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Bulletin Digest, Volume 8, Number 6 (1989)

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1989
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JUNE 1989

BULLETIN DIGEST

... that
which is good
to the use of
edifying.

Ephesians 4:29



BULLETIN DIGEST

Vol. VIII No. 6 June 1989

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Bulletin Digest is published monthly, P.O. Box 525, Sesser, IL 62884.
Subscriptions: \$10.00 per year, \$18.00 for two years. Foreign subscriptions, \$12.00 per year, \$20.00 for two years in US funds.

Bulk Rate: Bundles of ten or more (no labels), sixty-five cents per copy. This makes it possible for churches to buy a copy for each family in the congregation for less than the subscription price.

Congregational Rate: Nine dollars a year to churches sending the paper to at least five families in the same zip code. This may be paid in one payment or quarterly or monthly.

Second-class postage paid at Sesser, Illinois (ISSN 0744-768X).
Postmaster: Send change of address forms to **Bulletin Digest**, P.O. Box 525, Sesser, IL 62884.

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In The World, But Not Of The World

The 17th chapter of John records the great prayer which Jesus prayed for His disciples on the night of His betrayal. As He poured out His heart to God He said, in John 17:15, "I do not ask thee to take them out of the world but to keep them from the evil one." Then he went on to say, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:16) In the world, but not of it! What an exciting concept!

Have you ever wondered why the Lord does not take His people out of this crooked and perverse world as soon as they are saved? The answer is simple: He has a purpose for us here! He left His disciples in the world because this is where He wants them to be. This world is the Christian's base of operations; his field of labor; his arena of action. Jesus has left us here for good reasons . . .

(1) We Are Here For His Sake. He wants us to carry out the work He Himself came to do. He spoke of that work in Luke 19:10 as seeking and saving the lost and he said in John 20:21, "as my Father hath sent me, even so I send you," We are here on earth to represent Him, to carry out the work He came to do. We are charged with the responsibility of tending to His business until He returns. (Luke 19:13) In this world He has no eyes but ours to see the opportunities . . . no tongues but ours to speak words of hope and encouragement . . . no feet but ours to go to the lost with the good news of salvation . . .

(2) We Are Here For Others' Sake. Most people in this world are not interested in their own spiritual welfare. The god of this world has blinded their minds to keep them from seeing the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Being blinded to the danger they are in, they seek no salvation. So for the sake of others we are left in the world to carry the Gospel—God's power of salvation—to as many people as possible. Interestingly, Jesus did not entrust the work of seeking the lost to angels. He put the treasure of the gospel in earthen vessels. (2 Corinthians 4:7) He gave the job to us! (Matthew 28:19-20)

(3) We Are Here For Our Own Sake. The Christian life is one of growth; it is a maturing process. We must "grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18) When we obey the Gospel and begin living the Christian life we are just spiritual babies. We still have a lot of growing to do. It takes study, prayer, striving of the spirit, repentance and self-discipline for us to grow up into the image of Christ. (Colossians 3:10) So we are left in the world after our conversion to give us time and opportunity to grow into the likeness of Jesus. This world is a proving ground to prepare us for eternity. We need time to fully become what our Lord wants us to be.

The prayer which Jesus prayed in John 17 was for us! (John 17:20) He refused to ask that we be taken out of the world. He never prayed that we might find escape. He prayed instead that we might find victory! Christianity was never meant to withdraw us from life but to equip us for it . . . Christianity does not offer escape from problems, but a way to work through them . . . Christianity does not offer easy peace, but triumphant warfare . . .

We are in the world . . . but not of the world!



**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

Bobby Dockery
via Pauls Valley, OK

From The Editor

REAL LEADERSHIP

“Leadership” is the standard answer to the question, “How can this church move?” The test of leadership is being able to bring improvement. Leaders can build attendance. Leaders can boost the contribution. Leaders persuade people to evangelize. Leaders improve the singing.

But remember the situation in which most of us operate. The church doesn’t want to be persuaded. People don’t want to give more. The kids don’t want to work harder. The teachers don’t want to change what they’re doing. In fact, in most cases, what people are now doing is what they want to be doing.

The job of the leader is to help (exhort) them to do something different, something new, something more. Preachers, after moving three or four times, learn how extremely difficult it is to get people to do anything *else*, different or new. Still the job of the leader is to get people to do what they would not otherwise do.

Look at this point from another direction. Do we call someone a leader who inherits a winning team and then wins some more? Or isn’t the best definition of leadership the person who can take a losing team, turn it around, and then win with it?

Preachers, looking to move, whine, “You told me to try out for that job over at Kensington. You must have been crazy! Do you know what’s going on over there? . . . They had a split last year . . . They lost 31 percent of their budget . . . Their attendance is way down . . . The last preacher had a heart attack . . . The place is a shambles and you want me to take the job?”

I say, “What did you expect?” Winning teams don’t change coaches. Just the opposite. Most preachers don’t move until a hot hand turns into a hot seat. Impossible situations are the ones that require leadership.

A leader creates ways to get people to do things they would not otherwise do. A lot of congregations need leadership—desperately. Give yourself a couple of years and see if you are a leader.

Jim Martin

It's Your Choice

The Supreme Court recently handed down a decision which has many Americans up in arms. The highest court in the land decided that burning the flag, the national emblem of this country, was acceptable under existing laws. This decision has made a great number of Americans furious and was evidenced by the large number of flags waving over this past Independence

Day celebration.



Unfortunately, the decision made by the majority of the court was the only decision available to them. Living in a pluristic society, we accept the right of others to express themselves in ways others would reject, as long as they violate no existing laws and harm no one else. This freedom of choice is a difficult thing with which to live. It sometimes breaks the hearts of those of us who care the most.

God has given man the ability to choose as well. We can choose to serve him or defy him. We can choose life or death. While those who choose to reject God and walk in disobedience have that right, it hurts the one who cares the most. Jesus opted to come to earth, pay the price for all, and offer hope to those who would follow him. It is still a choice, no constraints, no compulsion, however the one who cares the most is most likely to be hurt.

Let me thank the veterans who fought to exalt our national emblem, your sacrifices are not unnoticed. And . . . thank you, Jesus.



Carl Feril
Stafford, KS

A Prayer From Kenya

From the cowardice
that dares not face new truth
From the laziness
that is contented with half truth
From the arrogance
that thinks it knows all truth,
Good Lord, deliver me.



BULLETIN
DIGEST

Cactus Dr. Church of Christ
Levelland, TX

Make Laughter A Priority

"He who laughs, lasts!"

One of the most limiting factors to quality leisure is simply that laughter has never been high enough on the priority list. The writer of the Book of Wisdom prepared us for the New Testament reminder that joy is a fruit of the Spirit:

"A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones." (Proverbs 17:22) You can choose to be jubilant. Likewise you can choose to be gloomy. But hearty, sincere laughter is a powerful tonic for weary, battered souls.

Tim Hansel
via Maxwell Ave. Church of Christ
Ardmore, OK



BULLETIN
DIGEST

via Maxwell Ave. Church of Christ
Ardmore, OK

Frankly, I'm Bigger Than You

Have we learned our role as parents from God or from our world?

Have you ever walked away from someone's home wondering just **WHO** was in charge there? A one-year-old throws herself to the floor in a fit; a two-year-old indignantly says, "No!" to everything; a four-year-old refuses to hold his parent's hand; a fifteen-year-old sneers at his parents and walks out the door; mom has to fix three different meat dishes and six different vegetables to please everyone (if they will even eat the vegies!)

I watched a television program where a four-year-old walks out of the home, past three disinterested adults . . . with a loaded revolver! Fiction? Eleven-year-olds roam the streets late at night. Parents never know where their teens are.

Children "bully" and intimidate their parents. Parents cater to their every whim. "Don't spank him, you'll warp his personality." "Don't say 'No,' they'll rebel." **Who's in charge here?** Do we really love them?

We need to take charge as parents. God did not take a vote on how to run the universe. He is in charge. The home was never intended to be a democracy. "**Children, obey your parents in the Lord.**" (Eph. 6:1)

Parents, know what you believe and stand firm. Wishy-washy parents scare their children. Don't stand firm on the trivial, then duck out when something really important comes along.

Parents must have the fortitude and character to be stronger than their children. As one of our brethren said: "Many times I've had to sit my son on my lap, hold his head in my hands, and say, 'Frankly, Jonathan, I'm bigger than you!'" Now, that doesn't mean govern your household with physical intimidation. But as parents, we

need to look our children in the eye with firmness, concern, and love.

"Father knows best." Our Father certainly does, and He is our role model as parents. God expects us to be obedient children, who in turn can raise up obedient children of our own, in discipline and love, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.



**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

Jim Tenery
Omaha, NE

For Our Teens

Someday when my children are old enough to understand the logic that motivates a Mother, I will tell them:

I loved you enough to ask where you were going, with whom, and what time you would be home.

I loved you enough to insist that you save your money and buy a bicycle for yourself even though we could afford to buy one for you.

I loved you enough to be silent and let you discover that your new best friend was a "creep."

I loved you enough to make you return a Milky Way candy bar to the drugstore (with a bite out of it) and tell the clerk, "I stole this yesterday and want to pay for it."

I loved you enough to stand over you for two hours while you cleaned your room, a job that would have taken me 15 minutes.

I loved you enough to let you see the anger, disappointment and tears in my eyes. Children must learn that their parents aren't perfect.

I loved you enough to let you assume the responsibility for your actions even when the penalties were so harsh they almost broke my heart.

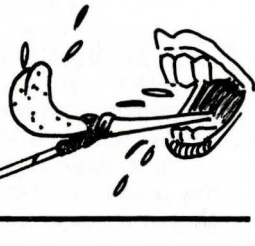
But most of all, **I loved you enough** to say "no" when I knew you would hate me for it. Those were the most difficult battles of all. I am glad I won them, because in the end you won something too.



**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

Palm Ave. Church of Christ
Fresno, CA

SINS OF THE TONGUE



At the original creation man was given "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Apparently this dominion has been retained because James said, "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of the things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind." (James 3:7)

But there is one thing that man does not seem to have dominion over . . . his tongue! "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." (James 3:8) Taming the tongue seems to be out of the question, but we can put a bridle on it. And we must if we want our religion to have any value. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridlenth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (James 1:26)

The Bible lists at least 18 sins of the tongue. No wonder Chaucer penned the words:

The first vertue, sone, if thou wilt lerne,
Is to restreyne and kepen wel thy tonge.

Don't let your tongue be guilty of:

1. **Cursing** (James 3:10)
2. **Flattery** (Psalms 12:3)
3. **Evil Speaking** (Ephesians 4:31)
4. **Lying** (Revelation 21:8)
5. **Crooked Speech** (Proverbs 4:24)
6. **Talebearing** (Leviticus 19:16)
7. **Harsh Criticism** ("Thou fool" Mt. 5:22)
8. **Whispers** (Romans 1:29)
9. **Backbiting** (Romans 1:30)
10. **Boasting** (Romans 1:39)
11. **Deceit** (Romans 3:13)
12. **Reviling** (1 Corinthians 6:10)

13. **Foolish Talking** (Ephesians 5:4)
14. **Jesting** (Ephesians 5:4)
15. **False Teaching** (Titus 1:10,11)
16. **Idle Words** (Matthew 12:36)
17. **Blasphemy** (Colossians 3:8)
18. **Filthy Speech** (Colossians 3:8)

Perhaps an appropriate prayer for each of us is the one found in Psalms 15:14, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."



BULLETIN
DIGEST

John Gipson
via Keyser, WV

Fall of the Roman Empire

The great historian, Gibbons, who wrote **The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire**, gave five reasons for the fall of the great dynasty.

FIRST: Rapid increase of divorce, with the undermining of the sanctity of the home, which is the basis of society.

SECOND: Higher and higher taxes; the spending of money for bread and celebrations.

THIRD: The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.

FOURTH: The building of gigantic armaments, when the real enemy was within; the decadence of the people.

FIFTH: The decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to guide it.

A review of these principal factors in the decline of the Roman Empire can easily be related to our own time, and may portend our own decline from the status of a prominent world power. "**Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.**" Again, "**Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah.**"



BULLETIN
DIGEST

via Port Lavaca, TX

Only a dentist can make a living on the nerve of some people.

People who think time heals everything haven't tried sitting it out in a dentist's waiting room.

“Dentists”

OUCH!

The mother said to her darling, “Now, Junior, be a good boy and say ‘Ah-h-h’ so the dentist can get his finger out of your mouth.”

On The Lighter Side

SUNDAY SERMON

The human mind may not be able to imagine how long eternity is, but if you've ever waited for a dentist to pull a tooth, you have a fair idea.

BAD NEWS

A dentist had gone out to collect a bill and returned home in anger. “What's the matter, didn't you get your money?” asked his wife. “No, I didn't,” fumed the dentist. “And on top of that, he had the nerve to gnash my own teeth at me!”

HONEST

The dentist was about to leave his office with his golf bag on his shoulder, when the phone rang. “Oh, doctor, I'm in great pain,” whined a voice, “and I must see you at once.” “Sorry,” replied the dentist, who was a deacon, and didn't want to lie, “but I already have an appointment to fill eighteen cavities this afternoon.”

TAKE YOUR TIME

“How much do you charge for pulling a tooth?” inquired a prospective patient cautiously. “Twenty-five dollars,” answered the dentist. “What! Twenty-five dollars for less than a minute's work?” objected the patient. “Well, I can pull it out very slowly, if you prefer,” offered the dentist.

LOST BUSINESS

Despite the boy's lusty protests the perspiring dentist finally managed to pull the boy's tooth. “That will be one hundred dollars,” he informed the mother, as he wiped his brow. “One hundred dollars!” she cried. “Why, I thought that you charged just twenty-five dollars for an extraction.” “I do ordinarily,” explained the dentist, “but this kid yelled so loud that he frightened four other patients out of the waiting room.”



WHY IS IT?

How come when a dentist is drilling
On a tooth that needs filling
He keeps up a chatter
As though nothing's the matter?
And there we are with a mouth full of tools—
no chance to talk
No chance to squawk.
All we can do is just sit there and listen
to the drill hum
And nearly go nuts when it strikes the gum.

CLOCK WATCHERS

Brief sermons are in great demand. If one could package and sell twenty-minute sermons with "pre-heat and serve" instructions, he would become an instant Forbes celebrity. The "let's hurry up and get this over with" philosophy has found a home in the church.

"If a man cannot strike oil in twenty minutes, he is drilling with a dull bit," may provoke a chuckle, but not from the spiritual mind intent on drinking deep from the well of living water. Sunday's high noon sounds the gun for the Indianapolis 500 to the local restaurants; beating the Baptists to the drumstick has become a sporting event.

Some assemble to offer homage to God while others convene to worship the clock. Overtime is a delight in sports, but a source of irritation and discomfort in preaching. A prominently displayed clock in full view of the pulpit has become a distinguishing characteristic of the church.

One brother said, "When the sermon goes overtime, I turn it off." Rest assured he never said that about his favorite television program. One can easily discern Sunday's time of day by taking note of the activity in the pew. Proceeding past the "allotted time" is like scraping the top off an ant bed. Overtime is no man's land where preachers void of stout hearts fear to tread.

Some attempt to justify this disturbing lack of interest in God, worship and the gospel by pointing to man's diminutive attention span. This is inane. The application of this point is always limited to small children or adults in a worship assembly. The truth is, the capacity of one's concentration is dependent upon his sense of priority and interest. One lacking in spirituality can devote rapt attention for several hours to some entertainment medium, while experiencing a severe shortage of mental vigilance under the sound of gospel preaching.

Missionaries tell of people who walk for miles to sit for hours on backless boards in

thatched huts and scorching heat to feast on the treasures of the gospel. It is indeed tragic when one's interest in spiritual things can be exhausted during the course of a thirty-minute sermon.



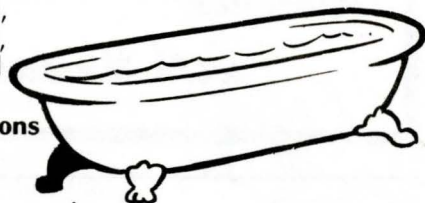
Frank Chesser
Valdosta, GA

10 REASONS "I Don't Wash"

A preacher out in Louisville, Kentucky, published a list of "10 Reasons

Why I Never Wash"

to parody the thread-bare excuses people give for not attending church. Among the "reasons" were:

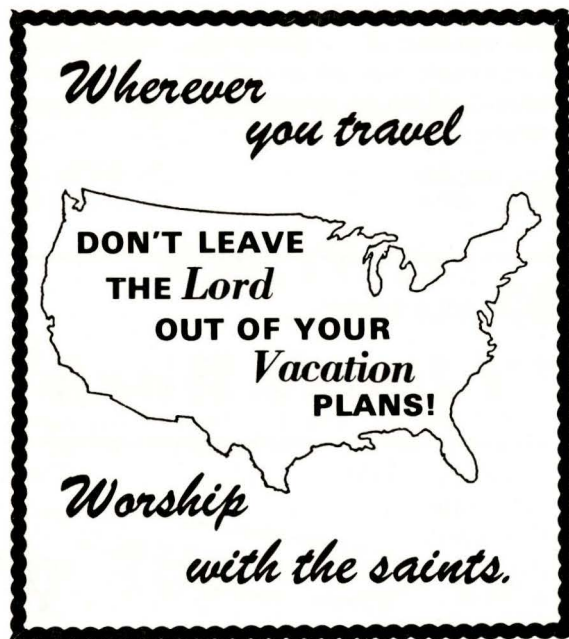


- My parents always made me wash as a child.
- People who wash are hypocrites; they think they are cleaner than other people.
- There are so many different kinds of soap, I could never decide which one was right.
- I used to wash, but it got so boring I stopped.
- I still wash on special occasions—like Christmas and Easter.
- None of my friends wash.
- I'm still young—when I get older and need it more I might decide to start washing.
- People who make soap are only interested in your money.
- I'm so busy I just can't find the time to wash.

via



Maxwell Ave. Church of Christ
Ardmore, OK



Wrong Perspectives

A common precipitating cause of depression in many Christians is a wrong perspective. We live in an affluent society and in a society with many temptations. It is easy for Christians to get their eyes focused on the wrong perspectives. In Psalm 73:1-3, Isaph recorded the depression he suffered when he developed a wrong perspective:

"Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

In verses 16 and 17 of the same chapter, he finally got his perspective straight and his depression lifted:

"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end."

Moses, on the other hand, had a more godly perspective. In Hebrews 11:24-26, we read:

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Because Moses had a godly perspective, he refused the pleasures of sin for he knew they would last but a season and would not give long-term meaning to his life. Many Christians with short-range perspectives will choose short-range behavior patterns such as taking drugs or having an affair in order to try to relieve the painful emotions they feel, but in the long run these behavior patterns only increase depression. These behavior patterns may give temporary relief, but only increase the pain over the long haul. On the contrary, an individual with a long range perspective will choose behavior patterns that he will sometimes not feel like following, such as memorizing the Scripture or studying the Bible daily, but in the long run, these behavior patterns will relieve painful emotions and enable the individual to feel good about himself.

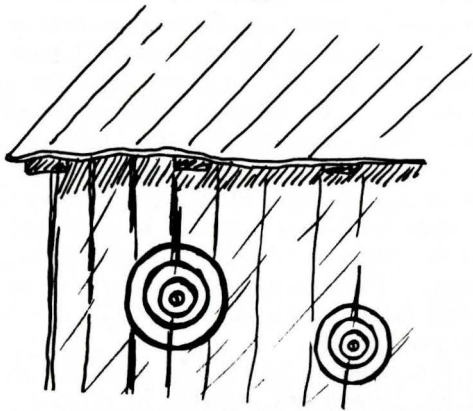
A healthy perspective is to realize that only two tangible things will last forever—the Word of God and people. In Matthew 24:35, we read, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."* In 2 Peter 3:10, we find that everything else will eventually be destroyed. A healthy perspective is to invest our lives in the only two things that have eternal significance—The Word of God and people. An unhealthy perspective is to let Satan trick us into investing our lives in things that are obtained through sinful means and will not last, but give only temporary relief of emotional pain. A sound perspective is to spend our time raising healthy children and helping our family live godly lives.

Frank Minieth, M.D. and Paul Meier, M.D.

Happiness Is A Choice
via Una Church of Christ
Nashville, TN



Set A Target



Years ago an accomplished marksman was passing through a community in which he saw evidence of amazing shooting. On barns, on trees, and on fences were many targets with a bullet hole in the exact center of the bull's eye. So he anxiously sought out the rifleman who had performed such astounding feats.

In a congratulatory and inquisitive vein he said: "Your shooting beats anything I have ever seen. How did you do it?"

"No trouble at all," replied the rifleman, "I shot first and then drew the circles around the holes."

Men often aim at nothing and then try to draw the lines of life around accidental marks. This is why they go in circles around shots they aimlessly call. If I would make the most of life, I must aim. (1 Cor. 9:24-27)

A few years ago some young men with bows and arrows were shooting at a target. When the arrows of one of them kept hitting the ground, another companion cried out, "Aim higher! Aim higher! Your arrowhead is always pointed to the ground!" The same is true of man. He goes where he points himself.



**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

via Leroy Brownlow
Pleasant Valley Church of Christ
Mobile, AL

He Took Our Place

Jesus took our place that we might have His peace; He took our sin that we might have His salvation. By and through Him we can have our sins forgiven and be reconciled to our heavenly father. To doubting Thomas Jesus said, "I am **the way, the truth, and the life**. No one comes to the Father except **through Me**." (Jn. 14:6) When Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?", Simon Peter correctly and wisely said, "Lord to whom shall we go? **You have the words of eternal life**." (Jn. 6:67-68) John Richard Moreland penned the words of a little poem called "**Broken Hands**":

The hands of Christ
Seem very frail
For they were broken
By a nail.
But only those
Reach Heaven at last
Whom these frail, broken
Hands hold fast.

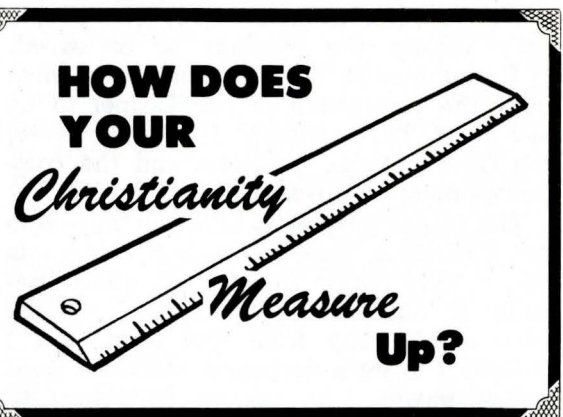


He took our place. He gave His life for us. He is our way to the Father. Put yourself in His hands—it will mean eternal security for your soul.



**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

Carroll Sites
Little Rock, AR



My Place

There is a corner somewhere
That I alone can fill.
If I fail to take my place,
No other ever will.
It's all a part of God's great plan,
That each a worker be,
And somewhere in His vineyard wide,
The Lord needs even me!

Northside Church of Christ
Spokane, WA



Two Sides to a Gospel Meeting

There is one primary goal in a Gospel Meeting; that of saving souls. But there are at least two sides or purposes to that goal.

The first purpose is to convert those who are not Christians. The very words GOSPEL MEETING carry with them this idea. It is a series of meetings in which the Gospel message will be proclaimed. Why is this important? Because the Gospel is THE power to save. (Romans 1:16) The people must receive the message to be saved. (1 Corinthians 15:1-2) The lost person must obey the commands of the Gospel to be saved. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9) Therefore, the Gospel: facts, promises and the commands must be proclaimed.

The second purpose is to revive those who are Christians, thus the revival concept is also a valid reason for such an effort. Because of abuse in religious history many have shied away from this term, but I believe it to be a scriptural one. The word revive means, "to restore or return to

consciousness or life; to reanimate. To raise from languor, depression, or discouragement; to render or become active, operative or flourishing again. To recover from a state of neglect or disuse; to restore; re-establish." Most churches need this because many individuals need reviving. Habakkuk cries out for the Lord to "Revive thy work." (3:2) The Psalmist pleads, "wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Psalms 85:6) The prophet Hosea pleads for Israel's return to God and tells of the promise of God if they will do it, he says, "They that dwell under his shadow shall return: they shall revive as the corn." (Hosea 14:7)

We need a REVIVAL! Webster defines it as, "Reverent interest in religion, after indifference and decline; a period of religious awakening." Is this definition limited to some nation-wide movement? I think not! It has definite pertinence to individuals and to a local congregation. There are so many things in the Lord's church that need reviving. We need a revival in interest and zeal for the Lord's work. (1 Corinthians 15:58) We need to be revived in our interest in worship and service to God. (Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; Titus 3:1) We need to overcome the fearful state of lukewarmness and indifference to things spiritual. (Revelation 3:14-29) We need a revival to help us return to the majestic and satisfying life lived by Christian principles. To know again the peace that passes the understanding of those who do not experience it. (Philippians 4:7)

Are all people in this condition? No, thank God! But there are some and they need to be revived. We therefore need REVIVAL.

We long for the salvation of souls. This is our objective in having such evangelistic efforts, but there are at least two sides; to convert the unconverted and revive the spiritually dead. May God help us accomplish these goals.

via
Lindell Doty
Pleasant Valley Church of Christ
Mobile, AL



Deadly Weapons in the Home

The news continues to remind us of the danger of handguns which are not hidden from children in our homes. Could there be anything more tragic than the accidental shooting of a child? As strange as it may seem, there are weapons in our homes more dangerous than guns which are not safely hidden from children.

Hypocritical lives of parents can destroy children eternally. It is easy for parents to overlook this fundamental truth until it is too late to do anything about it. The little eyes in our homes see far more than we realize and what they see has far greater impact than what they hear.

**PARENTS CAN TELL, BUT NEVER
TEACH
UNTIL THEY PRACTICE WHAT THEY
PREACH.**

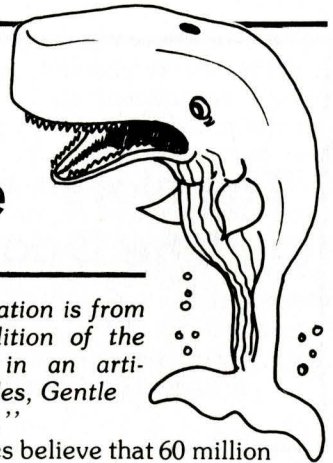
Consider the impact on the life of a child who sits in a Bible class where drinking is being discussed. The faithful teacher asks the child to read Proverbs 23:31, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper." Another child speaks up and relates how his daddy comes home after drinking and beats his mother. The teacher emphasizes that is why God says drinking is bad and we are not to look on it and only see it as "good."

The first child goes home and the next week he sees his daddy enjoying a beer after mowing the lawn. He recalls what he read and is troubled by what he sees. A deadly weapon has entered his life. Parental hypocrisy is a weapon that has destroyed many children.



Dan Jenkins
West Palm Beach, FL

Can You Believe It?



The following quotation is from the May, 1989 edition of the Reader's Digest, in an article entitled: "Whales, Gentle Giants of the Deep."

"Most authorities believe that 60 million years ago ancestors of modern whales were four-legged, wolf-size animals living on the shores of estuaries and lagoons, where an abundance of fish and shrimp enticed them to try wading Over 10 to 15 million years their bodies grew, forelegs shrank into flippers used for balance and steering, and hind legs disappeared. To propel themselves through water, whales grew tapered tails ending in horizontal paddle-like flukes. The nose in most species moved to the top of the head and became separated from the mouth; whales could therefore feed without filling their lungs with seawater and breathe without sticking their heads up. The insides were restructured, too, so whales could move, feed and communicate entirely underwater."

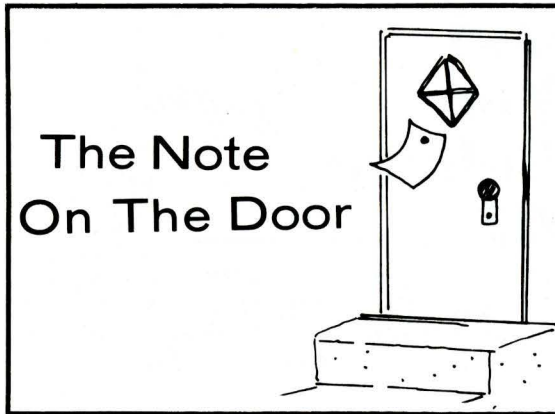
And this is supposed to be easier to believe than the following alternative description of how whales came into existence.

"And God said, 'Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.' So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds And God saw that it was good. . . . And there was . . . the fifth day." (Genesis 1:20,21,23)

I can believe in a God who is powerful enough to create a whale more easily than I can believe that a "wolf-like" creature evolved into a whale. What about you?



Penney F. Nichols
Van Nuys, CA



This is a true story. I know personally the parties involved. Love dwindled, unhappiness and dissatisfaction grew, daily fussing and fighting characterized the relationship of the husband and wife, and, ultimately, a divorce wrecked the home, leaving two bewildered, emotionally scarred children in its wake. The father gained custody and the mother went her own way, doing her own thing.

The children loved their mother. Strange thing about love—it's so often blind to the faults of those we love. Months went by and the mother longed to see her children. She mustered up the courage to visit. Leaving her car at the curb, she walked to the front door only to find no one at home. But, posted on the door was a note from the youngest of her two boys, the seven-year-old. It read, "Mother, I'm at the park. Please come to the park." She hurriedly made her way to the park, and there, sure enough, was the little fellow. After the preliminary hugs and kisses, the mother, still amazed by the note, said, "Honey, how did you know I was coming to see you today?"

"Oh, I didn't," he answered.

"But, what made you put the note on the door if you didn't know I was coming?"

In response, the love-starved little one said, "I put a note on the door every day, every time I leave, 'cause I knew you'd be coming to see me."

"I knew you'd be coming to see me!" I wonder if there are not those OUT THERE, life's rejects, those hurt by cruel circumstance, those whose life seems to be hopelessly going nowhere, those groping for some spiritual meaning in their lives, who are daily placing a note on their door which reads, "I'm not at home just now, but please—PLEASE—come find me!"

The world is filled with people who do not know who they need to talk to or just how to solve their heavy, seemingly unbearable problems, but they are confident that someone, somewhere has those answers and *that someone cares enough to go looking for them.*

Someone is waiting for YOU! Christians, with the Good Book in their hands and love in their hearts have those answers. On someone's door out there is a note which reads, "I knew you'd come looking for me." Let's not fail them. Out there, somewhere, someone is waiting on you.

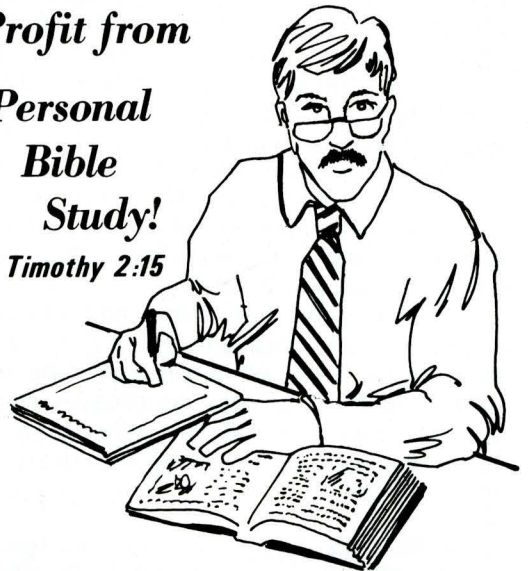


**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

Charlie T. Garner
via Opp, AL

Profit from Personal Bible Study!

II Timothy 2:15



IT'S HARD TO GROW UP

Do you remember "Captain Hook," "Wendy," and "Tinker Bell?" These were characters from the long-running Broadway musical and later Walt Disney film *Peter Pan*. The story centered around three children who were taken to "Never Land" by a care-free, young cavalier. After many exciting adventures, the story reached a dramatic conclusion as the children faced a difficult decision—whether to grow up or remain children. For the first time they saw the weakness of their fearless leader; he was afraid to face the real world . . . he was afraid to grow up.

This problem is common to all children. There comes a time when toys must be exchanged for tools and work must replace play. Dependence must be replaced with self-reliance and the role of servant must be acquired by the one who has been served. Although it is hard for parents to see their child struggle with these adjustments, we all know that it is a reality of life for every person.

The writer of the Hebrew epistle (5:11-14) saw in this a similarity to "spiritual" maturity. He pointed out that the time will come when Christians must grow up and assume the role of *teacher* rather than *student*. He said, "*By this time you ought to be teachers, but you have need for someone to teach you again the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.*"

We pity a child in the second grade who still drinks milk from a bottle. We shake our heads disgustingly at a fifth grader who depends upon Momma to serve him hand and foot. Yet we seem to think it right and proper for Christians of many years to be carried along by others. They cannot teach, they must be taught. They cannot visit, they must be visited. They cannot serve, they must be served. *Pitiful!*

We need *mature* Christians to fill the ranks of the work force in the church. I

know it is hard to be a Bible class teacher; it demands study, it demands preparation, it demands that you risk humiliation. I know that it is hard to grow up; to give up spoon-feeding, to give up being pampered and cuddled and prodded along. I also know that we have talented people in our midst whose talent is smothered by selfishness and pride. Some believe they have the right to retire. Some have never started. But as the Hebrew writer put it, "*you ought to be teachers.*" We don't ask you to carry the whole load, but just to do your part. Think about it.



BULLETIN
DIGEST

Mike Schneider
Lamesa, TX

Counsel From Hippolytus

Brother Everett Ferguson quotes the third century teacher in the church at Rome, Hippolytus, on the importance of the worship assembly. This teacher wrote, "The God-fearing man should consider it a great loss if he does not go to the place in which they give instruction, and especially if he knows how to read." Are you thankful for the chance to assemble with God's people to study His Word and to be able to have your own copy of the Scripture which you can read in your own language? Many people in the world do not have those blessings. Hippolytus then continued, "If there is a teacher there, let none of you be late in arriving at the assembly at the place where they give instruction." How much priority do you place on biblical instruction, and how much care and courtesy do you demonstrate in regular and punctual attendance? Many people habitually neglect the study times while others habitually come in late. For the most part, their behavior patterns are simply habits. Hebrews 10 warns against willfully forsaking the assembly. Jesus went to the synagogue "as His custom was." What kind of customs do you have?



BULLETIN
DIGEST

John T. Smithson, III
Starkville, MS

About Doing Personal Work

We'll never bring all the **world** to Christ,
But we can bring **Christ** to all the world.

We'll have no faith in the mission
before us,
Unless we have faith in the Master
behind us.

We'll never get **others** to obey His great
commands,
Until **we** obey His great commands.

We cannot expect the **world to react**
to the Word,
Until **we act** on it.

We'll never get excited over **sowing**
the seed.
Until we get excited over **seeing**
The need.

*"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the
world and preach the gospel to every creature.
He that believeth and is baptized shall be
saved, but he that believeth not shall be
damned." (Mark 16:15, 16).*

Shades Mountain Church of Christ
Birmingham, AL



**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

ATTENTION CHURCHES:

If you send out a bulletin, Please make
sure *BULLETIN DIGEST* is on your
mailing list.

Thanks!

Make The Summer Count For Something!



You remember those days in school . . . the three R's . . . Runnin', Rasslin', and Recess . . . and with them the **MULTIPLE CHOICE** test? Would you like to take another? It's called "**PICK A PROCEDURE FOR SUMMER.**" Which one would the Lord like best? Read the list, circle the one that would please Him. He's the Lord you know, and you are the slave. He's Master, you are servant! He's the Potter, you are the clay. In finality it isn't what you like best but what He wants that's first. O.K. Get set. Here's the test.

A. **SUMMER is for SLUMBERING . . .**

Those lazy, hazy days are hammock-tailored. Holy matters can wait. I plan to slumber.

B. **SUMMER is for SAILING . . .**

over water, around the country, visiting relatives, and for "sailing" right on past the church house. Just haven't time to be saddled with the saints and their regular worship hours.

C. **SUMMER is for SKIPPING . . .**

I'm not at services; surely you know I get to keep my contribution. I made the check out to me. I wrote "for cash" in big letters and spent it all on me. After all, one needs a break from everything, doesn't one?

D. **SUMMER is for SELF . . .**

Can't teach a class, got to camp. Can't be at devotional, want to forget all my responsibilities. For three months I serve me. See you after Labor Day.

E. **NONE OF THE ABOVE!**

The truth is—**SUMMER is for the SAVIOUR.** Just like Fall is, and Winter is, and Spring is! Count on me! He loves me 365 days per year. I must return that love. I'll be faithful.



**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

Jim Bill McInteer
via Bossier City, LA

Ride Out The Storm

Storms can be exciting, but they can also be very dangerous. Acts 27 tells of Paul, adrift at sea in the midst of a great storm. His main encouragement to his fellow passengers was to "ride out the storm."

Perhaps you have noticed that no matter what project you have, things are exciting at the beginning, but they usually get worse before they get better. Moses started out to lead the children of Israel from Egypt. Pharaoh refused to let them go. The people turned against Moses, and from there things got worse. Moses was a success, not because he got them to the promised land, but because he rode out the storm.

Job is an excellent example of perseverance. His main virtue is the fact that he rode out the storm. He weathered all of the temptations that Satan gave him and never charged God foolishly or cursed Him with his lips.

In our lives, a great deal of time and effort is spent in just "riding out the storm." In our work there are good times and there are bad times. Often there are a lot more bad times than there are good times. Those that patiently persevere are the ones that eventually succeed. It seems that an education is often more a matter of perseverance than intelligence.

Problems with children and problems between husbands and wives often bring great turmoil and disruption. The successful homes are not the homes that never had any problems. They are the ones that rode out the storm and worked to rebuild the relationships even stronger.

Some will leave when the church has trouble. There are others that stay and work to resolve the problems. Those who ride out the storms are the ones that the church depends on.

In our own personal lives, there are many storms that come: financial crises, emotional and physical problems. Some cannot ride out the storm, and they look for an easy

way out. The successes in life are the ones that have ridden out the storm. They certainly are not people that never had the same problems the rest have.

We cannot help the storms that come in our lives, but we can control our reaction to them. These moments cause us to place our trust in God and to hold more closely to Him with the certainty that all things work together for them that love the Lord.



**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

Neale Pryor
via Scottsboro, AL

Household Stress

For some strange reason, people—and particularly women—tolerate stress and pressure much better if at least one other person is aware of their struggles.

This information is especially relevant to homemakers. The frustrations of raising small children and handling domestic chores are much more manageable if husbands show some understanding. Even if the husband does nothing to change the situation, simply his expressed appreciation of the job his wife did today will make it easier for her to repeat her homework tomorrow.

Instead, the opposite usually occurs. At least 8 million husbands will go home every night and ask the same question: "What did you do all day, Honey?" The very tone of the question implies that she has been sitting around watching soap operas and drinking coffee.

A homemaker needs to know that she is respected for the way she meets her responsibilities. Husbands can get this emotional support through job promotions, pay raises, and incidental praise during the work day. Women at home need to get it from their husbands.



**BULLETIN
DIGEST**

Focus on the Family Bulletin
via Clear Lake Chronicle
Springfield, IL

Writer's Workshop

The Dash/Slash



The *dash* (not to be confused with the hyphen) and the *slash* (or solidus) have several special uses and purposes in writing. We will not discuss every rule for their uses, but those most frequently encountered in writing and editing.

DASH

- (1) The dash is used to credit the source of a quotation when the quote is set off from the text.

“Charity sees the need; not the cause.” —German proverb

“Faith is the antiseptic of the soul.” —Walt Whitman

- (2) The dash is used to signal a sharp shift in the continuity of a thought or sentence or a rhetorical turn of phrase.

“Humility is the first of the virtues—for other people.” —Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

“Mary told me—can you believe it?—that she can recite Romans twelve word for word.”

- (3) The dash may be used to indicate the insertion of necessary information that adds special emphasis to the sentence.

“Sin. Rub out the first and last letters, and you have I—or carnal self—the root of sin.”

- (4) The dash should be used when items are listed, then summarized as a group. The dash should separate the group from the summary.

“All things divine and human—virtue, fame, honor—are slaves to the beauty of riches.” —Horace

- (5) Sometimes, the dash is used in place of the colon, to direct the reader to a point of special emphasis.

“A man ought to know when to pray—it’s pretty late to pray for oars when the boat’s on the brink of the falls.” —The Country Parson

- (6) Dashes should be used to introduce individual sections of a list. Capitalize the first word following the dash. Use periods, not semicolons, at the end of each section.

New Testament baptism requires:

—Water (Acts 8:36).

—Much water (John 3:23).

—Going into the water (Acts 8:38).

—Being buried in the water (Romans 6:4).

—Coming up out of the water (Acts 8:39).

NOTE:

In typing, the dash is indicated by two hyphens with no space in between.

SLASH

- (1) The unspaced slash can be used to show that a season or other period of time covers two consecutive years.

school year 1989/90

- (2) The slash (with a space on both sides) may be used when two or more lines of poetry are run into the text.

Many people believe this quote by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “‘Tis better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all,” to be true.

- (3) Avoid using the slash to cover faulty sentence constructions and vague thoughts. In particular the good writer stays away from: and/or, either/or, and he/she.

WRITER'S WORKSHOP appears every-other month and is dedicated to all those who write bulletin articles, tracts, books, Sunday School literature and other inspirational materials.

The Oneness of the Kingdom

Several years ago a good friend of mine learned that his young son had a rare disease which generally did not respond to treatment. After consulting with other specialists, he and his family struggled with the fact that there wasn't much hope for his child. All of the doctors, however, told him there was ONE hospital in the United States which was involved in experimental treatment and that they might be able to save his son's life. My friend could have responded in several ways. He could have objected to the idea of there being only one hospital that could help. He could have reasoned that if one could do it, any or all could. He could have objected to the fact that the hospital was so far from his home town, or that it was operated by a religious organization that believed differently than he did. Of course, you know what he did. He took his son to that hospital as soon as he could! The story has a happy ending. His son overcame the disease, has grown up and has now made my friend a grandfather.

We all understand the concept of oneness in our daily lives. But for some reason when we try to introduce the idea of oneness to a religious world, people become confused and defensive. All of the sudden the idea of oneness becomes too difficult to comprehend.

God's Word, however, is clear with regard to this issue. Speaking of the apostles, Jesus prayed, "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in me through their word; that they may all be one . . ." (John 17:20-21). One of the first things Paul did in his letter to the Corinthians was to encourage them to maintain oneness. "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in

the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).

We need to help the world understand this oneness concept. We must do it with love, patience and in a way that would be pleasing to the Master. May God bless each of us as we strive toward this important goal.



Carl Perry
via Bethany, OK

Ignorance Is Not Bliss

Solomon said that "*much study (or reading) is a weariness of the flesh*" (Eccl. 12:12). It takes effort to learn and become informed—but it's worth it.

Ignorance is not bliss. Ignorance is jeopardy. It's a fact, borne out in scripture, that people tend to be down on what they're not up on. The object of our criticism is often the object of our ignorance.

They were down on Jesus. Why? In John 8:19 Jesus said, "*You don't know me.*" Again in John 16:3 he said the same thing, citing this as the reason religious leaders would kill the disciples and think they were doing God a service.

It's interesting to notice in John 7:52 that "ignorance" dismissed a crowd of truth-seekers. Wrong information was given and they all went home.

Even cultured, scholarly minds can be wrong. Ignorance parading as brilliance is the most dangerous kind. Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee, said, "*I verily thought I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*" (Acts 26:9). He later confessed, "*I did it ignorantly in unbelief*" (1 Tim: 1:13).

It's good to have impressions, opinions, notions, beliefs, convictions, and settled persuasions on any and all subjects. Just be certain that what you think to be the truth is, in fact, the truth.

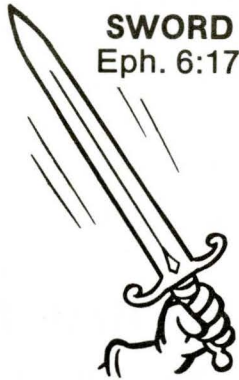
Read and study.



Harold Poland
via Clovis, NM



MIRROR
James 1:23-25

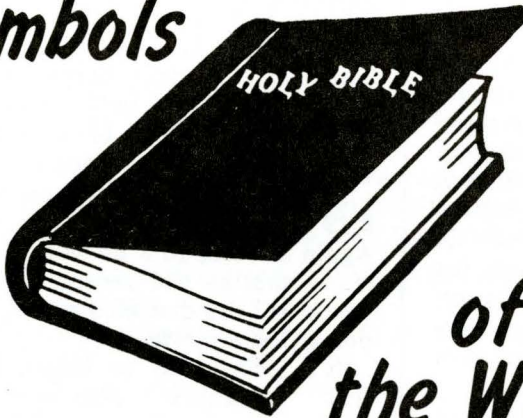


SWORD
Eph. 6:17

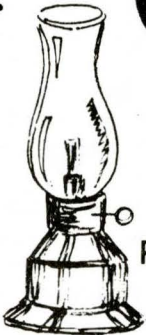


MILK
1 Pet. 2:2

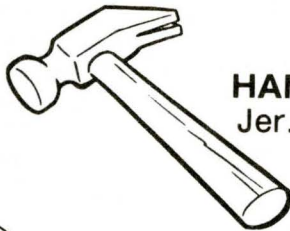
Symbols



of the Word



LAMP
Ps. 119:105



HAMMER
Jer. 23:29



MEAT
Heb. 5:12-14

FIRE
Jer. 23:29



—Jim Martin

**I HAVE HIDDEN
YOUR WORD IN
MY HEART THAT
I MIGHT NOT
SIN AGAINST
YOU.**
Psalms 119:11

**I DELIGHT IN
YOUR DECREES;
I WILL NOT
NEGLECT YOUR
WORD.**
Psalms 119:16

**OPEN MY EYES
THAT I MAY SEE
WONDERFUL
THINGS IN YOUR
LAW.**
Psalms 119:18

**MY SOUL IS
WEARY WITH
SORROW:
STRENGTHEN ME
ACCORDING TO
YOUR WORD.**
Psalms 119:28

**GIVE ME
UNDERSTANDING,
AND I WILL KEEP
YOUR LAW AND
OBEY IT WITH
ALL MY HEART.**
Psalms 119:34

**OH, HOW I LOVE
YOUR LAW! I
MEDITATE ON IT
ALL DAY LONG.**
Psalms 119:97

**YOUR WORD IS A
LAMP TO MY FEET
AND A LIGHT FOR
MY PATH.**
Psalms 119:105

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August August

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SEPTEMBER



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Workshop



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Ice Cream Supper

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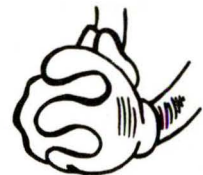


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Letters

I couldn't enjoy doing my bulletin without you!

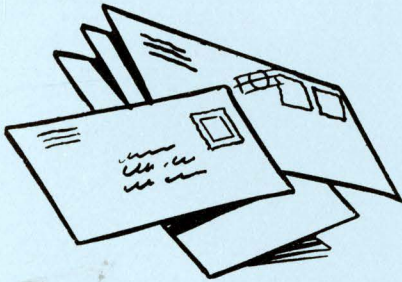
Each week as I type, I re-read your latest issue—it brings chuckles, memories to mind and causes prayerful thinking. God Bless You!

Jean Deen
Woodburn, OR

I have been a recipient of *Bulletin Digest* for the past three years and appreciate all the work that has gone into this publication, especially in its newly revamped format. I believe it has helped the overall appearance of the *Digest* immensely.

Again, thank you for all of the wonderful ideas you have given me.

Scott Lambert
Malibu, CA



BULLETIN DIGEST solicits reader response. Your kind comments are especially appreciated, but we also welcome suggestions and constructive criticism.

It is assumed that all letters are intended for publication unless otherwise indicated. We reserve the right to edit for clarity or space considerations.

It BEARS
Repeating:

Faithfulness in little things
is a great thing.



*"It Really
Happened!"*

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have not received any submissions for our feature, *It Really Happened*, in several weeks. If you have a humorous true story that you would like to submit for publication, please send it to *Bulletin Digest*, P.O. Box 525, Sesser, IL, 62884.

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 to **BULLETIN DIGEST**, or if you are already a subscriber, a six-month's extension. Send all items to: **BULLETIN DIGEST**, P.O. Box 525, Sesser, IL 62884

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___ Sample	___ Jan.	___ Jan.	___ Jan.	___ Jan.	___ Jan.	
___ April	___ Feb.		___ Feb.	___ Feb.	___ Feb.	
	___ Mar.		___ Mar.	___ Mar.	___ Mar.	___ Mar.
___ June	___ April	___ April	___ April	___ April	___ April	___ April
	___ May	___ May	___ May	___ May	___ May	___ May
___ Aug.	___ June		___ June	___ June	___ June	___ June
___ Sept.	___ July	___ July	___ July	___ July	___ July	___ July
___ Oct.	___ Aug.	___ Aug.	___ Aug.	___ Aug.	___ Aug.	___ Aug.
___ Nov.	___ Sept.	___ Sept.	___ Sept.	___ Sept.	___ Sept.	___ Sept.
___ Dec.	___ Oct.	___ Oct.	___ Oct.	___ Oct.	___ Oct.	___ Oct.
	___ Nov.		___ Nov.	___ Nov.	___ Nov.	___ Nov.
	___ Dec.	___ Dec.	___ Dec.	___ Dec.	___ Dec.	___ Dec.

Number of issues ordered _____
Amount enclosed \$ _____

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