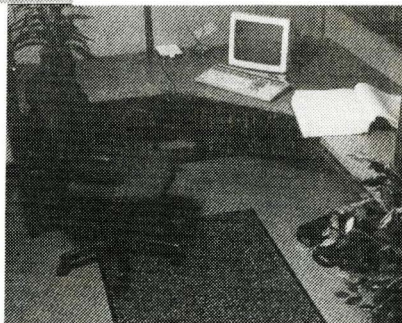
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## Selected Verse

### Thoughtful Words

How many words have you spoken  
this day  
Designed to encourage and cheer?  
How oft, may I ask, went you out  
of your way  
To gladden the hearts of those near?  
You may lift a burden and lighten  
some load  
Make sadness and gloom disappear,  
By being more thoughtful of  
others nearby  
Through a word that is warm  
and sincere.

Dryden Sinclair

### Success

Success is speaking words of praise,  
In cheering other people's ways.  
In doing just the best you can,  
With every task and every plan.  
It's silence when your speech would hurt,  
Politeness when your neighbor's curt.  
It's loyalty when duty calls,  
It's courage when disaster falls.  
It's patience when the hours are long,  
It's found in laughter and in song.  
It's in the silent time of prayer,  
In happiness and in despair.  
In all of life and nothing less,  
We find the thing we call Success.

### Mother's Covers

When you were small  
And just a touch away,  
I covered you with blankets  
Against the cool night air.  
But now that you are tall  
And out of reach,  
I fold my hands  
And cover you with prayer.

### The Non-Attending Member

I've seen footballs that had no air,  
And cars that had no lights;  
I've seen men who had no hair  
And guns that had no sights.

I've seen locks that had no key  
And grapes that had no juice;  
But I've never seen an absentee  
Without a big excuse.

### Giving

"What, Giving Again?" I asked  
in dismay,  
"And must I keep giving and  
giving always?"  
"Oh, No," said the angel piercing  
me through,  
"Just give till the Father stops giving  
to you."

### The Cross was His Own

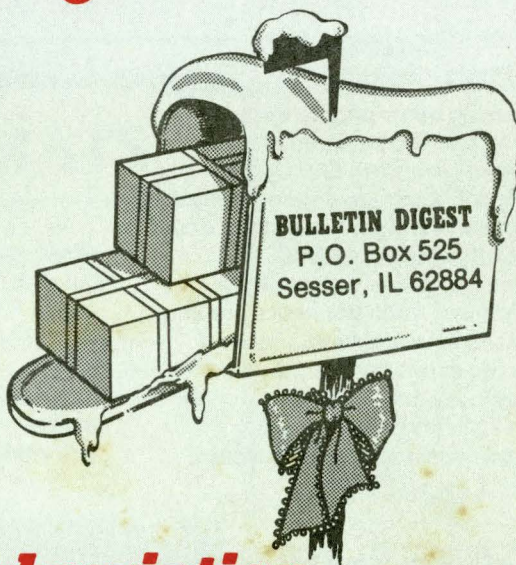
They borrowed a bed to lay His head  
when Christ the Lord came down;  
They borrowed the ass in the mountain  
pass for Him to ride to town;  
He borrowed the bread when the crowd  
He fed, on the grassy mountain side;  
He borrowed the dish of broken fish  
with which He satisfied;  
He borrowed a ship in which to sit  
to teach the multitude;  
He borrowed a nest in which to rest,  
He had never a home so crude;  
He borrowed a room on His way to  
the tomb, the Passover Lamb to eat;  
They borrowed a cave for Him a grave;  
they borrowed a winding sheet;  
But the Crown that He wore  
and the Cross that He bore  
Were His own — the Cross was His own.

Doug LeCroy  
5212 Liveoak  
Waco, TX 76710

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