WRITINGS OF JACK HYLES

by Jack Hyles

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Jack Hyles, compiled for study and devotional reading.

94 Chapters

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0A.00 Blue Denim and Lace

Blue Denim And Lace by Dr. Jack Hyles

Jack Hyles work, Blue Denim and Lace, is a set of 49 meditations, in which he deals with a large number of topics, Meekness, Work, the Body, Love, a Good name, Helping others, Education, etc. Some of these are like sermons and others are just short devotions.

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Foreword

One of my staff members said to me one time that he wished that he could feel as deeply as I feel. He asked me for the secret. I made it clear that one of the main secrets is practicing the art of meditation. In these days of busy cities, busy activities, and busy schedules, how neglected is this spiritual grace. In the first Psalm we are reminded that meditation is necessary for prosperity. Paul reminds us in Php 4:8 that we are to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. In 1 Timothy 4:15 Paul admonishes young Timothy to meditate on what God had done for him. When Joshua assumed the leadership of Israel, he was reminded in Joshua 1:8 to meditate. In Genesis 24:63 we find that Isaac was a man of meditation. In Psalms 63:6 David reminds us that he meditated through the night.

I have found it wise to have a set time and set place for meditation. It is something that should be done on purpose. Meditation is love’s nourishment. No one can properly love unless his mind dwells on the love and on the loved.

If one is to develop the depth of soul that he should have, he must of necessity spend time in meditation. In order to have proper gratitude, one must meditate upon the things that God and others have done for him.

If improvement comes in our lives, it comes only after soul-searching meditation which leads us to realize our weaknesses, imperfections, frailties, and need of improvement.

Meditation enables us to escape the traps that Satan sets for us in order to capture our minds. Drive down the average highway and look at the signs that seek your mind’s attention. Add to this the television, the radio, the thousands of people with whom you come in contact regularly, and the million other things in life and you will find the mind has little chance to be alone. Hence, it is wise for a person to set a time and a place for meditation. This has been my policy through the years. In the following chapters you will find some of these meditations. Some have been during the night watches; some have been while flying 30,000 feet in the air, but all have come through meditation. May God bless you as we together "think upon these things."

0A.01 Chapter 1. When Time Is No Longer

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When Time Is No Longer ". . .that there should be time no longer." (Revelation 10:6)

Perhaps one of the hardest things to define is time. I have often thought of time as being a yardstick with which to measure deterioration. Could that be the reason there is no time with God, and there will be no time in eternity? Nothing will ever deteriorate there. There will be no depreciation; hence, there will be no need for the measuring stick - time. The older I get the more I realize that perhaps the greatest gift that I could give you is my time. Actually, the only gift that I can give is my time. If I give you money, I give you the time it took me to earn that money. If I give you a gift, I give you the time it took me to earn the money with which I bought the gift. Perhaps, then, it is true that time is the only thing that I can give to you. Time is probably the greatest gift for several reasons:

1. When I give you my time, I am giving you my life, for time is life. If one takes the life of another, actually he takes only time from him. Murder is simply taking from a person the amount of time that he would have lived anyway. So in a real sense, when I give to you my time, I am giving to you my life, for time is life.

How much more could I honor you than to give you my time? How much more could you honor me than to give me your time? My time with you is an investment. Your time with me is an investment. Let us care for each other's investment wisely.

2. If I spend some time with you, I am giving you a gift that can be given only to YOU! The moment that I give to you I will never have again. Once it is given, it can never be given to another. Such a realization should cause us to appreciate moments spent friends, for a moment given to me by a friend is not only his giving to me of his life, but also something which he can give to no other person and which can never be given again.

3. For you to give me a moment, or for me to give you a moment, is to exchange the only moment that we actually know we have. We are only promised the present. When we share the present with each other, we are giving to each other the only moment that we have for sure. There may never be another.

4. The giving of a moment to a friend is a greater gift than Heaven can give. If I spend a moment with you in Heaven, it will not be subtracted from time, for there is no time there. In Heaven I will not be giving you my life, for life is eternal there. Here is an earthly gift that I may give you that I cannot give you in Heaven, for to spend a moment there is not a sacrifice. May I then never take lightly the time you give to me, and may you never take lightly the time I give to you.

5. Time is a gift God cannot give. God gives us many wonderful gifts. This is one thing that God cannot give you. God has no time. He does not give up any of His life to fellowship with you. To be sure, He gave His life on the cross to save you; but since God will never die, the time He gives to

you and the moments you share with Him do not subtract anything from His life. In other words, He loses no life to fellowship with you. However, when I fellowship with you, I lose my life. When you fellowship with me, you are giving of your life. Here is a gift we can share that even God cannot give.

6. For me to give to you a moment is an honor that God cannot give you. When we share a moment alone, we take that moment from everyone else and give it to each other. God, however, is omnipresent. For Him to fellowship with you does not mean that He must forfeit fellowship with all others. Hence, when you give me a few moments, I must pause to realize that you are honoring me above all of the people of the earth for that moment.

Therefore, to give you my time is the greatest gift that I can give. Since it can be given only to you and only to one person at a time and can never be given again, please accept the moment that I can give as my supreme gift, and as an expression of my love to you and my interest in you.

Recently someone asked me this question: "Why do you make everything seem so sacred? It seems that you make the least little event such a sacred occasion."

I have given you my reasons. Every event of life uses up a little more of the most precious commodity that I have on earth - my life. The event may seem trivial and the occasion may seem small, but the price that I am paying is the greatest price that I have to pay. Hence, I do not measure an occasion by its greatness or bigness, but by the price I pay for it - even my life.

0A.02 Chapter 2. The Advantages Of The Friend Relationship

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The Advantage Of The Friend Relationship

Life is a series of human relationships. It is very important that we develop each to its fullest. No one need magnify the importance of the parent-child relationship, the husband- wife relationship, the brother-sister relationship, etc. There is, however, a need to magnify the importance of the friend relationship. Many would never class it in importance with the aforementioned. I think that it should be. Let us observe some advantages in the friend relationship.

1. It is one of the few relationships that we choose. We do not choose our mother, our father, our brother, our sister, our son, our daughter. God chooses them for us. Because He does, they are sacred relationships. There are a few relationships, however, that should be akin to those mentioned above. These are made sacred because they are chosen by us. One such relation is that of a friend. If I am your friend, I chose to be your friend. If you are my friend, you chose to be my friend. What an honor we have given to each other. Of all the people in the world we have given our friendship one to the other. How sacred such a relationship!

2. It can be a completely unselfish relationship. The child needs the parent. In usual cases, in later years the parent needs the child. The husband needs the wife, and the wife needs the husband. In each of these relationships there is, however holy, a righteous selfishness involved. When I chose to be your friend, however, I chose to give and not to receive. I chose to help and not to be helped. I chose to love and not to be loved. I chose to care for you and not to be cared for by you. In being your friend I ask nothing. I am willing to give everything, which means that the object of such friendship may rest comfortably in an unselfish relationship.

3. Friendship is one of the few relationships that never changes. The child grows up and leaves home. The parent grows old and passes away. Brothers and sisters move away from home. At first the child needs the parent; later the parent needs the child. Even in marriage the needs change with the passing of the years. In friendship it need not be so. Many parents will admit that about the time they learn how to be parents, the children are grown. The same is true with many relationships in life, but the friend relationship is one of the few, if not the only one, where one can spend years becoming an expert and still have time to use what he has learned, for the relationship may remain the same.

4. The friend relationship is one that needs not the acceptance of another. To become a husband means that another must accept the proposal. To become a wife means that there must be a proposal by another. True friendship is not, however, based upon this. I can be your friend, even if you are not my friend. In other words, friendship need not be reciprocated. This means if I am your friend, I have chosen you from a wide field of possibilities. I did not choose you because you accepted, for I became your friend before you accepted. In some cases, I am your friend even if you never accept, but what an honor it is to have a friend!

6. One need never give up one friend for another. In some relationships of life there can be only one. In the friendship relationship the one relationship need not be traded if another is acquired. This relationship is never lost to another. You may be my friend and someone else's friend. When I become a friend to another, I may still be your friend.

7. The friend relationship is one that can be completely spiritual. Most of life's relationships are based upon physical needs. To be sure, there are spiritual needs also. In any relationship of life the spiritual should be uppermost. I can become your friend, however, without there being one physical need for you to supply. Our souls may be knit together, and our relationship need not be based upon the satisfying of physical appetites.

8. A friend may be chosen at any time of life. Parents come at birth; children come to us in young adulthood; brothers and sisters come to us during childhood. People at a certain age are unable to have children, but a friend may be chosen at eight or eighty, nine or ninety, ten or one hundred, sixteen or sixty.

Friendship is a high and lofty relationship. Few ever know its depth. Most never know a friend, and certainly, most never are a friend.

Hence, the great relationships of life are husband-wife, mother-daughter, father-son, brother-sister, and friend. Happy is the man who has a friend. Happier is the man who is a friend. Happiest is the man who has a friend and is a friend. Oh how happy I am!

0A.03 Chapter 3. The Importance Of Little Things

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The Importance Of Little Things

Sometime notice in your Bible the many little things that were of great significance: the little gift of the widow, the water pots in which Jesus performed His first miracle, Shamgar's ox goad, Moses' rod, etc.

There is no doubt but that one of the great differences between success and failure is the importance placed on little things. There has to be a reason why men of equal talent do not have equal success, and oftentimes, men of less talent have greater success than many- talented ones.

Often a successful person will be called a perfectionist. He will even be criticized because of his overemphasis on seemingly "trivial matters." It might be wise, however, for less successful people to examine the methods of those who are successful, and in so doing, not criticize the differences but rather pattern after them. The differences between people is composed of their differences. Our differences cause our difference. Hence, it might be wise for one to emulate rather than criticize a so-called perfectionist.

1. The only way to excel is to do the little things. Everyone does the big things. They are the things that challenge each of us. Consequently, the difference between us must be our attention toward little things. I have noticed very carefully successful people from every walk of life. The so-called trivials mean something to them. The nonessentials seem to be essentials. Everything seems to be big. They have found that "little drops of water and little grains of sand make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land."

2. The one who cares for little things will be misunderstood by those who care not. "He is too particular." "He is hard to work for." Similar statements are often made about those who care for details and to whom punctuality, neatness, and thoroughness are important. Hence, when one comes to the place where everything is important and there are no such things as trivials, he is oftentimes misunderstood by his contemporaries.

3. The big is the little. We have found in our generation that the most powerful force is the splitting of the smallest thing. In the splitting of the atom a succession of explosions can be set off to cause the biggest explosion the world has ever known. This has taught us that the power is not in the big but in the little. The spoil lies to the person who counts the little as big. Oftentimes I have said to my staff. "If a task is worth doing, it is worth doing right,. If it is not worth doing well, it is not worth doing." If something needs to be done, it is big. If we have a job to do, it is big. If it is worthy of our attention, it is worthy of our best.

4. When one does the little thing well, he will automatically do the big thing well. Someone has said that a preacher should preach to the back row. If the folks on the back row can hear him, certainly he will be understood by those on the front row. When a person does a little job well, he

will certainly do a big job well.

Truthfully, who among us is able to discern between the big and the little? So often we come to the conclusion of a task only to find that it was one of the biggest tasks we had ever attempted. None of us can be sure about the size of a task. It should behoove us to do every task well, thereby insuring ourselves of always doing a good job on the big tasks.

5. The little often becomes the big. Someone has said, "Be nice to your paperboy; you may try to borrow some money from his bank some day." Someone else has said, "Be kind to the boy who plays in your yard. You may be on trial in his court some day." The safest thing to do is be nice to the little man, do well each little task, preach your best to the little crowds, prepare well for the little jobs, and you will certainly corral the big ones. Remember, the little often becomes the big and the big is often the little. Who is able to judge the difference?

6. Do not measure a task by its size. Just do what there is to do. The other day I was parked in front of a big business. I was not surprised when I saw the owner of the business sweeping off the sidewalk. This is the way he got to be a big man. He was a good little man. The way he got to do the big tasks was by doing the little tasks well. Greatness is often wrapped in simplicity. A person who is unwilling to do the little will not have the opportunity to do the big. The person who is not challenged by the little will not be presented the challenge to do the big. A person who has not done well the little is not prepared or qualified to do the big. Do not weigh a task. If it is before you, do it and do it well. Even if it is unworthy of you, you, nevertheless, are setting principles by which you will live a life. One who is not diligent in little tasks will not develop the diligence necessary to do the big tasks. Even if the task is not worthy of you, diligence is; and even if what you do is not big, the way you do it can be big. Someone will see how you do it and realize that you are qualified to do something bigger. Then too, in doing the small task diligently one is preparing himself with the methods necessary to succeed in a big task.

7. Always make a check list of little things.Never trust your memory. You will remember to do the big, but you must remind yourself to do the little. If possible, the little should be done immediately. Fix little things when they break. Most houses become run-down because of the neglect of repairing little things. Many cars lose their value because the little things are not attended to. Make a check list of things to do that are little. This article is being dictated on a jet plane between Chicago and Seattle, Washington. There I will board another jet for a speaking engagement in Tokyo, Japan. Just a moment ago a little thing was called to my attention. I made a note of it, put the note in my pocket, and will be reminded to do the task and do it well.

8. In doing the little things one becomes Christlike. You must remember that Jesus never pastored a large church. He was never a president, governor or mayor. He took time for little children.he told simple stories. He spoke of a flower, a bird, a gardener, a husbandman, a lost coin, and a boy who ran way from home. His Father and our Father takes note of a bird that falls. He clothes the lilies of the field. He is even interested in each hair on our heads. Hence, if we would be Christlike, we must notice the little things and do them well.

9. The degree of unhappiness you have with yourself over not doing the little things well will determine the amount of growth you experience.For one to improve himself he must realize his inefficiencies and weaknesses. Usually the big things will be accomplished. When one has

accomplished the big things, he may then think that he has arrived. The growth he experiences in the future will be determined by how dissatisfied he is in the present. Hence, he must find unhappiness over the failure to do well the little things. This is true in every field. The baseball player who is in a hitting slump may find he is jerking his head at the wrong time. The football player may find that he is not charging low enough as he blocks. The track star may find that his failures are caused by holding his arms too far from his body or standing too erect when he starts to race. In every walk of life this is the case. Once one has become successful in a field, his continued improvement is dependent upon his mastering, not of the big, but of the little. Remember nothing is unimportant. No task should be taken lightly. Every job is a big job. Every day is a big day. Every sermon is a big sermon. When I was in college, I took a course called Pastoral Theology. It was taught by the president of the college and was attended by the preacher boys. Each Monday we were asked to give a report of our weekend activities. On this particular Monday I was so happy to give my report. You see, I had just accepted my first pastorate the day before. It was one hundred miles from our college town. Mrs. Hyles and I drove there each weekend in our old Dodge. I was the first preacher asked to give his report on this particular Monday morning. I stood and said, "Dr. Bruce, I would like to report that I had a wonderful weekend. I was called as Pastor of a little church in the country . . ."

Dr. Bruce interrupted me and said, "Sit down, Mr. Hyles."

I could not for the life of me understand why he told me to sit down. Every other young preacher gave his report, and there was not another single reprimand given by Dr. Bruce. Finally when the reports were all given, I raised my hand and asked, "Dr. Bruce, what did I say that was wrong?"

Dr. Bruce replied with an answer I shall never forget, "You said, Mr. Hyles, that you had been called to pastor a little church ... Mr. Hyles, there are no little churches!"

I then stood to my feet and said, "Dr. Bruce, I would like to give my report. Yesterday I was called to pastor a big church up in the country with nineteen members at a salary of $7.50 a week." The class roared with laughter, but I had been taught a lesson I shall never forget. There are no little churches. There are no little preachers. There are no little people. There are no little tasks!

0A.04 Chapter 4. Sacred Things

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Sacred Things The Jews had many holy days, special seasons, feasts, etc. Colossians 2:14-17 reminds us that these were nailed to the cross. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. (Colossians 2:14-17)

Paul said in Galatians that he was afraid of the Galatian people who had lapsed back into legalism and the observance of days and seasons lest he had bestowed labor upon them in vain. In his writings the apostle gives much space to the fact that in Christ every day is a holy day and every season a holy season.

Places were also sacred to the Jews. There was the Holy of Holies in the temple as well as other places that became known as sacred. Jesus was talking to the woman at the well when suddenly she interrupted him by suggesting that the Jews worshipped in Jerusalem but the Samaritans worshipped on Mt. Gerizim. He then reminded her, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. (John 4:23) Hence, there are now no sacred places - only sacred relationships.

Someone would say, "Pastor, how about the place where you were saved, the spot where you were married, the place you became engaged, etc. - are these sacred places?"

No. The place is not sacred. It is the relationship that is sacred. The place and date are simply made dear because of the sacred relationship. Hence, the Christian should have no sacred places, but many dear places; no sacred days, but many dear days. He should however, have sacred relationships. The spot should be only a reminder, not the object. There are several such spots in my life, such as the place where I was saved, my father’s grave, etc. These spots, however, are not sacred spots. These are only places held dear because of relationships and events that are held sacred. Because of this, we should make many of them. With the passing of the years they will be even more dear to us. In order to make such dear places we must find how to do so.

1. Think now how you will feel later. One of the tragic things of this depraved human race is that we have to wait until an experience is ended before it has been made dear to us. If the spot will someday be a treasured one, let us make it such now. Character enables one to appreciate the present as those who have no character will appreciate it in the future. The chair in which a loved one sits, the pulpit behind which a dear pastor speaks, the organ bench on which an organist sits, the desk of an office worker, and other places will someday become hallowed spots. If this be true, we should appreciate and see them as such now. The things that one is now doing will some day

become dear and hallowed things. The rearing of the children, the living of a normal home life, and even youth itself will some day be looked back upon with reverence. Why not look upon the enjoyment as such while it is in progress? As the pastor walks to the pulpit, he should realize that someday this spot will be very dear, so it should be very dear now. When the office worker sits behind his desk, he should realize his privilege while he sits there. It is sad that so many of us have to wait until days are past to really appreciate them.

2. Remember that the usual will someday become the unusual. Everything is temporary. Because it is, the usual should be treated as the unusual. That which will someday become the unusual should be treated as the unusual today. A trip to the zoo, a night with the family, the eating of hamburgers at a drive-in sandwich shop, etc. will someday be precious memories. The person with character will make them precious experiences now.

3. Use the same place. People who have close ties are happy people. In order to make those close ties there must be familiarity. Some people who love each other meet at the same spot year after year. Others pray for each other at the same time day after day. Others eat at the same restaurant, etc. As an experience takes place at the same place, or at the same time, it becomes more dear and sacred. Man is a creature of habits. Proper habits can make, not only for treasured memories, but treasured experiences now.

4. Measure the relationship now. One of the sad things about us is that we wait until the tree is fallen before we measure it. Anybody can measure a fallen tree; character measures the tree while it is still standing. Do not wait until you lose him to know how much you love him. measure that love now. It isn’t death that makes something sacred; it is life. Character makes it sacred now. If you work for a good employer, realize it now! Do not wait until he is gone. If you have a good husband or wife, realize it now. Do not wait until that one is taken.

5. Make gifts what they ought to be. A gift is a shrine where the recipient meets the giver and an altar where he thanks God for the giver. Choose what you wear carefully. A certain tie can be worn as a reminder of the one who gave it. This chapter is being dictated in the Atlanta, Georgia, airport. The cuff links and "tie tac" that I wear are gifts from dear friends. Hence, I am now thinking of them and praying for them. A simple thing such as a cuff link has become a shrine where I meet the giver and an altar where I thank God for the giver. Gifts should be purposely used in order to remind us of those whom we love.

6. A disciplined schedule makes for sacred times. The person who does the same thing at the same time will find it a precious time. Wise is the person who schedules his time. In so doing, he is building up memories of things that happened at a certain hour so as to make that hour dear and precious in the future. One of the secrets to life is the discipline of time. This and other things make for close ties and sentimental people. People often say that they are just not affectionate and sentimental. The simple truth may be that they are not disciplined. Proper discipline of time, mind, and life will make for regular activities that may be looked upon in the future as dear ones. With character these can be treasured now.

7. A route can make sacred places. There are many such sacred trails. The child who takes the same way to school each morning is making the route a revered one. The man who drives the same way each day to work may do the same thing. Just a few months ago we visited a city where

I pastored for seven years. How dear to me was the route between my home and the church because I took the same route each day. It became almost sacred to me. Hence, how happy I was to retrace my steps once again.

8. Enter into close relationships.A few years ago as a young man I read a book that had a very vital influence on my life. It was called Try Giving Yourself Away. I do not recall the contents of the book; I do recall its title. I decided then and there to give myself away in human relationships. I decided not to be afraid to enter into close relationships. I have never been sorry. Hence, my friends are sacred. My relationships are sacred. I have known intimate ties that I have treasured, do treasure, and will treasure all my life. No place is sacred in itself. No time is sacred in itself. Hence, if a place or a time becomes sacred, it is so because of relationships and disciplined lives that make it possible. Such discipline and such relationships can make life more meaningful and more worthwhile. They can make every gift a shrine, every bush a burning bush, every spot of ground holy ground, every building a temple, and every day a holy day.

0A.05 Chapter 5. Jonathan And David

- 5 -

Jonathan And David

One day while conducting Staff Devotions, I was asked by one of the staff members concerning the subject of friendship. The devotion for that day had pertained to the relationship of friends. The question asked was something like this: "Pastor, do you know of any such friends in the Bible?" Immediately my attention was directed toward Jonathan and his relationship to David. This, of course, was one of the most beautiful relationships in all the Bible and is worthy of careful inspection.

1. ". . .the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David ..." (1 Samuel 18:1) Notice that it does not say that he knitted himself, but that the soul was knit. True friendship is a gift of God, and a person who has a true friend should count him as such. We hear much about "falling in love" in our day. I doubt if anyone can really define such a condition, but there is such a thing in the Bible. God knit the soul of one to the soul of another. The words "made one" could be used in the relationship of Christ and the church as well as in the relationship of the husband and wife. In other words, when God gives one a friend, he knits their souls just as really as Christ was knit to the church and as the husband and wife are knit to each other.

It is worthy of note that Jonathan's soul was knit to David's. David needed a friend. God gave David such a friend. Happy and blessed is the person who knows such knitting of his soul to that of another.

2. Notice the words in 1 Samuel 18:1 and 1 Samuel 18:3, "as own soul." In other words, Jonathan loved David as he loved his own soul. This could mean "one soul in two bodies," or it could mean "another self." When God gives such a friendship, He gives a love for the friend that is akin to a love for self. The friend's welfare is my welfare. In other words, we prefer our friends to ourselves. How sacred, how wonderful is such a relationship.

3. Jonathan gave up the kingdom for David. (1 Samuel 18:4) Jonathan was the son of Saul. Saul was the king. No doubt he was the heir apparent to the throne, but his friendship led him to give all to his friend. David's Welfare meant more than his own. True love and true friendship knows no bounds of sacrifice, love, and giving. True love gives to be satisfied, but finds dissatisfaction. Again, it gives, but again it wants to give more. Yet again it gives, and again it is unsatisfied. Nothing can satisfy true love but giving all. Such was the case of Jonathan.

4. This friendship was not necessarily earned. The word "Jonathan" means "God has given" or "given by God." Apart from salvation itself, God has no more gracious gift than the gift of a true friend. If there is one such person in the world to you, thank God daily for him and do your best to nurture this relationship to its fullest.

5. The friendship was closer than blood. (1 Samuel 19:2) In Proverbs 18:24 we find that there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. In John 15:13 we find that the greatest love is one laying down his life for a friend. True friendship is often closer than blood ties. this is the way God would have it. No doubt many readers will think of some such relationship that they enjoy. How sweet it is when the bonds of Jesus Christ and the bonds of Christian friendship exceed even the ties of blood.

6. They made a covenant between them to die for each other and to help each other's relatives. I believe that people should develop friendships so close for which death itself would not be too great a gift. Jonathan proved the sincerity of his heart when he risked his life again and again for his friend David. Each of us would like to have such a friend. It is more important that each of us become such a friend. Ask yourself: "Would I die for anyone?" Make a list of people for whom you would die. Once this list is made and you have made a covenant with yourself to offer such friendship, then go to the person or persons involved and tell them of your devotion. Enter into this covenant with them. Of course, do not expect reciprocation. Happy is the person who has love for another deep enough to die for him. It is certainly important that such relationships be expressed one to another when such friendships develop.

7. Jonathan was willing to be in the shadows. (1 Samuel 23:17) True friendship is willing to be second. It is willing to exalt the other in place of self. It steps in the shadows and pushes the friend into the limelight. It finds its satisfaction in loving and not in being loved, in helping and not in being helped. It rejoices in the success of a friend.

8. It seems that Jonathan expressed his friendship to David every time he saw him. Again and again he took care to tell David of his love, devotion, and friendship. This is very important in a friend relationship. To be sure, there is an assurance in perfect love. Yet, we are only people, and we need to be assured again and again. There should be an excess of "I love you's" rather than a scarcity of them. How sweet it is when friends express devotion one to the other.

9. As far as we know, David was the only one to whom Jonathan was such a friend. One must not assume such deep relationships lightly. A friend should be as carefully chosen in the will of God as husband and wife. It is not a lesser relationship. Hence, too many such friends would cheapen the union. Also, because friendship bears with it tremendous obligations, one should not assume more friends than he is capable to fulfill the obligations involved. The word "friend" means far too little in most circles and should certainly carry with it a willingness to give all. This, of course, would narrow considerably the number of friends that any one person could have.

10. Jonathan gave to David his every desire. (1 Samuel 20:4) True friendship seeks for the needs of its object. As I have said elsewhere in this book, THE DESIRE OF A FRIEND IS A ROYAL COMMAND!

11. Bodily absence does not mean that friends are apart. Jonathan and David were not together as much as one would think, yet their souls had been knit. There is a fellowship other than physical fellowship. How beautiful it is when the souls of two people are so knit together that they cannot be "separate" from each other.

There are some people in this world for whom I would die. I have them listed, and each day I pause to thank God for them by name and to fellowship with them though miles may separate us.

Paul said in Php 1:7 that he had the Philippian people in his heart. In Php 1:8 he expressed his longing for them. True friends should have each other in their hearts and should have such soul fellowship that nothing can separate them.

12. It is interesting to note what happened to David after Jonathan died. Not long after Jonathan died, David had his terrible affair with Bathsheba. Then he lost the baby from this unholy union. A son raped a daughter. One son murdered another son. The murderer son then rebelled against his father, fought to take over the kingdom, and was soon killed in a battle against the forces of his own father. None of this happened to David while he had his friend. Could it be that it was Jonathan's friendship that helped keep David right?

I have known the inspiration that is given by having a friend. Such relationships can make my preaching better, inspire me to write more, and even keep my life cleaner and more dedicated to God. A true friend leads one to righteousness. A true friend enables his friend to become a better Christian. Such was the case with Jonathan and such should be the case with us.

13. Perhaps David never really understood the depth of Jonathan's love. To some, the relationship seems one-sided. To be sure, David did not have the opportunity to be a friend to Jonathan that Jonathan had to be a friend to David. However, the statement in 2 Samuel 1:26 that Jonathan's love exceeded that of women seems to me to be a little shallow. It is doubtful that David ever knew the depth of the friendship for Jonathan that Jonathan knew for David. We must remember, however, that David needed a friend more than Jonathan did. Perhaps it could be that God gave David a stronger friend because of his need. God's promise is that He will "supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory." This God did for David and likewise for Jonathan. There has always been some doubt to me, however, if David knew the depth of friendship that Jonathan knew. This should alert each of us to do this best to have sufficient love to reciprocate the depth of a friend's affection.

14. David gave to Jonathan after his death. All relationships on earth must end for a season, and so did David and Jonathan's earthly friendship. Jonathan died, but David's friendship lingered In 2 Samuel 9:1 we see that David did a favor for Jonathan's son in honor of Jonathan and his life. He brought Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, to the king's palace (though the son was crippled) to live as one of his own sons in honor of Jonathan. There are those who think that David should have done something for Jonathan earlier. Perhaps he waited too late to express his friendship. Whether or not this is true in this story, it is nevertheless the case in many lives. We should do now what we plan to do later for our friends. Let us tell of our love now! Let us show our appreciation now! Let us sacrifice now! Let us give now. Let us share now. It is good to give to one's descendants after his death. It is better to give to them during his life. How sweet it is when God miraculously imparts friendship to two people. There are many close relationships in life such as parent-child, husband-wife, brother-sister, etc. Along beside these relationships must go a true friendship - the kind of friendship that exists between Jonathans and Davids, the kind of friendship which is a gift from Heaven and which will last forever.

0A.06 Chapter 6. Daniel's Spirit

- 6 -

Daniel’s Spirit

"Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." (Daniel 6:3) In this verse we find that Daniel had an excellent spirit. There is more to this statement than meets the eye. Perhaps it would be better translated, "the spirit excelled in Daniel." In other words, the spiritual was more important to Daniel than the physical. The unseen was more important than the seen. The intangible was more important than the tangible. The spirit excelled in him. When Jesus speaks of the end time, He says that one of its characteristics will be that people will be buying and selling, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Now there is nothing wrong with buying and selling. There is nothing wrong with eating and drinking, and there is nothing wrong with marrying and giving in marriage, except it is a picture of our day when people excel in the flesh.

Daniel excelled in the spirit. He placed his physical appetites secondary, and the spirit became the chief thing. Here is the reason that Daniel could interpret dreams and obtain spiritual insight which few others did. How tragic it is that even good Christians spend so much time on the seen and so little on the unseen; so much time on the physical and so little on the spiritual; so much time on the tangible and so little on the intangible. in Daniel, the physical did not possess a spirit, but the spiritual possessed a body. This is why he could purpose in his heart that he would not sin against God or defile his flesh with the king’s meat. This indicates that he gave much thought as to his purpose in life. He found his duties, found the will of God for his life, and built all else around it in a world of materialism and physical attraction.

Let it be said of us that the spirit excels in us as it did in Daniel. Let us major on the spirit. Let us think of and find our purpose in life. Then let us purpose in our hearts that we will do nothing that will steer us from our goal and purpose in life. The only way one could properly do this is to have the spirit excel in him.

0A.07 Chapter 7. Do Right

- 7 -

Do Right When I was a high school lad, a dear Sunday School teacher named Dr. Rutherford gave me a New Testament. On the inside of it he wrote, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." (Proverbs 1:10) This became my motto for life.

Billy Sunday used to say, "Do right. Do right if the stars fall, but do right." Such was the case with Daniel. Let us notice several things about Daniel's doing right when he refused to eat the King's meat or drink the King's wine.

1. It is always right to do right. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow down to wrong. Later Daniel was put in the lion's den, but this decision was made a long time before at the dining room table when he decided that he would always do right. It became a part of his character. It is always a good idea for people just to say, "I will always do right." Let principles make decisions. A person should decide early in life the principles by which he plans to live. These principles can become an IBM machine letting every decision fall where it will according to one's principles. As I look back on my life, I can see several principles that I set as a child and as a young person that have guided me in the making of decisions for a lifetime.

2. It is always right to do right away from home. Someone has said that the "real you" comes out away from home. What do you do when away at college? What do you do in the army when temptations come? The real test will come when there is a temptation to do wrong and Mother does not know, Father does not know, Pastor does not know, and friends do not know. Let it always be said that we do right away from home. Many people go places during vacation to which they would never go at home. Many people gamble at Las Vegas who would never gamble anywhere else. How sad.

3. It is always right to do right regardless of the results. Always make the decision apart from the results. If right turns out wrong, it is still right to do right. Right needs no vindication. Right is its own reward. Do not even consider the results when deciding whether to do right or wrong.

4. It is not right to do wrong in order to do right.There is a popular untruth going around: "As long as you have a chance to do good, anything goes." This is not true! Right should rise and fall on its own self, not upon the opportunities it presents. The doing of right is an opportunity. The doing of right is its own result, gives its own reward, presents its own satisfaction, and should be done even if it causes one to lose his job, lose his popularity, lose his friends, or lose his all. Right will always turn out right in the end. Do you remember what happened to Daniel? He was promoted to the top. Nero did wrong and Paul did right. Now people name their boys "Paul" and their dogs "Nero." Stephen did right and died, but he looked up and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. John did right and was exiled on the Isle of Patmos, but it turned out right because he saw the great Revelation. The Hebrew children did right, and it looked bad for awhile until the fourth Person came into the fiery furnace and Jesus walked with them.

There is absolutely no thrill comparable to the thrill of doing what is right. Do right if it is unpopular. Do right if it looks bad. Do right if it turns out wrong. Do right when opportunity is lost. Do right if nobody thinks you ought to do right. Do right if nobody else does right. Preachers, do right. Businessmen, do right. College students, do right. Children, do right. Teen-agers, do right. Let everyone that has breath, do right! Of course, it is not always easy to say "NO"! to wrong, but we must remember that it is always wrong to do wrong and always right to do right. Looking back over my youth I recall three vital times in my life when, thank God, I said "NO!"

"No" to Drink One night I was with the wrong crowd, I was a senior, I thought I was popular, but I wasn't really. I found out later what it was. I was just the boy that hadn't been with the girls yet, and I was in the wrong crowd. I had never been out past eleven o'clock except to sit and think across the street from our little apartment.

Six of us in a car stopped in front of the Texas Theatre at one o'clock in the morning. The driver got out a bottle of whiskey or wine, took a drink, and passed it to the second person, etc. Each of them took a drink. I was behind the driver so it got to me last. Yes, they passed it to me! That was the test. What would I do with it?

(Now right there, young friend, when that decision comes, the road you take will largely determine what you really are and what you will do in life.)

I didn't want to be a stick in the mud. After all, suddenly I was in the gang. I had never been in the gang before. The girls were taking a second look at me, and all of a sudden (I didn't know why) they wanted to go with me. I didn't want to lose the popularity that I had gained. I reached out and accepted the bottle of wine. I put it an inch from my lips. An arrow stuck through my heart and I threw the bottle to the floor! It spilled on everyone in the car. I shouted at the top of my voice, "TAKE ME HOME!" I was within one inch of an awful night.

They said, "What? Take you home? Why?"

Never mind why, I am not going to drink it. I promised God that I wouldn't and I won't."

They said, "Oh, you want to go home and knit, do you?"

I said, "Okay I will go home and knit, but take me home."

"Little Sissy wants to go home and embroider and crochet."

I said, "Okay, I will go home and embroider and crochet, but take me home!"

They took me to 2632 Idaho and let me out, laughing at me. By that time it was one-thirty. I walked up the sidewalk, ashamed to walk in. We lived in a little apartment with two big trees out in front. The screen door was shut and locked, and the main door was open. We had a wood stove in the front room. We had a linoleum floor with very simple, poor furnishings. My mother was kneeling beside the stove. I stopped and listened to her while she prayed. This was her prayer: "Dear God, I have tried to rear Jack to be a good boy. I have had to be a mother and a father to him. I don't know where he is tonight. He has never been out this late. Dear God, keep him clean. Keep him pure. Help him to remember what I have taught him."

I said, "Mama."

She jumped up, ran to the door, and embraced me.

I said, "Hi, Mama."

Mama said, "Son, you didn't do anything wrong, did you?"

I said, "No." Then I told her that shortly before the bottle was just an inch from my lips. (By the way, thanks be to God, a bottle has never touched these lips, nor has there ever been a cigarette in these lips.) My mother said, "Son, what time was it?"

I repeated, "Mother, it was one o'clock."

She said, "It was one o'clock when I knelt beside the stove to pray."

Mothers, you can't beat the old-fashioned way of rearing kids by saying, "No-No-No-No! Bad-Bad-Bad-Bad!" Then after you have done all you can, stay on your knees and ask God to help them do right. You can't beat that!

"No" to a Movie My senior year in high school was a year of decisions. I had a pal who had been my best buddy for quite some time. He and I were together all of the time. We took every course in high school together but one. In 39 classes out of forty he sat right beside me. We were about the same size, and maybe we even looked a little alike. When graduation time came, my pal and I planned a double date. The four of us attended the baccalaureate on Sunday morning. It was held in a church building. (This was back in the days when we had some religion and decency in America.) After the baccalaureate service we went out to eat and then attended an Open House being held in honor of two of our classmates. However, after we left the Open House there was nothing to do. My pal said, "What are we going to do tonight?"

I said, "What church shall we go to?'

He said, "Church?"

I said, "Yea."

He said, "Not church! This is Senior Day."

I said, "It is also Sunday."

He said, "Now look, Jack, we have been to church all of our lives. I go to church as much as you do, but this is not the day to go to church." He continued, "let's go to a night club. Let's not drink, but let's just go to a night club."

I said, "GOOD NIGHT, NO!"

He said, At least let's go to a movie." I said, "No, I am not going to go." My date looked at me and said, "Boy, what did I draw?"

I said, "I guess you drew a dud." My pal said, "Okay, we will just take Jack home." They took me home. I called my date's mother and told her that I was no longer responsible for her daughter, and I told her where they were going. The three of them went to a movie, and I went to church. (That is one reason why I make a big to-do about young people who do what is right!) My pastor was so proud of me. My mother was so proud. She would look at her friends as I sat beside her

and pointing at me, she would whisper, "He is here."

I felt like I had discovered America. What I didn't know then was that I chose to be a preacher that night. My pal and I had never been apart before. My heart was broken. He went to the movies, and I went to church. I became a preacher. He became a Hollywood actor and producer. I am still in church, and he is still in the movies.

You don't know, young people, what the decisions you make will do to your life. When you say to some boy that is about to put his wicked, vile, sensual paws on you, "Take me home," and you slap him across the face or get a shoe and knock him in the head with it, you never know but what that may be the thing that changes your whole life.

"No" to the Sunday Evening Ball Game Sports have always interested me greatly. I loved to play ball. I played softball on a city team. I was the only teen-ager on the city league team. The other players were grown men and some were even professional players. A firm gave me a job just so I would play ball for them. I was their pitcher, and they did not have another. We advanced to the championship game. This was a tremendous honor.

We always played our games on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday nights, but they announced the state championship game would be played on Sunday night at seven o'clock. I had a battle. I will never forget it. It was the biggest thing in my life. For days I battled. What would I do? The team said, "Why, you have to play. We do not have any other pitcher." The coach of our team said, "Jack, I am going to go. What is wrong with it? This happens just once in a lifetime. It is the state championship game!" So I went out and sat under the tree in our yard all Sunday afternoon. I had not made my decision during the previous week.

Someone said to me, "Jack, it won't hurt you." To this I replied, "It won't hurt you, but it will hurt me if I play."

I made my decision on my knees under the shade of that tree to go on to church that night. When I got to church, the manager had the entire team dressed in uniform and sitting across the street from the church. They tried to talk me into going with them. I was the only hope they had. They didn't have another pitcher. I had pitched three or four no-hit games. Often I would strike out ten to twenty batters a game. They didn't have another pitcher.

They got out of the car, got around me, and said, "Jack, we just have to have you. If you played short stop, it would be different. If you played left field, or center field, or if you were catcher, it would be different, but we do not have any more pitchers. We will be swamped!" As I walked into the church, two or three of the players were cursing me. (By the way, they lost the game, 10 to 0.)

My, how I thank God that I had a mighty good mother, a mighty good preacher, and some mighty good Sunday School teachers who cared about me and gave me some principles by which I could live or die!

Years passed. I became a pastor of one church, then another, then another. I was preaching one night at the Junius Heights Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. When I finished, a middle-age man walked up and said, "Jack Hyles, put `er there."

I said, "How do you do, sir."

He said, "Do you know me?"

I said, "No, I don’t. I am sorry, but I don’t"

He said, "You are a pastor now. My, I heard you preach a while ago, and that was great! I used to play for the professional teams, and I was the second baseman on the team for which you pitched."

I said, "You old rascal!"

He said, "Jack, do you remember the time that we played the championship game?"

I thought, "Oh, oh, here it comes right now."

He said, "I cursed you when you walked into the church building, but as I drove to the game that night, I said to myself, `I wish I had what that kid has.’ Jack, I never got away from it. I got what you had in just a few days. I was saved because you didn’t pitch that game." Then he said, "I am chairman of the board of deacons at this church."

It always pays to do right!

0A.08 Chapter 8. Mary Magdalene

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Mary Magdalene Who loved Jesus the most? I guess it is impossible to be dogmatic about this, and yet I would like to nominate Mary Magdalene. Oh, the argument could be presented concerning John, the beloved. Others would vote for the impetuous Peter. Perhaps votes would be cast for James, Andrew, and others. To this author, however, no person during the personal ministry of Christ had the devotion and love for Him as Mary Magdalene. She seems to have been more loyal and more faithful than the others, and our Lord seemed to hive her privileges that others did not enjoy.

Why this great devotion? Of course, the answer must lie in the fact that God gave it to her. How was it developed and nourished? No one knows. There are those who think that she was a fallen woman, yet the Scripture gives no verification of this fact. She was possessed of seven devils, the Bible says, but what devils are bigger than malice, envy, etc.? There is absolutely no proof that she was a woman of the street, a prostitute, or a harlot. Perhaps she was; perhaps she wasn't. Who knows? Yet one thing is certain: She was really devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ! Let us examine her and her devotion.

1. She became more than saved. How tragic it is that so many just get saved and that is all. We should want to have the most devotion possible for our Lord. Nothing but our best should be offered to Him. Mary Magdalene could not stop at just being saved or just being a good Christian. She wanted complete devotion given to her Christ.

2. Her devotion happened suddenly. She spring on us in the Bible without warning. Those who have true friendships know that this is often the case. The kind of friend that would die for another finds that it often happens suddenly. The soul is suddenly knit. The tie is suddenly made. It is inexplainable, yet it is there. This, no doubt, means that God does it. How sacred this makes such devotion, such friendship.

3. She cared for the physical needs of Christ. Luke 8:1-3 finds her being a servant. No sacrifice is too great; no gift is too precious; no task is too difficult when such devotion exists. Let us follow Mary Magdalene and examine her devotion. When Jesus died on the cross, we find she is still His servant, administering to His needs. It was Mary Magdalene who leaned against the sepulchre after He was buried. She came to the garden to pay respects to her Master. For references notice Matthew 27:55, Matthew 27:61; Matthew 28:1, and John 20:11.

It is also interesting to know that our Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene first after His resurrection. why did Jesus appear to her first? Your imagination could fancy that it was because she would be the happiest to see Him, and happy she was. Why was not this honor reserved for Peter, James, John, or another? It is the opinion of this writer that Mary was His most devoted follower. How beautiful that the supreme devotion should be given, not by the chosen twelve or one the favorite few, but by a humble, grateful lady who simply would not be denied and who stayed by her Master

to the end and even after the end.

4. She knew His soul. It is a very interesting thing to know this story concerning Jesus and Mary Magdalene immediately following the resurrection. She supposes she is talking to the gardener as she converses with Christ. He then says one word, "Mary." She then said, "Master." There was something about the way he said, "Mary." There was a soul relationship that existed. Remember that the disciples on the road to Emmaus walked for miles and recognized Christ only when He opened their eyes. The disciples fished for a long time and conversed with Christ at some length before they recognized Him. Leave it to Mary to know Him first. She did not recognize Him by His resurrection body, but her soul had experienced too much fellowship with His not to recognize Him by the way He said, "Mary." How beautiful.

5. Her devotion did not stop at death. Her devotion was too great for that. It continued on past His death, and we find her leaning against the sepulchre of her buried Lord. In these days of selfishness and coldness, it is wonderful to stumble occasionally across a relationship that is built upon the spiritual rather than the physical. Nothing, not even death, can stop such a relationship.

6. She was as close as His family. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." (John 19:25) When Jesus came to death, His mother and his closest friends gathered around the cross. They were not all members of the family.

See Mary Magdalene. She is true to the end. Maybe she knew Him better than others. Maybe she loved Him more. Who knows? Votes for the most devoted follower of Christ would be cast for many different New Testament characters. I vote for Mary Magdalene.

0A.09 Chapter 9. For Sale

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For Sale

One’s degree of character may be determined by what he would do wrong, for so many are so prone to "sell out" so soon. Politicians, preachers, and others find the temptation to sell out to be a great one. Some sell for much and some sell for little. The tendency to be for sale starts in childhood. If the child is not taught that wrong is punished, and if he gets no spankings, wrong is not made distasteful to him. He oftentimes gets his desires by doing wrong. If he cries long enough, he gets the candy, and oftentimes he is even rewarded when throwing a tantrum. He does not have to mind his parents. To say "no" to Mama is considered cute. Then he will say "no" to the teacher, "no" to the Sunday School worker, "no" to the law, and "no" to God. He then dies and goes to Hell because the parents thought it was cute for him to say "no." This tendency to sell out continues in youth. It is found in the youth who does right only if it turns out right. Right needs to be vindicated in such a life. Every action is determined by its reward or results. According to this opinion, nothing is right or wrong in itself, only in how it turns out. Hence, anything can become right if it turns out right. Popularity, gaining a new boy friend, good grades, etc. become the main end rather than principles and character. How sad! Such people stand only until the price is big enough. They are not taught to live by principles. Their convictions last only until the selling price reaches their desires. This tendency increases in adulthood. From such young people we have our police scandals, our crooked politicians, our compromising preachers, our loafers, lawbreakers, and homebreakers.

Early in childhood our youth should be taught the need for conviction and that right is its own reward and needs no vindication. They should be taught never to sell out for convenience or fair price, but rather to place a sign over their souls, "Not for Sale."

0A.10 Chapter 10. Personality Priorities

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Personality Priorities

One of the most important Scriptures in the Bible for a Christian is found in 2 Peter 1:5. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge." Here the Holy Spirit inspires Peter to list for us some virtues necessary for character. Notice in verse 5 the words "add to." These words come from the singing of an old Grecian song. The custom was for the people to join their hands as they sang. This means that the following virtues are to "join hands" in the Christian's life, and they are to do so in the proper order.

1. Diligence. This word could be translated "hastening to do a thing well." It is doing the job well, and it is doing the job swiftly. There is a false teaching going around that people who do things swiftly do not do them well, and that people who do things slowly are of necessity thorough. This is not true. We should be diligent; every task should be done well; but we should do it in the least time possible so we can do more for God. Hence, we have the first stone laid. This is the stone of diligence.

2. Faith. Once the stone of diligence has been laid, faith should be placed on top of it. Notice there is no need for faith without diligence, for faith without works is dead. Just to have faith in what God is going to do is not enough. We are to be willing to do our best. God will not do what we can do, but He will do what we cannot do after we have done what we can do. What is faith? Faith is the belief in what God has done, what God can do, what God will do, what God is going to do, and what God is going to use me to do. I have said so often that a Christian should make no provision for failure. Faith is basically "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

3. Virtue. Next in line we have this trait. Now it is interesting that so far nothing has been mentioned about kindness. That will come later. Far more important than kindness is diligence, faith, and virtue. Honesty is better than courtesy. It is better to do right wrongly than to do wrong rightly. Position is more important than disposition. Integrity is better than popularity. Being a right fellow is more important than being a "regular" fellow. Do not misunderstand. It is important to be kind. Courtesy is important. The right spirit is important. Disposition is important. Being a nice person is important. However, these should never be placed above such traits as virtue.

Many years ago when I first began preaching I faced a big decision in my ministry. My heart was broken. My face was against the wall. I then made five promises to God and established five principles that have governed my life ever since. a. If I have friend, I will stick with him.

b. I will base my decisions on right or wrong, not on how right or wrong turn out.

c. No one will tamper with my preaching. I will ask only God what I shall preach and where I preach.

d. I will never seek a raise or talk money.

e. I will treat the rich and poor alike.

One should live by principle, not by convenience. When principles are established early in life, fewer decisions have to be made later. The principles make the decisions for us, and hence, frustration is averted and avoided.

4. Wisdom. For many years my prayer list has been topped with power, love, and wisdom. wisdom is certainly one of the great personality priorities. Notice it comes before self control, godliness, brotherly kindness, or love. Remember that God has given us a divine order. The bricks are laid one at a time on top of each other. First should be laid diligence, then faith, then virtue, then wisdom.

Wisdom is the ability to use knowledge. It is available to all. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)

5. Self control. This is the next brick in the wall. It precedes godliness, kindness, and love. Self control means discipline. It means discipline over body appetites such as eating and sex. It includes the disciplining of one's schedule, mind, disposition, emotions, frustrations, etc. Nothing will take its place. It is vital to the life of the Christian.

6. Godliness, Kindness, and Love. Now we are coming to the traits that show. God starts on the inside and works out. He starts with the foundation and works up. No one can see wisdom, virtue, and faith; but we cannot have true godliness until these stones have been laid. We cannot have Bible kindness until these stones have been laid. We cannot have real love until these stones have been laid. Love is one of the great attributes a Christian can have. Kindness, of course, is important. Godliness is vital, but a godliness, a kindness, or a love that is not built from the inside will not last. It will be superficial. If one gains diligence and adds to it faith; to faith, virtue; to virtue, wisdom; to wisdom, self control; then godliness, kindness, and love will of necessity come.

Let us teach our children and teach ourselves the proper order of character and its priorities. Let us use God's order. To teach them to be kind, and yet not make them obey is folly. To teach them to be loving, and yet not teach them self control is foolishness. Let us exercise care in trying to place all of these things in our lives. Let us give the proper emphasis where God gives the emphasis. All across our country we find a bankruptcy of character. We are more interested in "nice guys" than "right guys." We are more interested in being friendly than being a friend, and in having a good disposition rather than having the right position. In politics, in the ministry, and in business there is a desperate need for people who have character. Personality is important; talent is important; but a good personality with talent will oftentimes run from character. The motto of some seems to be, "Why work hard? I have it made. I can talk my way out of it." On the other hand, a child that is taught to have character will get the necessary talent. Talent oftentimes flees character. Character will always seek talent - that is, the talent necessary to fulfill the task. How vital it is that we stress character and place each of its qualities in the proper order.

0A.11. Chapter 11. I Corinthians - All The Same

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1 Corinthians 10:13 - All The Same

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13) The other day a question was asked which often is directed my way: "Why don't you get mad at your enemies? How is it that you are sometimes able to avoid retaliation and revenge?" My answer invariably is 1 Corinthians 10:13. Such thoughts as these that follow are a constant source of help in overcoming bitterness, vindication, retaliation, and revenge.

1. All people have the same attributes. Yes, I certainly think that the Apostle Paul had the same temptations that I have. Our temptations are common to man. If this be true, I have in me what I don't like in you, and these same ingredients are found in the life of every person. To be sure, different amounts of certain sins or temptations may exist in different people, but the fact remains, I have in me what I don't like in you. Hence, I must be tolerant toward you.

2. Each asset has a liability, and each liability has an asset. In other words, with the asset of purity, often comes the liability of Phariseeism. With the asset of friendliness often comes the liability of compromise. With the asset of leadership often comes the liability of pride. This philosophy levels each of us with his neighbor. It eliminates pride. A characteristic which is good about us carries with it the temptation for something bad. Negatively, a bad characteristic often carries a tendency toward an asset. One who is stubborn may develop conviction. One who is proud may have the asset of leadership. One who is guilty of Phariseeism may carry with him the asset of purity. Seeing such equality in the human race will avoid over-exaltation and excessive criticism of one's fellow man.

If the above be consistently true, and perhaps it is not, and if we love people because of what they are, we will find ourselves loving all people, for all have in them what all others have in them.

3. If we then love one person more than the other, the love is given to us by God. This is a great thought. If you have a friend who lives by this philosophy and loves you more than he does others, it is because God have him that love. Think of the security involved. It is not generated, by His grace, and, consequently, will not change.

Think what such a philosophy does for one: It eliminates criticism in this life. It encourages the impure to realize that even the pure possess impurity. Remember that no temptations take us but such as are common to man. This theory will also humble the pure, for the pure will find in himself liabilities and temptations that will make him more careful to undergird himself against Satan's wiles. This also offers real humility and meekness. It makes one think of himself as no better or worse than anyone else. It will help to eliminate both inferiority and superiority complexes.

If each of us will examine his assets, he will no doubt find the temptations that each asset carries. This will drive each of us to more dependence upon God and His help and strength. As one grows in this grace and in all Christian graces he will find himself being more and more alone in society. Someone has said there is a fine line of distinction between a genius and a moron. This appears to be so because each is about the same distance from society or from the masses. The truth, however, is that the only similarity a genius and a moron have is their distance from the average. They are really on the opposite ends of the pole. The same thing is true concerning true love and lust. Love and lust look alike only because the masses would be the same distance from both. Love and lust are on the opposite ends of the pole, but since we interpret everything according to what we think, we associate the two together because they are both the same distance from the masses. The more we become like Christ, the farther we will travel from Mr. Average. Mr. Average is the one who gives us our reputation for being a good person. The one who grows the most in grace, the one who loves the most, the one who sacrifices the most, the one who gives the most will probably be looked upon by society as being as obnoxious as the one at the other end of the line. Hence, the one who is Christlike will not appear to be Christlike to the world. In contrast, one who appears to be Christlike, no doubt, has missed Christlikeness.

Let each of us realize that the weaknesses of his neighbor are found in some degree in ourselves. Hence, because what is found in all of us is in the rest of us, it behooves none of us to be critical, for in the final analysis we are all depraved creatures with common temptations and common weaknesses. In criticizing our neighbor, we are criticizing ourselves, for we have a common origin.

0A.12 Chapter 12. Greatness

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GREATNESS

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it." Matthew 16:25. A few days ago in my study I was meditating on the above Scripture when the thought came to me that the only lasting thing one can ever get for himself comes from the leftovers when he gives to others. The strange paradox of the Christian life is that the way up is down; the way forward is backward; and the way to be served is to serve. This is especially true concerning friendship. It is infinitely better to be a friend than to have a friend. It is better to become something than to obtain something. When one becomes a friend, he will, no doubt, have friends. (Of course, this should not be his motive, or he too will fail.) No one ever found a friend searching for a friend, but many have stumbled upon lasting friendships while being a friend. One should forget whether or not he has friends and concentrate on being the right kind of friend. The same is true concerning happiness. No one ever charted a plan for personal happiness who found it, but millions have found happiness in the pathway of carrying out responsibilities. Oftentimes people come to my office and say, "Pastor, how can I find happiness?"

I invariably say, "Forget it. Think of the happiness of others. There are so many who have problems so much worse than you. Forget your own happiness. Seek to make others happy, and one day you will return to me and say, `Pastor, in my effort to make others happy, I suddenly, to my surprise, found that I have become happy too!'" This same truth can be applied to peace of mind. It seems nowadays that in order for a magazine to sell, it must have an article about sex and another about peace of mind. No one can tell anyone else how to have peace of mind, and no one can set out to find peace of mind and find it. When one, however, forgets himself and becomes obsessed with the needs of others, he suddenly realizes he has peace.

Several years ago a lady came to my office stating that she was fearing an imminent nervous breakdown. I suggested that each day he do something for someone else. "Bake cookies and take them to a friend one day," I suggested. "The next day take some roses to the hospital and give a rose to each patient who has no visitor during visiting hours. The next day drop by and see a blind person. The next day take a cake to one of our deaf friends and simply write the words, `I love you,' on a card. Continue this indefinitely," I said, "and see if it helps."

Months passed. One day I asked the lady about her proposed nervous breakdown. (It seems that most of the ladies I know are either having a nervous breakdown, just getting over one, or planning one real soon.) "How about that nervous breakdown?" I asked.

"Oh Pastor," she said, "I just got so busy doing things for other people that I had to postpone it." (She had found the answer.)

I think it was R. A. Torrey who came in one day after a preaching mission and hurriedly began preparations for another trip. He had some dirty clothes he needed to have laundered. He asked a young friend if he could take care of this for him.

"What? Do you think I am an errand boy?" said the young friend.

Another young friend stood by who overheard the conversation. "Let me do it," he exclaimed. The young man did take care of the menial task for R. A. Torrey. His name? Oh, his name was James M. Gray, who one day became the president of Moody Bible Institute. When we think of success or greatness, we think of giving commands and being obeyed. When we think of greatness, we think of having much. When Jesus thought of greatness, He thought of giving much. When we think of greatness, we think of being served. When Jesus thought of greatness, He thought of serving. A poll was once conducted in the country of France to determine the greatest Frenchman who ever lived. The experts unanimously predicted, of course, that Napoleon would win by a landslide. The poll was won by a landslide all right, but not by Napoleon, but rather by none other than Louis Pasteur. Once again the servant had won over the served. The giver had won over the receiver, and he who lost his life had found it.

Let us remember that the only thing one can ever obtain for himself comes from the leftovers after he gives to others.

0A.13 Chapter 13. Deepening Relationships

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Deepening Relationships On a recent weekday morning I was speaking in a church in the city where I grew up. I had moved there when I was only one year old. There I attended elementary school, junior high school, and high school. I was faithful to my church as a child. I had pastored in the same county for nearly seven years. I had helped to start sixteen churches in the area, and twelve of my preacher boys are now pastoring nearby. In spite of this, there were less than a hundred people in the morning service, and to my knowledge not one from the church where I grew up and only two from the church where I pastored for seven years.

"Don’t they love me?" I asked.

"Why, of course, they do," was the answer that came to my mind. It is just the fact that they did not love me as much as I loved them. Perhaps this is just another case of deep love being unreturned.

What causes us to have such little depth of love? Perhaps there are several reasons:

1. Most love is simply the satisfying of an appetite. People normally come to hear a person speak because they want to see him or because they want to hear him. If they have heard him recently, why should they hear him again? We seldom think about the satisfying of the appetites of others. we are basically concerned about the satisfying of our own appetites. This, of course, is not deep love. In some sense, it is lust in that it is to satisfy an appetite.

2. Most love must be generated by an atmosphere.A beautiful moon at night, soft music in the background, the faint smell of perfume, etc. not only are helpful but oftentimes necessary to most love. Real love loves at all times, at noonday as well as midnight, and whether the odor is Chanel No. 5 or "Perspiration No. 6." As a boy I went with a girl whom I liked very much. One night we were walking together looking at the moon when she said, "Doesn’t that moon make you feel romantic?"

I answered, "Yes."

She talked about the moon for thirty minutes. (I think she was in love with the Moon.) I felt like shouting, "How about me?" The moon is only a visual aid.

I have often said that when I love someone I love them as much on the Dan Ryan Expressway in downtown Chicago as I do on a lonely road with a beautiful moon.

3. Most love becomes disinterested when acquired. Here is a tragic truth. It is the acquiring of the relationship that many people want rather than the having of the relationship. Many marriages fail because the acquiring of the relationship is more important than the relationship itself. The same is true with friendships. The acquiring of a relationship is certainly not the ending but just the beginning. It is the commencement. Real character is never satisfied with its depth.

4. Much love know no degree or availability of depth. One should think of the great possibilities of the depth of love. God is love. In Him is perfect love. The difference between the love I have today and the love He has is the potential for the growth and depth of my love. It is not "in love and out of love." It is not simply love or no love. When one learns to love, he enters into a world of possibilities, growth, and depth.

Upon returning from the morning service mentioned in the first paragraph is this chapter someone asked, "Doesn't that make you sad? Isn't it heartbreaking when people do not love you as much as you love them?" My answer was one emphatic "no" for several reasons as found below: a. The line between positive and negative should be very low.It should take very little to please us, and it should take much to displease us. We should find our satisfaction in loving, not being loved. Our joys should be wrapped up in the giving, not the receiving. b. It is good to take a trip; it is better to have a partner.Notice I did not say it is good to take a trip with a partner, but bad to go alone. It is not a matter of good or bad, but good or better. Hence, if a friend's love for your does not increase, it will not keep your love from deepening. Believe me, it is better for you to love alone than not to love at all. If one has to take the trip of depth alone, it is not as good as sharing it with another, but it is infinitely better than not knowing the depth. c. Sometimes a relationship comes that reciprocates.When this happens, it turns good into better. Bear in mind that it does not turn bad into good. To have love is good; to have love that is reciprocated is better. d. Such relations let us look into the mind of God.When we love and it is not returned, we know something, of His great heart of love. He so seldom finds reciprocation. When we do find a relationship where love is reciprocated, we know something of how God feels when He finds someone who loves Him with all his heart. Bear in mind that the purpose of God's creating man was that man might love and fellowship with God. Though God is grieved when His love is not returned, He nevertheless does not withdraw His love. How happy He must be, however, when one of His creatures returns His love. e. The more lonely we become, the less lonely He becomes.The deeper a person grows in his love the more he is separated from the rest of mankind. In that separation, however, he becomes more like Christ and he finds he can offer Christ pure fellowship. When we grow in grace and in love and find ourselves misunderstood and lonely, we look around and find that Christ has been there all of the time. He is happy to see us. Then, and only then, can we offer Him the love for which He yearns. Since His love is so unlike our love, when our love becomes like His love, our love will become less like the love of man. As it becomes less like the love of man, it becomes more like the love of God. As it becomes more like the love of God, it gives us the ability to help satisfy the travail of His soul. f. This is the kind of love that does not stop when it cannot be reciprocated.This love does not forget the pretty when it becomes ugly. It does not forget the young when it becomes old. It does not forget the rich when it becomes poor. It "never faileth."

Observations

1. I want to keep lovable. Since most people know nothing about deep love, but rather tend to seek that which satisfies the appetite, I would then attempt to keep in my personality and character the things for which the appetites crave. For example, if a person is hungry to hear a fresh message, I would want to provide that fresh message. If a person is hungry to be with a friendly soul, I would want to be that friendly soul. Just because another's love is not as deep as mine should not keep me from attempting to satisfy his wholesome and holy appetites. In other words, I want to keep having what they need. No doubt, hundreds of people come to hear us preachers

simply because we have what they need. They do not come because they deeply love us; they come because they love to hear us. If this be true, we should have what they need.

2. I can thank God that I am where I am and not where they are. It is infinitely better to be the lover than the loved. It is better to offer love unreciprocated than it is to fail to reciprocate love offered you.

3. May I never be a mental or physical invalid. This is a strange thought, but a true one. How tragic it would be to lose the ability to love. Then how tragic it would be to retain that ability but lose the ability to help those whom you love. Hence, I must keep my mind healthy so I can love my friends. I must keep my body healthy so that I can help my friends.

Perhaps the most underrated word in the English language is "friend." He is "just a friend," we often say. That is like saying that eternity is "just forever" or that the ocean is "just a pond." let us pray God to give us depth of love and depth of relationship even if that depth is unreciprocated. There is little doubt in my mind that in God’s mercy He will, in His own time and will, give us a relationship or relationships that do reciprocate.

0A.14 Chapter 14. Premature Nostalgia

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Premature Nostalgia

How many times it has been said, "I didn't know how much I loved her," or I wish I had done more while he was alive." How sad are such statements. Instead of "I wish I had done it," why not substitute something like this: "I will not have to wish that I had done it." Look toward the future to the day when you will lose a relationship. Picture yourself without it; become prematurely nostalgic, and you will appreciate the relationship more in the present. This eliminates remorse, and remorse is the sting of nostalgia. In Ecclesiastes 12:1 we have a man whose life had been lived with much of it being lived foolishly. Looking back over his life he had remorse. Let us notice how to take remorse out of the future.

1. Do everything on purpose. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Discipline the mind to control the emotions and the actions. Far too often we are prone to say things we do not mean. We do things caused by temporary emotional stimuli. We then find ourselves sorry in the future for our behavior. Because of this, one's mind and actions should be so disciplined that he will do everything on purpose. Hence, he leaves no room for remorse in the future.

2. Make relationships the most important thing in life. It is easy to use the patients to build a hospital, to use the pupils to build a school, and to use a family to keep a clean house. The purpose for the school is to educate the pupil. The purpose of the hospital is to heal the patient. The individual is all important! Therefore, one should see to it that relationships in life are more important than anything else. Relationships should be nourished and cultivated. They should not be made or perpetuated haphazardly. If human relationships have the proper places in our lives, then we will give more diligence and care to the treatment of our fellowman, thereby eliminating future remorse.

3. Do not "weigh" a person every day. Someone said, "I have changed my opinion about him." Then he should not have had an opinion. The person is what he was yesterday. He has not changed. The opinion was in error. The simple truth is that one does not have to have an opinion about people. If no opinion is formed, or if a careful, accurate, and objective opinion is formed, then the opinion will not have to be changed, and we will not be disappointed to find that a friend is imperfect.

4. Plan every relationship carefully. Each person has a few basic relationships in life. For example, I am a son, a husband, a father, a brother, and a friend. I must look carefully at these relationships and plan to be my best in each one. for example, for many years I planned to be a father. As a child, I looked forward to being a dad. My relationship as a dad has been one that has been calculated and planned with much prayer.

It is unbelievable, yet true, that we spend less time preparing for life's most important relationships. The theologian may spend seven to ten years in preparation. The medical doctor may spend even more than that. The school teacher spends many years in preparation, but the sad truth is that many of us spend little or no time preparing to be a wife, husband, brother, sister, mother, father, or friend. Each of us should become an expert in being what he should be in each of life's relationships. Much study, thought, and care should be exercised in becoming the best that one can become in each relationship of life. If such relationships are carefully planned, and if we do our best in becoming what we should become, then we will have no cause for remorse in years to come. If we do not do our best to become the best in every relationship, we may well spend many hours filled with remorse because we did not become all that we could have become to those who loved us.

5. Make every experience with every relationship a sacred one. Life is so brief, and no experience can be recalled. Because of this fact, each experience should be squeezed to its fullest. If we make the most of every relationship of life, and if we make the most of every experience of life's relationships, then there will be no remorse in days to come concerning failures. If we lackadaisically and haphazardly go through life not realizing the importance of our relationships and the depth of our experiences, we will wake up one day realizing the hours, days, and years that were wasted, at least partially, because the mind did not absorb the depth of life's experiences. Someday we will look back upon them and find that we did not take advantage of them. This causes remorse.

Yes, we should have premature nostalgia. We should look out into the future and predict what things could bring us remorse. We then should predict what causes such remorse and should set about immediately to eliminate them in the present and avoid the remorse in the future.

0A.15 Chapter 15. Gratitude

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Gratitude "And He looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury." (Luke 21:1)

"And it came to pass, as He went to Jerusalem, that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee." (Luke 17:11)

Real gratitude is real humility. One cannot be humble without gratitude, and one cannot be grateful without humility. Many years ago someone took a poll as to the greatest sin committed by mankind. To the surprise of many, the sin chosen as the greatest and most oft committed was the sin of ingratitude. Let us meditate for a while upon this grace which is so necessary to a successful and happy Christian life.

1. There is no such thing as a self-made man. We often hear it said of someone that he is self-made. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Each of us is largely a product of the influences of others. One cannot divorce himself from the contributions that others have made to his life. Short-sighted and self-centered is the person who does not regularly recognize the contributions that others have made to his life, his success, and his stature.

Paul said, "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20)

2. The foundation of gratitude is the expectation of nothing. One should remember that though he is debtor to all men, he should feel that none are indebted to him. Not only is this one of the secrets to possessing gratitude, but also it is one of the secrets to happiness.. If one expects nothing, then anything is a bonus. If one expects more than he receives, he is disappointed. If he expects less than he receives, he will be pleased even though what he receives is the same.

3. Weigh a small gift.We are so prone to judge the size of a gift by how much it costs. This is certainly a poor basis for measurement. Money is simply time wrapped in a paper sack. The man who makes a dollar an hour gives as much when he hives a dollar as does the man who makes fifty dollars an hour and gives fifty dollars. Didn’t Jesus say that the woman who gave two mites had given more than them all? On my last birthday I received many wonderful gifts. Which was the greatest? I am not sure, but it may have been the gift given me by a small lad. After I had baptized on a Sunday evening I was met at the door by a Junior boy who had made a birthday card and taped two quarters on the bottom of the card for me. This was probably a week’s allowance for him, and no doubt he spent a half day drawing childlike pictures on a piece of paper to make his preacher a birthday card. Hence, he gave me seven and a half days of his life as far as money is concerned. Some would have to give a hundred dollars to equal his gift because this is what they would make in seven days. Others would have to give a thousand dollars to equal this fifty-cent gift. As I weighed the size of my birthday gifts, I thought perhaps this boy had given more than them all.

Another gift I received was a birthday cake made by a lady who has a limited amount of money but unlimited love. Now if it took her three hours to make this cake, she gave me as much as anyone if they had given me the amount of money it took them three hours to earn. When one weighs a gift in this light, the gift becomes not small at all, and gratitude can fill the heart.

4. Do not measure a large gift. Bear in mind that we are trying to develop gratitude. A large gift is easier to appreciate, and the weighing of such a gift oftentimes decreases gratitude. Hence, we weigh the small gift in order to gain more gratitude, but we do not weigh the large lest it take away from our gratitude.

5. Never lose appreciation for a gift.Gratitude acquired should be gratitude kept. Continue to think of the gift. Continue to thank God for the giver. Just to say, "Thank you," one time is not sufficient. Just to reciprocate once is not enough. When I was a boy my sister made our living for a number of years. My dad was unemployed and the only food we had was the food provided by my sister. The first new bicycle that I ever owned was bought by my sister. She bought me my first baseball glove and fed, clothed, and housed me during some crucial years. I must not forget this. Just to say, "Thank you," one time or give an expression of thanks one time is not sufficient. I must continue to express my gratitude.

6. Let nothing extinguish gratitude. There is a strange but true fact about the human race: We are so prone to complain because the roses have thorns rather than to rejoice because the thorns have roses. Someone has said that it hurts more to have to have your arm cut off than it feels good to have it on. How tragically true this is. This is the reason that someone may do a thousand kindnesses for another and yet lose his "friendship" because of one seeming injustice. A soul winner can lead another to Christ, point him to Heaven, save him from an eternity without God or hope, but later do something to disappoint that convert and strangely and tragically lose that "friendship." Let us keep our balance. Don’t leave a church because the Pastor who has said thousands of things to help you says one thing to hurt you. Do not lose gratitude because someone who has done something for you seemingly does something against you. Let nothing extinguish our appreciation and gratitude to those who have befriended us.

7. Feel gratitude in the heart and think through every gift given to you and every gesture done for you. Think of all of the possibilities concerning the plans and effort to put forth in the doing of something on your behalf. Let gratitude swell in your heart as you do.

8. Be sure to express gratitude. Our Lord tells the story of the ten lepers who were cleansed. Only one returned to express thanks. Jesus asked, "Where are the nine?" Now it is entirely possible that some of the others felt gratitude, but failed to express it. There are so many of our feeling and expressions that go unexpressed, thereby robbing countless people of blessings. It has been the policy around our house for many years to encourage our children to express gratitude. A personal note of appreciation at the end of the school year to a teacher and a verbal or a written expression of gratitude to anyone doing a favor or kindness to them could always bring blessing. How important it is that we relay to people the feelings of our hearts in such matters.

9. Be grateful for the usual. It is easy to be grateful for a bonus; it is character to be grateful for a salary. Most of us do not appreciate the usual things of life until they are lost. One of the finest ways to develop gratitude for the usual is to have periods set aside to imagine what life would be

like if the usual were lost. Sometime each day think of the sorrow of a losing a husband, or wife, or a child, or a pastor, or a church. Such thinking will lead to gratitude in the heart and should lead to open expressions of that gratitude.

10. Be grateful for the least. The more you appreciate the little, the more you will enjoy the average. Most of us have much more than we deserve, or for that matter, than anyone in previous generations has ever had. May God give us gratitude to Himself, gratitude to our loved ones, and gratitude to our friends. Then may He give us character to express the feelings of our heart to Him and to those who mean so much to us and do so much for us.

0A.16 Chapter 16. How You Look At Your Life

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How You Look At Your Life The roses have thorns and the thorns have roses. Life is made that way. All assets have liabilities, and all liabilities have assets. Those who laugh the most will cry the most. Those who cry the most will laugh the most. Those who love the dearest will suffer the dearest losses, for nothing is permanent in this life, and all must some day be given up. When a child is born, he is born to die. Hence, the joys of the maternity ward will some day be balanced by the tears of the mortuary. If there are a few children, there are fewer finger marks on the walls, fewer sleepless nights, and fewer doctor bills. Perhaps it is true that in the end our joys and sorrows all come out even. If one has few friends, he will lose few friends. The more friends that one has, the more times he will have to go to the cemetery with a broken heart. Since every asset has liabilities and every liability has assets, could it be then that none of us has a worse time than the rest of us? The asset of much money carries with it the liability of shallow friends. The asset of deep love carries with it the possibility of a deeper heartbreak. The more that is acquired, the more that must be lost. If the above be true, there are several lessons that can be learned.

1. Happiness depends upon whether we magnify the assets or liabilities. If every asset has a liability and every liability has an asset, if every bad has a good and every good has a bad, and if life's assets and liabilities are all evened out in the end, then each of us has the same possibilities of happiness. Those who look at the liabilities more than the assets become unhappy. Those who magnify the assets over the liabilities become happy. May we rejoice over the having of the child rather than sorrow over the fingerprints on the wall. Far too many are so busy looking at the lost column that they forget it all evens out in the end.

2. If the above be true, no one has it worse than the other. Even in our defeats there are lessons we learn that the victorious ones never know. Hence, one has no more right to complain than another.

3. A realization of this truth will cure envy. Why envy another if his liabilities match his assets as do ours? He has as much right to envy us.

4. This truth will make us choose a life that does the most for others. If the books balance out as we are supposing, then we will come out even regardless. Could it be then that the grasping of this philosophy will lead us to choose the kind of life that will do the most for others? In other words, if there is no way at all that we can gain more assets than liabilities, we may then center our attention on helping others to gain assets.

5. This truth will take away the desire for personal gain and selfishness. That thing that you want will bring with it a liability that you may not want to assume. The more things you own, the more things you can break. The more conveniences that one obtains the more repair bills he will have. Hence, we are led simply to say to God, "Give us what You know is best for us, and we will trust Your wisdom and judgment."

6. This truth will drive us to do the will of God. If all our attainments and obtainments lead us to the same place, then we must cast ourselves upon the Lord and His will. Nothing else will much matter but that which He wants us to do. If there is no asset that does not bring with it a liability, there can be nothing that we really do want or do not want. If we obtain it, we can rejoice because of its assets. If we do no obtain it, we can thank God for the privilege of not having to accept the liability. So since it is six of one and a half a dozen of another we can turn our eyes toward Jesus and say, "Thy will be done."

0A.17 Chapter 17. You Can Do What You Ought To Do

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You Can Do What You Ought To Do

Once a dear lady on my staff became a bit discouraged because her work seemed more than she was able to do. She had recently accepted her position with us and was somewhat frustrated with her inability to perform all of her new duties. In an effort to help her and the rest of the staff, I presented at staff devotions one Monday morning the following suggestions:

1. Believe that you can do what you ought to do. God never gives us anything to do that He does not give us the strength to do. The Apostle Paul reminds us in Php 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." When I was a student pastor, a fellow student gave me a wonderful truth when he said, "When God calls, He qualifies." This He does! You can do what God has given you to do. You can do what you ought to do. You can do what you are supposed to do. If this be true, it may be appropriated by faith. Faith is the key that unlocks God's cupboard. Claim for your task the strength that you need to perform it.

2. Do not un-do in doubt what you have done if faith.When a job has been accepted in faith, do not un-do it in doubt. When God called me to become Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Hammond, Indiana, He miraculously led me to accept the call. Though I personally did not want to make a change, I was nevertheless assured that God's will was being done. I contacted the church, offering my acceptance. I then gave my resignation to the Miller Road Baptist Church in Garland, Texas, where I had labored for nearly seven years. I gave them a thirty-day notice. During this thirty-day period I became doubtful that I had made the right decision. Emotion gripped my soul as I thought of the heartache of leaving those dear friends. Again and again since that time, God has vindicated that decision and has shown me over and ove that it was a wise one. Has God called you to do a task? He will then equip you for it. Has God led you to a place? He will then qualify you for the job.

3. Realize that success does not depend upon talent. The great prerequisite for success is not talent but character. Character seeks talent. Talent often runs from character. The talented man often thinks he can make it on his own. The man of character realizes he cannot make it on his own and must work to equip himself for his job. Integrity, diligence, honesty, and hard work are the main secrets to success. Average public speakers often become more successful preachers than more gifted men. Mediocre singers often accomplish more than ten talented ones. I have often said that in employing secretaries and staff members, I look for traits such as loyalty, tenacity, and integrity, rather than typing, shorthand, and other talents. Because one is a typist does not mean he will have loyalty and character. Because one has character does not mean he will learn to type if his job requires it.

4. Work as hard as you can believing God will do the rest. God will not do what you can do. Someone has said, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." A lazy college student who believes

God will provide his needs is not living by faith but by folly. A shiftless pastor who believes that God will grow his church has misunderstood the entire meaning of faith. Faith is doing everything I can do, and then trusting God to do what I cannot do. God can do what I cannot do, but He will not do what I can do if I refuse to do it.

5. After the job is done, give God the glory. Tragic but true is the fact that many of us fall prostrate before the Lord asking His help before attempting a task, then we bow gracefully and proudly as we hear the applause coming from men after we have accomplished the task. In my own life I started out as a very poor boy. When God called me to be a preacher, I was untalented and unprepared. My first sermon ended in failure and frustration after five minutes of searching for something to say. If successes come, I must not forget those early days. I must remember that I am what I am by the grace of God. I have what I have by the grace of God, and I have done what I have done by the grace of God. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." (Romans 7:18) It is His work and not mine. It is done by His Spirit and not mine. Hence, when the victory comes, I must step back in the shadows and say, "The Lord gave ... blessed be the Name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)

0A.18 Chapter 18. The Capacity To Enjoy

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The Capacity To Enjoy

Recently while sharing with some others a happy time, I said, "Isn't it a wonderful thing to have the capacity for enjoyment?" Many people have never developed such. Their enjoyment is always accompanied by a dissatisfaction because of its brevity, and overemphasis of its liability, or one of a thousand different complexes that immune people from having fun. There are several things that one can do to enhance his chances for enjoyment and to develop a capacity for the same.

1. Remember that everything is relative. What can be an enjoyment to one can be a drudgery to another depending upon the plateau of life in which he lives. Two people can eat the same meal. One can enjoy it; the other cannot because one is accustomed to a better standard of living than the other. Hence, it is vitally important for us to compare our present experiences with our darker days rather than our brighter ones. If there were no darkness, there could be no light. If there were no hot, there could be no cold. If there were no low, there could be no high. How high something is depends upon the thing with which we compare it. If one having a usual experience of life, he can compare it with the best day he ever had and mourn, or he can compare it with the worst day he ever had and rejoice. Since most everything is relative, one should compare an experience with lesser ones that he has had and find joy in what he is doing.

2. Learn to rejoice in sorrow. The Apostle Paul said that he gloried in his tribulations. The Psalmist said, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." So there is a way that a person can be happy in both joy and sorrow. When we are sharing a joyful experience, we are of necessity happy; but when we share a sorrowful experience, we can rejoice in that a tear today is an investment for a laugh tomorrow.

There are other compensations in sorrow. One draws closer to the Lord in such hours. Friends who share life's dark hours become better friends. One's happiness will not be determined upon how happy he is his happiest day, but how happy he is his saddest day. It is not the height of the mountains but the height of the valleys that determines joy and happiness. Let us learn to rejoice in our sorrows and count them as investments for rejoicing tomorrow.

3. One should develop a variety of enjoyments. Many people have to be hearing jokes to be happy. To be sure, good clean humor is a part of fun, but it is certainly far from all of it, and it is even far from being the most important part of it.

What can beat the enjoyment of a serious conversation when two people share ideas and when two minds meet at a common denominator? Unfortunate is the one for whom the spectacular is necessary for fun.

Recently a group of Christians were on a bus trip together. They had had some spectacular enjoyment. They had laughed until they cried. They had a lot of loud, wonderful, happy fun, but as

the trip was nearing its end, it was suggested that everyone sing. They found themselves singing some of the old songs: "When I Was Seeing Nelly Home," "Bicycle Built for Two," "Down by the Old Mill Stream," "Dixie," "Back Home Again in Indiana," etc. This fun was no less real just because it was less spectacular. It simply meant that they found more than one way of having fun. Some remembered the old days of finding fun in the simple things like popping popcorn, making fudge, pulling taffy, etc.

It must be remembered that the more the variety of enjoyment the more people we can enjoy. When we find fun in many areas, we can enjoy many more people than if we limit ourselves to one area in the search of fun. More important than this, however, is the fact that more people can enjoy you if your fun is varied. People will not have to adapt themselves to you, but you can adapt yourself to them. You can enter into their level of fun and enjoyment and find enjoyment as well as give it. Where is the fun of reading a book, sharing a simple conversation, taking a walk in the park together, or driving around as a family group? "Ah, that is dull," you say. Yes, this is because fun is relative and comparative. This busy, herky-jerky world can only find fun in the fast and furious, the wrong and restless, the big and busy, and in so doing robs itself of many areas of enjoyment. This means that if we find fun only in an isolated area of life, we have to be doing one particular thing to find enjoyment and fun. If we have developed a varied appetite for pleasure, we can find ourselves enjoying just that many different types of experiences and events. To the person who has learned this, whether it be the kids' ballgame on the corner lot, a quiet evening with the family, a Sunday School picnic, a simple conversation with a friend, or a wild time of humor at a party, life affords many more joys, happiness, pleasures and fun than to the person who has become a specialist find finding pleasure in only one area of life.

4. Remember from past experiences the recipe for fun. Many times my wife will say while in the home of another lady, "Could I have the recipe for that cake?" The lady has it ready, for she remembers the recipe for successful ventures. The same things can be applied to life. When a person has a good time, he should make a written list of the ingredients. Hence, he has a recipe for fun and enjoyment that he may do it again and again and again, and even share it with others. Far too many of us have a wonderful experience or a delightful time not realizing the ingredients that made it so. Then the next delightful time will have to be by accident when conditions just happen to be right. If, however, one could sit down at the close of a happy time and list its ingredients, he could ":stir" himself a happy time with the proper ingredients, just as he could stir himself a cake like he had before. This is a vital part of developing a capacity for enjoyment.

We must remember that the more we have enjoyed, the less we can enjoy if we are careless. If, for example, life is composed of one hundred enjoyments, then each time we have such an enjoyment we have one less, that is, unless we learn to create enjoyments ourselves. In this way the same pleasure can be enjoyed over and over again. We must not let the acquiring of more mature enjoyments and pleasures keep us from re- experiencing the old ones. Let us not trade one pleasure for another but rather, add one pleasure to another. Keep the ability to enjoy the last pleasure while developing the ability to enjoy the new one or else the cultivating of new enjoyments becomes simply another step in a search for something that cannot be found. How much better it would be if the cultivation of a new enjoyment could simply be the addition of a new dimension to a happiness already found.

5. The good time of others should always be considered. As a pastor this is very vital to me. I must always be measuring the enjoyment level of others so as to see to it that they have fun, joy, and satisfaction at various activities. I must not use my humor just to demonstrate that I am the life of the party, but rather I must be unselfish in my humor and think of the enjoyment of another. Humor is not something to be exhibited, demonstrated, or applauded, but rather it is another of the God-given talents which can be used to make another happy. Used properly and unselfishly it can be a great tool for others. Used carelessly and unwisely it could become a weapon against others.

0A.19 Chapter 19. Preach To The Back Row

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Preach To The Back Row When God called me to preach, all of my talents were hidden. In fact, no one could see them! I could not make a public speech. When I enrolled in college, I took several courses in speech and public speaking the first year. One of the first things I learned was the rule that one should speak to the back row and then the rest of the audience would hear him also. If the person in the back can hear, all the others can hear. This little rule can become a philosophy of life. If a person will do the smallest task well, the other tasks will take care of themselves. If one can do the least enjoyable chore well, all the others will be done well. If one does well that which is hard for him to do, he will do a good job on the rest. If one is nice to the ugliest,. he will be nice to all. If he is kind to the unkind, then he will of necessity be kind to the kind.

Anyone can love the lovely, but he who loves the unlovely will automatically love the lovely. Anyone can do the easy tasks, but he that does the hard tasks will subconsciously do the easy tasks. Anyone can do the challenging job well, but the one who does well the insignificant work will perform properly the significant task. Oh, how we need to learn this simple truth: Preach to the back row and everyone else can hear easily.

Someone has well said, "The light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at home." What we are saying is what we have said many times before: The secret to success is not talent, but character; not gifts, but discipline. The successful man must force himself to do that which he is supposed to do though it be an undesirable task. This comes not from inspiration from without, but from within. It comes from our doing the task because we are supposed to do it, not because we are inspired to do it. It comes from obedience to schedule, obedience to planning, and obedience to discipline. Basically, it is obedience to self - when self is disciplined. It is obedience to duty, obedience to right and a subconscious doing of that which is supposed to be done. This is character.

0A.20 Chapter 20. Dangers Of Success

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Dangers Of Success

Someone has said that what a man is can be determined by what it takes to stop him. In a sense this is true. The greatest test in life, however, to this author is not how he takes the tough places in life, but how he learns to take the successes in life. Many people have stood the tests, trials, and heartaches that have confronted them but could not stand prosperity or success. Many institutions, churches, and nations have withstood the dark hours but could not stand the prosperous ones. In this brief article we will not attempt to list all of the dangers of success, but we will enumerate some.

1. Self pride. It is very interesting to note that God uses only small people, small things, and small churches. This does not mean that the small cannot become big. One does not have to read far in the Bible to find that the way up is down, the way to be the greatest is to be the servant of all, and the way to become big is to become small. It was said of Saul that God could use him when he was little in his own eyes. Someone has said, "Immorality has slain its thousands; pride, its tens of thousands." Certainly this is true. Let us always realize that whatever we are, whatever we have done, and whatever we have is all because of the grace of God. There is nothing good about any of us except Jesus Christ. Let us never forget it.

2. Self-confidence. When the days of testing are over and we have thrown ourselves upon God for His strength and help, then ofttimes come the days of success and victory. It is then when we often feel that we have no need of God, and it is then when we really need Him the most. Actually the tough times are caused by opposition from without. In prosperity our opposition comes from within, and this is the most dangerous of all. Many a Christian has with stood the onslaught and attacks of the Devil on all sides only to find himself defeated by self-confidence because of his past victories. He looks about him and finds that all of his enemies are slain. What he does not know is that inside of him the enemy of self-confidence is lurking for the deadly blow.

3. Self-satisfaction. The Holy Spirit led the inspired writer to say, "Where there is no vision the people perish." It is easy for us to arrive at a certain plateau of victory that causes us to lose our vision for the future. It was Alexander the Great who said, "I have no more worlds to conquer." This was said at the tender age of 29 and led to his downfall. The Christian should always be setting new goals, looking for new heights, and pointing to new victories. We should never look back and gloat; we should look forward and dream and plan. Let us never be self-satisfied until we awake in His likeness.

4. Selfishness. Success often brings this enemy to the forefront. Perhaps God gives us a great victory and much success. Then the Devil tells us that we were the cause for the victory. We are tempted to forget others who helped us and stood by us on the road to success. No man lives unto himself or dies unto himself, and there are no self-made men. The Apostle Paul said that he could

but speak the things which he had seen and heard. We are certainly influenced by our environment and those with whom we work. We should readily give the major share of the credit to those who help us, lest the deadly enemy of selfishness creep up from within to defeat us, not in hours of trial, but in hours of triumph.

5. Self-evaluation. When we have been through the battles, won the victories, and have found ourselves successful, then we often begin to measure our degree of success. This is a crucial time in our lives for this is the time we want to evaluate ourselves, but we should not. There was not time to pause in the battle to find our positions for the standings are decided when the game is over. Let us not evaluate ourselves by growth, size, building, etc., but rather let us keep pressing on realizing the work is the important thing, not the status which we have achieved or the plateau to which we have arrived.

6. Self-analysis. There are certain tried and tested means by which success is gained. Often when success comes, we begin using new methods. A businessman who works his way to the top is tempted not to work as hard to keep successful as he did to get successful. We should remember that the same thing that gets us there keeps us there. The same diligence, the same humility, the same spirit, the same character, the same integrity, the same honesty, the same earnestness - these and other characteristics that brought about our success are the characteristics that will sustain our success.

How easy it is for us to win the battle of Jericho and lose the battle of Ai. How easy it is to fight and defeat the wild beast and be destroyed by the little foxes. Certainly, what we are is shown in the heat of the battle, but many people who have won the battle have lost the victory. Many a runner who won the race stumbled at the Bema and broke a leg while receiving his crown.

0A.21 Chapter 21. The Horse And The Mule

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The Horse And The Mule

"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." - Psalms 32:9.

Dr. Lee Roberson has said, "Everything rises and falls on leadership." One of the great needs in our generation is the need for leaders. Everyone to some extent is a leader. The pastor in the church, the teacher in the class, the superintendent in the department, the father in the home, the mother and the children all have a sphere of leadership. The great problem of being a leader is that of having to start the fire yourself. Many people can serve God and become a blessing once they have blessed by another, but someone has to begin the service. Someone has to have a blessing before the service starts. he must find his blessing alone so that he in turn can lead others to be blessed. How to do this is the subject now presented for our thinking.

1. The leader must have inner motivation. I have known many preachers who could preach a great message if it were preceded by someone else’s message. I have known many singers who could sing a great solo if they could be inspired first. The leader, however, must have inner motivation. His motivation must come from character and not from inspiration. One who depends upon external inspiration becomes unpredictable because he is giving himself to powers outside his own control as he has no power over external motivation. One who through character and duty has learned to gain his inspiration from within will develop more consistency and hence, better leadership ability.

One should learn things that inspire him. I once heard a great preacher say, "I am always looking for things that inspire me." This is very important. When one know what inspires him he should write it down. In fact a list of such things should be made in order that we may learn how to be inspired from within rather than from without.

2. The leader must have predictability. A follower can shout today and cry tomorrow but a leader must offer predictability to his followers. They must learn what to expect from him. To be sure, a leader will have high hours and low hours, but he must learn to conceal his disappointments and heartaches and walk predictably before his followers. This means that a leader will have to walk on the highest level he is able to maintain. It is better to go 60 miles an hour all of the time than 90, then 10, then 80, then 100, and then 20. Such leadership does not prompt mature followship.

3. The leader must be able to fill the appetite he creates in followers. In other words, the leader’s production must be able to fill his image. He must not lead the followers to more than he can give and he must not create appetites in the followers that he cannot fill.

Many preachers err in this respect by announcing flashy titles that create in the minds of their people appetites for something that the talent, knowledge, and ability of the leader cannot fill.

4. A leader should have a checklist. He must never trust his memory. There is no one to remind the leader what to do. In every obligation he should have a list before him as his reminder.

5. The leader must know where he is going.He must also sell the follower on the fact that he knows where he is going. The leader must look down the road and plan the trip. He should plan on the trip several points of fulfillment and arrival. For example, when our family takes a vacation, I draw up a schedule. I want to arrive in this town at this time and at the next town at a certain time, etc. On a 1000-mile trip one can have twenty goals to reach and hence feel a sense of fulfillment twenty times. Whereas another would simply have the 1000-mile goal as the only goal and only feel one sense of fulfillment. The leader must remind the people of intermediate goals as well as the ultimate goal. Consequently, the followers (and the leader too, for that matter) can keep a sense of achievement as they reach little goals on the way to the big goal. A good illustration of this is a football game. The ultimate goal is to win the championship. There is a more immediate goal of winning the present game. Then there is still a smaller goal of making a touchdown; however, the most immediate appetite to satisfy is that of making a first down. The stands cheer some over a first down, more over a touchdown, still more over victory, and most over the championship. One's life should be this way and the leader should plan the activities of his followers so as to satisfy secondary appetites as well as the primary one. There must be first downs in life as well as touchdowns. This is why it is often more satisfying to make a touchdown by a series of first downs than to score on a long play. The long play may be more immediately satisfying and exciting. This is why life's victories are won basically on a series of first downs. People who take the short cuts seldom win the final victory.

6. The leader should also be a good follower.Every leader also has a sphere of life in which h follows. The corporal leads the privates but follows the sergeant. The sergeant leads the corporals but follows the lieutenant. The lieutenant leads the sergeants but follows the captain. The captain leads the lieutenant but follows the major. The major leads the captain but follows the colonel. The colonel leads the major but follows the general, etc. The Sunday School teacher leads the class but follows the superintendent. The superintendent leads the teacher but follows the pastor. To expect followship for his leadership, the leader must present followship to his leadership. If I expect my followers to follow me, then I must follow those who lead me. Then whom is the general to follow? He is to follow the Heavenly Father. Here each of us becomes a follower. The writers have said, "Where Ever He Leads I'll Go," "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow," "Have Thine Own Way, Lord, Have Thine Own Way," "All the Way My Saviour Leads Me," and "He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought, O Paths with Heavenly Comfort Wrought." To be a successful leader, one must be a successful follower.

7. It is wise for the leader to identify himself with the followers. When Ezekiel was going to preach to the Jews in captivity he said, "I sat where they sat." In other words, he went to the seat of the follower and sat there. Having learned the heart and the feeling of the follower, he now is a more capable leader. One of the things that I have done for years in my church is to go through a little mental calisthenics when I walk out on the platform. I try to look at the people and feel what they feel. For a moment I sit in their seats. This is especially true in a funeral service. The leader must feel the heartbeat of the follower and must know what it is to sit where he sits.

8. A leader should list the times and means of success. There is a reason for success. It comes as a direct result of the proper ingredients. When a leader (or anyone for that matter succeeds, he should immediately write down the formula that he used. This would even apply to followers. When a follower pleases his superior, he should write down the ingredients used so as to use them again and again.

9. The leader must spend much time with the Saviour. I will never forget the day in my life when I realized that I would never have a pastor again. For nearly a quarter of a century I have had no pastor. Hence, I have had to spend much time with the Lord. No one can be a successful leader who does not walk with God. Since there is followship in each of us and a need for security in the strongest of us, the one who has few or no earthly leaders must know intimately the One Who is the Leader of us all.

Oftentimes young preachers ask me what advice would supersede every other advice that I would give to a young preacher. Immediately I answer, "Walk with God."

0A.22 Chapter 22. Meekness

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Meekness "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5)

"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." (1 Peter 3:4)

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." (1 Timothy 6:11)

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Galatians 6:1) "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." (Titus 3:2) The word "meekness" in the Bible comes from the word "mecca" which means level. It does not mean, as some would think, that one looks up to everyone else and thinks of himself as being inferior. Meekness is not fright, neither is it possessing an inferiority complex, but rather it is looking to everyone from a level position. Meekness looks up to no one and down to no one. Meekness does not look up to the rich, nor down to the poor; up to the educated, nor down to the uneducated; up to the higher ranks, nor down to the lower rank. Of course, I do not know who the best Christian in the word is, but whoever he is, he does not know it. In fact, he does not think of himself at all. His greatness is lost in obedience to his Saviour. I do not know who the biggest preacher in the word is, but whoever he is, he does not know it. I do not know who the greatest person in the word is, but whoever he is, he has not found out about it yet. It has been my joy to meet some of the great Christians of our generation and to fellowship with some of the greatest servants of God living today. I have noticed in every case that these men do not feel either inferior or superior. This does not mean, however, that we are not to respect authority. We certainly ought to respect the position of our superiors, but we are not to idolize their person. Romans 13:1-14 tells us that we are to respect the authority of rulers. Ephesians 6:1 reminds us that we are to respect the authority of our parents. Ephesians 6:5 tells us that we are to respect the authority of our employers. Certainly we are to respect the authority of age and the position of the pastor. We are to give respect to those who have had more success than we, those with more experiences than we, and those who teach us or have taught us.

I can recall my mother teaching me about the subject of meekness when I was a little boy. She told me never to look up to anyone or down to anyone. She taught me to respect the position of my superiors and of those in authority over me, but she reminded me that though I was a poor boy, I should look everyone straight in the eye. What a tremendous truth this is and how necessary it is to the molding of the character of our youth.

0A.23 Chapter 23. Preparedness Or Perplexities

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Preparedness Or Perplexities When I was a kid about eleven years of age, I started taking long walks and thinking about life. One of the thoughts that occupied my mind the most was the fact that most of life's perplexities are caused by being caught off guard. It seemed to me then, and it seems to me now, that the right kind of person prepares himself for life's changes and transitions. As I look back over my life, I find that the two most perplexing times were those for which I was unprepared. The first of these was the death of my father. I was not prepared for it. I had not even thought about it, and because of this, there was a great adjustment I had to make. The second of these perplexing times was my leaving Garland, Texas, to move to Hammond, Indiana. I thought I was in Garland for a lifetime. I had no desire or intention of leaving when suddenly God called me away. It took eighteen months for me to get over the shock of this heartbreak simply because I had not prepared for such a move. Much of our mental illness and many of our nervous breakdowns are caused by the fact that we take life as it comes, never preparing for its inevitables. We find ourselves in frustration and perplexity because of the lack of preparedness.

1. Prepare for an era.Life changes. Eras of life come and go. This is true for school, church, and individual, a home, or any organization or institution. We must prepare ourselves for the inevitable changes which take place during the transition from one era to another. For example, when we built our present auditorium, I had regular meetings with my staff reminding them of the possible pitfalls of entering into a new auditorium. The song leader must remember that voices do not carry as well in a big building. People cannot see the song leader as easily in a larger building. The numbers must be announced more distinctly in a bigger building. These are just a few of the many things that must be considered. Many churches have lost their joy and spirit because they were not prepared for such a move. In my own ministry I have realized the changes that must come as one era goes and another era comes. I started preaching when I was nineteen years of age. For a long time I was a youthful pastor. As I grow older I find I must discard some of the older mannerisms and add some new ones. I must give constant thought concerning my attire, my vocabulary, my manners, etc. I must prepare myself to be a middle-aged preacher. Then someday I must prepare myself to be an older preacher. Many preachers, because of a lack of such preparation, find themselves frustrated in their ministry. This same thing is true in the life of a layman. We must always be foreseeing new eras in life and preparing for them.

2. Prepare for changes in relationships. Relationships in life undergo changes. If you are a parent, you have already noticed that the relationships with your children change. The child is constantly changing in his behavior toward his parents. This is God's way of preparing the child for going out on his own. From infancy to adulthood there is a gradual withdrawing from Mother and Father. Of course, this should not mature or ripen too early, but proper preparation will avoid heartbreak.

I can recall as a teen-age boy how I began to realize that I was going to have to leave my mother and go into the army. World War II was on at that time. I can recall gradually withdrawing myself

from mother and unraveling my life from around hers in order to avoid the heartbreak that would come if I failed to do so. At this writing my daughter Becky has only one more year in high school. I have begun to prepare myself for this transition. No father ever hated to see his daughter leave home any more than I, but I must realize the inevitables of life and substitute preparedness for perplexity. I must realize the happiness that lies ahead in this phase of my life. I must magnify the benefits and minimize the liabilities. This will enable me to enjoy the new phase of my relationship with my daughter rather than lament its drawbacks.

Many people live in a utopian tomorrow while others dream of a happy yesterday. I want to live in a happy utopia today! Hence, I must watch others and learn from them. I must foresee the changes and transitions of life in order to prepare myself for them and receive the fullest from them.

Much is said in this book about the friend relationship. It never changes. There need be no preparation for transition periods. The needs of the friend relationship are always the same, and though the relationship may deepen, it need never enter into a new era that will cause perplexity if there is not preparedness. One can nestle back in a friend relationship and comfortably relax in it, developing it to its deepest depths within the bounds of right realizing that it is a bond that need never be broken and a tie that need never be severed.

Each of us must choose whether our future will be described by preparedness or perplexity. If we prepare ourselves for life’s inevitables, we will not be perplexed by life’s transitions.

0A.24 Chapter 24. The Body

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The Body

Nothing happens accidentally. Discipline and character always accompany success. The same is true with physical strength and health. One does not have a strong body accidentally. To be sure, some are more gifted than others in this respect, but many strong and healthy people have dissipated their bodies, whereas many people with care and discipline have caused their bodies to outlast their expected usefulness. Remember that one serves the Lord with his body. When health is gone, usefulness is gone, then we will be of no value to God or to others. Several simple rules will help you to have a stronger body.

1. Let God have your body. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Romans 12:1) I was not a big boy as a child, I did not have an extremely healthy body. I did, however, take my hands and say, "God, they are Yours." I took my feet and said, "God, they are Yours." I touched my eyes and said, "God, they are Yours." I did the same thing with each member of my body. It is amazing what God can do with a little bit.

2. Dedicate your body as a temple. "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:18-19) This teaches us that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We should take the same care of the body today that the Jews did of the temple in the Old Testament. The Bible seems to imply that the body sins are the worst sins. Could this be because the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? Our bodies should be as dedicated to God and His service as were the furnishings of the Old Testament temple.

3. Keep your body clean. Since the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, it should be kept clean both outwardly and inwardly. Regular baths should be taken. Proper deodorant should be used. Men should shave carefully. The hair should have regular care. The teeth should be kept clean. Nothing was kept more immaculately clean than the Old Testament temple. Since the body is the temple of the New Testament, it should be likewise clean. Certainly this should apply to morals. Adultery, necking, petting, and promiscuous behaving between the sexes should certainly be out as far as God’s people are concerned. Keep the body clean. There is something about a clean body that God can use.

5. Keep your body straight. It is very important that a Christian should learn how to walk properly and sit properly. No Christian should be slouchy. In our family altar we have taught our children such habits. We have had our girls to practice walking across the room. We have taught them to walk like girls and sit like girls. We have taught our boy to walk with a manly walk and sit with a manly posture. Keep the body straight. It is God’s. let it be a good testimony.

6. Keep your body coordinated.This is of vital importance. A person should know how to handle his body with dexterity and coordination. At this writing I am 41 years of age. I have played sports all of my life. I have kept my body in fairly good condition, and because of this, I was able to save my sister's life. She and I were crossing a street in South Bend, Indiana, where I was preaching in a Bible conference. A car turned left, not seeing us. I saw the car and jumped back. My sister did not see it. The car was about to hit her when I almost subconsciously grabber her and pulled her from the path of the car. It barely scraped her and knocked her to the cement, but tests for injuries proved negative. She would probably not be alive today were it not for my coordination. My coordination also saved my own life once. In Word War II, I joined the Paratroopers. On my fifth jump the parachute did not open. I was one second from the ground when I quickly pulled my reserve chute. It opened and saved my life. Certainly a man with manly coordination can reach more men for Christ. For both men and women coordination should be a must for the body.

7. Keep the body properly fed. Remember, food is fuel. It is tragic that we feed our dogs better than we feed our own bodies. We carefully choose the food for our pigs, horses, and cows, and then gulp down most anything for self. Proper vitamins, Bible foods, and Bible stimulants should be taken by the Christian. The Christian, of course, should not be guilty of drinking liquor, smoking, etc. I have found it helpful not even to use coffee or carbonated drinks. Why not try honey or orange juice for a stimulant?

It is also wise for a Christian to fast occasionally. Occasional fasting is certainly physically helpful to the body. Sometimes a Christian should pray and fast.

Many times I have been preaching and found myself developing a bit of voice trouble. When such times occur, a juice fast often is the answer. Much throat trouble is caused by the stomach. To say the least, a Christian should put the proper fuel in his body so that he may use it to the glory of God.

8. Keep the body rested. It is important that the body receive the proper amount of rest. This rest should be done at regular hours if possible. Much of what is commonly called "fellowship" by preachers should be sacrificed for rest and work. I have found it wise to avoid late-hour snacks as well as late, heavy thinking. Sometimes a few exercises before going to bed are good to relax the body and make it rest better. certainly we should not develop the habits of sluggards. Yet we should realize that the body is the Lord's and needs to be rested regularly.

9. Keep the body under subjection. Appetites are good servants but not good masters. No appetite should control the body. Let the Christian always yield to his body to Christ and be master over his own appetites.

10. Keep the body strong.Exercise is very important to the body. I find that I can do more work when I do regular calisthenics and exercise. I find it is good to run some as well as to do calisthenics. Now there are as many suggestions for this as there are people, but I find if I run a mile or so a day and do about fifteen minutes of heavy calisthenics, my lungs are in better condition for preaching, and I have a healthier body to use for the glory of God. With proper dedication of the body, proper cleanliness, neatness, coordination, food, rest, exercise, and control, one can live longer to the glory of God.

0A.25 Chapter 25. Dangerous And Important Times

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Dangerous And Important Times For Staying In The Will Of God

It is always important to stay in God’s will. However, at certain times of life, it becomes even more difficult than usual. Some of these times are listed here:

1. The obeying of parents during childhood. It is important for young people to remember that their parents represent God. As children obey parents now they will obey God later. This is why it is very important that parents insist that their children obey and that proper punishment be given for disobedience. Occasionally a parent sill say, "I love my child too much to discipline him." The truth is simply this: If a parent loves a child, he will spank him and discipline him. A child simply MUST be taught to obey his parents. If he gets out of the will of God here, he will no doubt be out of the will of God for the rest of his life.

2. In choosing a high school. It is very interesting to find out how many people marry their high school sweethearts. Once while preaching along these lines, I asked those who married someone they met for the first time in high school to raise their hands. It was very shocking and revealing, for a large percentage lifted their hands. Hence, if there is a choice in the choosing of a high school, it is of vital importance that the proper choice be made.

3. The centering of a young person’s life. Of course, Christian young people should be good students in school, and pastors and Sunday School workers should encourage them to be so. It is usually wise, however, for young people to be very careful about extracurricular school activities. The use of spare time should be centered around the church and the church activities. Because of this, the church should provide activities for the young people. Young people choose mates from those they know best, and most of these mates are chosen from people met at the extracurricular activities where the most time is spent. A Christian young person has a far better chance to marry another Christian young person if his spare time is spent in church activities. They are also more likely to go to a good Christian college because they are spending their lives with those who are going to attend Christian colleges. It is very important that a young person center his life around the work of Jesus Christ and the New Testament Church.

4. The choosing or accepting of a date. In a public service I asked for the married folks to raise their hands who had no idea on their first date that they wanted to marry the person who later became their mate. This response was also revealing.

It seems like a small thing for a girl to say "yes" or "no" to a boy who asks for a date. However, no girl should have a date with a boy unless she that he would make a good Christian husband. Likewise, no boy should ask a girl for a date unless he feels she would make a good Christian wife. It is wise for young people not to date someone whom they feels would not make a proper mate. One never knows when admiration shall turn to love.

5. The choosing of a job or vocation.Here is one of the easiest times for a person to leave the will of God. Several good rules for choosing a job or vocation are as follows: a. Choose one which is beneficial to mankind.I advise young people not to choose jobs such as professional sports, acting, etc. These activities were meant to be recreation, not vocation. A job does not have to be a well-paying job or a glamorous job. Some helpful jobs which could be chosen are collecting garbage, building houses, being a plumber, being an electrician, or any one of hundreds of vocations beneficial to one's fellow man. b. It is usually best to choose a basic job.For example, a young man came to me trying to decide whether to go into the grocery business or the boat making business. I showed him that in case of depression or recession, the grocery business would still be in demand, whereas the boat business would be extinct. It is always wise to consider what economic changes would do to one's job. c. The vocation should be honest and right.Such things as selling liquor or entering into any other wicked vocation should not even be considered. d. One should not commit himself to a company.These are days of chain stores and monopolies. It is certainly not wrong for a person to work for a nationwide chain. It is wrong for that person to commit himself to move wherever his company wants to move him. This takes God's will out of it and makes it the will of the company. Of course, this is wrong! e. One should always consider the availability of good fundamental churches near his place of work.It is spiritual suicide for one's children when he carelessly takes a job in an area not knowing if there is a good fundamental church available. There is a man in my present pastorate whose company is moving. He has a very responsible position with his company. Rather than leave and take his boys out of our church, he is leaving the company with which he has been for many years and is staying in Hammond. We think he is making the right decision. f. Do not move because the company transfers you.Suppose your pastor got up in the pulpit next Sunday and said, "I am changing churches because I have been offered more money." You would be completely shocked and overwhelmed, but he has just as much right to do this as you. No person has a right to take a job because it offers more money or a promotion. The only thing that a Christian has a right to do is the will of God.

Let each Christian pray and seek God's guidance as he seeks his vocation for life.

5. The choosing of a church. "Attend the church of your choice," and "Go to church in your neighborhood" are two of many fallacious statements being made nowadays concerning church attendance. All churches are not alike! All churches do not preach and believe the Bible. It is very vital that a person choose a church that believes in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity of Jesus Christ, and salvation by grace through faith. It is also wise to place one's life and membership in a church that is actively evangelistic and offers a strong program for the entire family. When a family chooses a church, oftentimes the mates for their children, the colleges their children will attend, as well as scores of other things are being chosen at the same time.

6. The purchasing of a house. God's will is also very important when the buying of a house is being considered. Certainly care should be taken and prayer should be offered in the making of such a decision.

It must be remembered that the will of God is the greatest thing one can do in life. There is no greater accomplishment than to be in the will of God. There is no greater joy than to be in the will of God. There is no greater safety than to be in the will of God. Let us always stay in His will and take extra care when life-changing decisions must be made.

0A.26 Chapter 26. Work

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Work

Someone has well said, "I believe in luck. The harder I work the luckier I get." The secret to any success is hard work. Whether it is the building of a church or a hot-dog stand, the making of a good life or good grades, work is the great secret to success. No amount of talent can take its place. No gifts can substitute for it. Even if per chance one could obtain success without work, it would fail to satisfy. The Bible has much to say about work, and we should look at a few of its passages.

1. Work is spiritual. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (Proverbs 13:4) One of the great mistakes of our generation is dividing the sacred from the secular. As someone has said, "To the Christian every day is a holy day; every bush is a burning bush; and every place is a sacred place." Being a good Christian is not having a good feeling, having a good cry, or making a good speech, but it is obeying the commands of God and doing His work. One can learn all the lingo, attend all the meetings, ride the spiritual merry-go-rounds, give a glowing testimony, and still not be a good Christian. The great test of Christianity is obedience. Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14) He also said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15) Work is spiritual!

2. Work is succeeding.The word "work" implies to produce or achieve. The salesman gets no commission for trying to sell. He gets a commission for selling. This means that when we do a job, we are to do it well and point to success. The question then comes, "How can I succeed?" The first Psalm will answer that question: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Notice also Joshua 1:1-8. "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for

an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of they mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous. and then thou shalt have good success." In these verses we find a guaranteed recipe for success. This is a plan that will not fail. From childhood one should be taught that if a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well. Every job should be done thoroughly and carefully. When you children are growing up and have a task to do, let them carry the task through to completion. They will learn character, and you will gain a helper. This is a very vital part of rearing a child.

3. The worker should do what needs to be done. "And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down." (Proverbs 24:31). No task is too little to demand our best, and no task is too great but what our best plus God is enough.

4. If a person does not work, he should not eat. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thessalonians 3:10) College-age students who are not studying should not be supported by parents at home. Socialists and Communists who refuse to work are not supposed to eat. No poverty program, whether by church or state, should feed people who refuse to work. We do not help a lazy fellow when we feed him. Rather we help him when we teach him that if he does not work, he does not eat. This is God’s plan. Liberal Bible rejectors try to make their own social standards and develop their own social programs, but the Bible still speaks that if a man will not work, he shall not eat.

5. One should learn to work without a boss. "Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler." (Proverbs 6:7) Nothing quite reveals the lack of character in a person more than for him to refuse to work when the boss is not looking. The simple truth is that a little ant has more character than a lot of people. The sluggard should go to the ant bed and look down at the little red insect, salute him, and envy him because he has more character. A person has reached a very sad state when an ant on an ant hill has more character than he. We should work for work’s sake, for integrity’s sake, for honesty’s sake, and for decency’s sake.

One of the great problems of our generation is mass production and big-city factories. It often eliminates one’s pride in his work and takes away trades, skills, etc. In spite of this, however, one should develop such character that he will do his work simply because he is supposed to do his work. Diligence and discipline should compel us to do our best at every task. In the training of a child he should be given definite duties. These duties should be outlined carefully so that both child and parent understand. Then the child should be taught what he is to do and how to do it. He should be taught the willingness to serve. He should not be paid for his duty unless his job is done well. The parent should not do the job for the child after he has failed, but rather, the parent should make him do it again and make him do it well.

Work is spiritual. One cannot be a good Christian and not work. One cannot be a good Christian and not obey. One cannot be a good Christian and not do his best at every task.

0A.27 Chapter 27. So You Are Out Of God's Will

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So You Are Out Of God’s Will "There came then His brethren and His mother, and standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him." (Mark 3:31) "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." (John 4:34)

Most Christians at one time or another find themselves at least a bit out of the will of God. As someone has said, "It is not a sin for a bird to land on your head, but it is a sin for you to allow him to build a nest there." It is easy to get out of the will of God. It is hard to get back in the will of God. The following thoughts are given to those who have slipped out of God’s will:

1. If the door is still open, go back through it. If a pastor has left a church and he should not have left, and if the church is still pastorless, he may go back. If the job is still open, the one who left may return. If one has gone to the wrong school, he mat go to the right school. If one has entered the wrong profession, he may rectify that by entering the right profession. If one is engaged to the wrong girl or boy, he can break the engagement. In other words, if one does not perform wrong by doing so, he should re-enter the door through which he left the will of God.

2. Go back the way you came. If one left the will of God when he quit paying his debts, he should get back in the will of God by paying the debts. If one left the will of God by hurting people, he should get back in the will of God by making reconciliation. Undo what has been done if it is at all possible, and go back to the will of God where you came out of His will.

3. Never do wrong to get back in the will of God. Suppose, for example, the pastor leaves a church that he should not have left. The church then calls a new pastor. In such a case, the former pastor has forfeited the will of God and should in no way attempt to regain the church. Suppose someone marries the wrong person. If the one he should have married is already married, it would be wrong to break up that home in order to get the person that God had for him in the first place. Never do wrong in getting back into the will of God. Two wrongs do not make a right!

4. Seek the acceptable will of God. Many people find themselves so far out of God’s perfect will that they can never get back in it. If the wrong person has been married, for example, then there is no way to get back rightly in the will of God concerning one’s marriage. God will allow one to live with his present mate in His acceptable will under such conditions. This same is true about one who has committed some sin that would cause him to forfeit the perfect will of God. Here is a man whom God has called to preach, but the involvements of his life have made it impossible for him to do so. Perhaps he has complicated his life so much that it would be unscriptural for him to be a pastor. This means he has forever sacrificed the perfect will of God, but he can go ahead by teaching a Sunday School class, winning souls, etc. in the acceptable will of God and be a very fruitful Christian.

5. Get close to someone in the perfect will of God. This is very important. If a person's life has caused him to forfeit the perfect will of God, he may then be in the acceptable will of God, but perhaps he could accomplish more by working with someone in the perfect will of God and being a part of that someone's ministry.

6. Work harder. As mentioned in another chapter, work is the secret to success. If one finds himself unable to get back into the perfect will of God, he may find the acceptable will of God for his life, and by working harder than those in the perfect will of God, he may certainly do much to make amends. He may even get as much done as the person in the perfect will of God. If for any reason you have forfeited the perfect will of God for your life, work that much harder to make up for the mistake and try to accomplish as much in life as possible.

All of us know about the athlete who is not as gifted with as many natural gifts as others, and yet accomplishes more. He is not the natural athlete; he is a scrambler. By hustle, practice, and hard work he oftentimes surpasses the more gifted one. This is also true in God's service.

7. Use your testimony to warn others. If you have left the perfect will of God, admit it to help others avoid making the same mistakes. Especially should you be a help to children and young people.

8. Be sure you do not blame the cause. In some cases one's mate may be associated with his leaving the perfect will of God. He should in no case blame his mate. This simply adds fuel to the fire and insult to the injury.

9. Do not lament, but be thankful.Take your medicine like a good boy and be thankful that a least something has been reclaimed and salvaged in life. So you are out of the will of God. I am sorry. If possible, go about getting back into the perfect will of God immediately. If this is impossible, get right with God, have your life reclaimed for His service, and do His acceptable will. God can still use you. Let Him do so.

0A.28 Chapter 28. Faithfulness

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Faithfulness The word "faithful" in the Bible comes from a word which means "to be trusted" or "to be reliable." It is a twin to the word "believe" as concerning believing upon Christ for salvation.

Faithfulness does not mean "not being unfaithful." Suppose a wife says that she is faithful to her husband. She may mean that she is not guilty of negative acts against her husband. On the other hand, she may not be doing anything positive for him. Faithfulness is not the absence of the negative, but the presence of the positive. For example, a person who does not come to church is unfaithful. He cannot excuse himself by saying he has not been to another church.

We should discipline ourselves to be faithful to many things. Some of these are listed below:

1. Duties and tasks. One should discipline himself to do what he is supposed to do. It is vitally important that one’s task becomes his employer. It is important that we get up at the same time every day. This is especially true in the case of people whose employment and duties do not consist of punching a time clock. A salesman, a pastor, and other such people can be successful only as they discipline themselves to be faithful to their duties and tasks. Whatever one has to do he should do and do it well. He should designate a time to do it and then do it at that time.

2. Punctuality. In the building of character, one must learn to be punctual. This means he should be faithful to his appointments. He should not develop the habit of always being late. He must be dependable. This is one reason, at the First Baptist Church of Hammond, we start our services on time. We do not start one minute late, but rather, exactly on time. If 600 people wait one minute, 600 minutes are lost, or 10 working hours. If 2,400 people wait one minute an entire work week is lost as far as time is concerned. We have all heard it said about someone, "You can set your clock by him." This means that he is at least in one respect a man of character. How important this is.

3. Church. It is important that a child be taught to be faithful to his church. There are several reasons for this. Life’s principles are being set. One of these principles should be faithfulness to the house of God. Many years ago I decided that I would go to church every Sunday morning, every Sunday night, and every Wednesday night. This has been my policy through the years. There have been a few times when I was ill, but unless I was very ill, I have been to the house of God and have been there faithfully. This cannot be overly stressed.

You recall what Thomas missed by being absent the first time the apostles met with the risen Christ. You remember his doubting spirit. There are many doubting, cantankerous Christians who would not be so had they been faithful to God’s house.

One will do later what he does now. It is a good idea now to start the habit of faithfulness to the house of God. The sermon you need the most may be preached the service you are not present, and it may never be repeated.

4. Spiritual habits. I find it possible for a person to read the Bible all the time and not be a good Christian, to pray all the time and not be a good Christian, and even to win souls all the time and not be a good Christian. It is wise for a person to set a schedule for spiritual habits-a set time to pray, a set time to study the Bible, a set time to go soul winning. One should be faithful to these times and obedient to his schedule, and at the same time, keep a balanced Christian life. It is a good idea to sit down and list all the things that the Christian is supposed to do. Then find time in the schedule for them, and observe the schedule with all diligence and faithfulness.

5. Principles.Our loyalties should be to principles and not to institutions. Far too many of us have pledged our faithfulness and loyalty to denominations, churches, schools, etc. They change so gradually that we do not notice it; therefore, we change with them. The day comes when both institution and Christian have changed and neither realizes it. The landmark has been moved so gradually that, as is the case with the hands on the clock, it was not noticed. This is the reason we should be faithful to principles. When the institution goes outside our principles, we should hold the principles and discard the institution unless we can bring it back in proper focus with right principles. For example, I have taught my boy, David, to protect his sisters. A few years ago I saw him beating up on a little kid. I had told him not to fight. I went over, jerked him off the kid, and said, "What are you doing?"

He looked at me and said, "He called my sister a dirty name."

I said, "Then go to it. You are doing fine." In these days of pacifism and people who fight capital punishment, laugh at discipline, disregard law and order, and disrespect authority, how we need a generation of people who are loyal and faithful to principle!

0A.29 Chapter 29. Holy Places And Holy Days

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Holy Places And Holy Days "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood." Hebrews 9:18.

You will notice that Christ has left for us a will. A will cannot be opened unless there is the death of the testator. When Christ died on the cross, His will became valid. Now what He willed to us is ours. You recall that the vail of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom. This meant that the will was being opened. Before the death of Christ only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies. The High Priest represented Jesus Christ. In His will Jesus made it possible for all men to come to God through the veil. Because He has died, His will may be opened. Hence, the Holy of Holies is opened so that all men may come to God. No longer is there a Holy of Holies. Every place is a holy place. Jesus said to the woman at the well, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) One of the great dangers of our day is having holy places. Bear in mind that the holy places of the Old Testament all pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Any time we give attention to a holy place today we take away from the Lord Jesus Christ, for He has come and fulfilled all of the holy days, holy places, etc. When one day is emphasized above others, the others are de-emphasized. When one task is emphasized above others, the others are de-emphasized. I have often said that the most important sermon is next Sunday’s sermon. The most important Sunday is next Sunday. The most important day is today. The most important task is the one I am doing now. The most important place is the one I am in now. It is very important that we pause to realize that the church building of our day is not the temple of the Old Testament. It is simply as Charles Spurgeon said, "a meeting house," or a meeting place where God’s people come and keep comfortable while they do God’s work and hear God’s Word.

Each of us has heard some well-meaning parent or Sunday School teacher say to some child, "Be quiet! You are in God’s house. Be reverent here in God’s house." This is unwise teaching. The reason that one should be quiet in church is that it is a good manners, not reverence for a building. To teach one to be quiet because one is in church means that he won’t have to be quiet when he is in the school assembly meeting. To teach one to be quiet because he is in the house of God de-emphasizes the importance of being quiet in other public gatherings. The reason that a person should behave in any public meeting. It is just decent and good manners to behave. So many preachers point to that big sermon out yonder some day - that "convention sermon." So many choir directors rise and shine on that big, special occasion when guests are there from far and near. Then this is true: They de-emphasize the other days, the other choir specials, and the other sermons.

Let every task be a big task. Let every choir special be the most important one ever sung. Let every sermon be the most important sermon ever preached. Make every day be the biggest day ever lived. It is dangerous to look forward to a big occasion and overlook the occasions in

between. Let us do our best now, for now is the only real chance we have to serve God. I will do my best where I am now, doing what I am doing now, on the day that I am doing it - today!

0A.30 Chapter 30. How High Are Your Valleys?

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How High Are Your Valleys?

"He is always able to rise to the occasion." How typical this is of our finite minds' estimation of success. We judge one by the height of his peaks, when the simple truth is that one of the tests of real character is the height of one's depth. It is not how high the mountain top, but how high the valley that counts. The valley of a mountain range may have higher elevation than the top of a mountain somewhere else; consequently, it matters not how high the peak is, but rather how high the valley is. Raise your valleys and your peaks will care for themselves.

It is not how high one can go, but how low he can keep from going. A person is as moral as his most immoral day. He is as efficient as his most inefficient day. He is as deep as his most shallow day. One can be morally clean 364 days a year and yet be an adulterer. One can refrain from robbing banks 364 days a year and yet be a bank robber. One can resist murder 364 days a year and yet be a murderer. It is tremendously important that in one's character he raise the height of his depths, the peak of his valleys, and that he not only "rise to meet the occasion," but refuse to "lower to meet the occasion."

There are many preachers who on a given day, with a big enough crowd, and enough inspiration, can preach great messages. However, the test of a great preacher is not on Easter Sunday, but on Labor Day weekend. The great preacher is the one who gives his best to his people week after week and is the best preacher on his lowest day. The best worker is the one who does his job every day. His inspiration comes from within and is a part of the subconscious. At this writing Cindy, my youngest child, is eight years of age. She has been afraid of storms all her life. Oftentimes even a cloudy day will bring tears to her eyes. A few days ago Cindy wrote a little article concerning her fear of storms. She brought it to me. She had written something like this: "I, Cindy Lynn Hyles, do on this 23rd day of June, 1968, quit being afraid of storms. I know that God will take care of me, for He promises to do so. He took care of Daniel in the lion's den; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace; and He will take care of me. Because of this, I will not be afraid of storms any more . . ." The article was much longer than that, but all of it was just as well written and serious minded. In less than two hours the worst storm that we had had in weeks was raging. I looked at Cindy, and she was as sober as she could be. I grinned and said, "Are you the little girl that wrote an article a while ago?" With trembling lips and moist eyes she said, "Yes, sir."

I hugged her and said, "It is a lot easier to promise than it is to fulfill the promise."

It is one thing for a person to vow to do his job well; it is another thing for him to develop the kind of character that subconsciously forces him to do the job well. The doing of right must get on the inside. This means that we will subconsciously do a job well even at our lowest point.

Let us work on the valleys and let the peaks care for themselves. Certainly the peaks are more inspiring. Certainly it is easier to do the job well at the peak, but the ones who will be remembered the longest and will accomplish the most are those who do the unspectacular jobs well when uninspired from without, but subconsciously inspired from within with the kind of character that is more concerned about raising the height of the valleys than raising the height of the mountains.

0A.31 Chapter 31. The Security Of Silence

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The Security Of Silence

Some of the most beautiful expressions of love are expressed by silence. One may be reading a newspaper while another is putting a crossword puzzle together on the floor, but nothing is being said. Some of the sweetest expressions of love and devotion ever given were given by silence.

Just what does silence say? In the first place, silence says what the silent man is. If love exists between two people, silence then is an expression of that love. The bitter heart stores up bitterness in its silence. The selfish heart stores up envy in its silence. The loving heart exudes love in its silence.

Silence between friends says that one’s presence is enough. There are millions of places that one could be, but when he chooses from all other places one place, and from all other people one person to share with him that place, even his silence speaks volumes of tender expressions of love. In such silent moments in private sanctuaries one’s silence says to his friend, "Your presence is enough." When two people choose to be alone together, each is honored by the other above all men during the moments spent together.

Silence between friends also speaks confidence, for there is no need for one to impress the other. The friendship has already been sealed under God, and there are no more worlds to conquer. This kind of friendship does not take for granted its friend, but rather continues to express love, affection, and gratitude. This expression, however, is not an attempt to impress, for impressions have already been made that will last for life. This kind of silence says something else. It says, "Dear Friend, I do not have to gain assurance from you of your love. That assurance is spoken to me so often and shown to me so well. My silence with you tells you that I am assured of your love." True friendship need not be reconfirmed daily. It should be perennially expressed and demonstrated. Since "perfect love casteth out fear," often silence can say, "I am assured of your love, and I am assured of your friendship." True friendship does not decide every day whether it should continue or not. It does not decide every week. It does not decide every month. It does not decide every year. It does not decide even twice! True friendship is God-given and is conditioned by the heart of the lover, not by the traits of the loved. Hence, when God places in the heart of one a true friendship for another, peace, assurance, and security is offered even though not recognized.

Recently I said to one of my daughters, "Daddy loves you, Honey."

She looked up to me and said, "I know it."

Perhaps I had not told her for a few days, but I had so demonstrated that love and expressed that love that even in the silence, I was assuring her that I love her.

Once in a cartoon "Dennis, the Menace" sat down in the barber’s chair, looked up at the barber, and said, "What do you say we just don’t say nothing today!" As I laughed I thought that perhaps the excessive talking by many barbers is caused by a lack of confidence in their work. This is not to say that a barber should not talk to his customer. It is to say, however, that talk should not have to be forced by the one who applies his trade well.

Though expressions of love, gratitude, and affection are always in order and should be offered, many times the silence of a quiet meal, the silence of the wife sewing while the husband reads the newspaper, the silence that is broken only by the twinkle of an eye, the touch of an arm, or the squeeze of a hand says more than words. Thanks be to God that when people love each other even their silence speaks of that love.

0A.32 Chapter 32. How To Be Close

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How To Be Close

Tragic but true is the fact that many people live and die and never have close relationships. This is especially true in the life of many pastors. Many grope in darkness hoping to find a close relationship with another and yet never develop the kind of ties for which their dreams have drawn plans.

One of the surest and best way to develop close ties is to enter into all the relationships of another's life. Though this is perhaps exaggerated a bit, it is none the less true. Many pastors, for example, do not laugh with their people; they only mourn with their people. In so doing they become only a part of the lives of their parishioners. They are only considered or thought about when mourning comes. On the other hand, a comedian only entertains. When one has a party, he invites him. When one wants to laugh, he seeks his company, but in all other areas of life, he is omitted. Hence, one should not confine himself to one area in the life of a friend. Through many years of pastoring, I have tried to laugh with my people, weep with my people, rejoice with my people, and enter into every area of their lives. I want to share with them times of humor, and I want to share with them times of sorrow. When one can entwine himself into every area of another's life, he can become "close" to the other and endear himself as a friend. The more types of experiences that people can share, the more possibilities there are for times spent in the future. If, as a pastor, I can be a teacher, a comforter, an encouragement, a delight, a strength, etc., then my people can and will associate me with each of these areas of life. The more areas of their lives with which I can become associated, the more needed will I be, the more intimate I can be, and the deeper is the friendship we can develop.

It is vitally important also that we realize that we share these experiences together while they are happening. It is important that I, as a pastor, realize that there are people in my congregation with whom I have shared the joys of a wedding, the sorrows of a funeral, the anxieties of an illness, the blessings of a conversion, the thrill of the coming of a new baby, etc. Many share such experiences but miss the blessing and the close ties because they fail to realize the privileges shared while the experiences are taking place.

0A.33 Chapter 33. Perfect Love

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Perfect Love

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath given to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John 4:16)

While we will not attempt to exegete the above verse, we will think a while about perfect or more mature love. One's love for another may grow until he loves another with all of his heart. What then may he do to offer the object more love? Are we not to continue to have our love for each other increase? Should we "arrive" in our love for our friends? Certainly not! Hence, if you love one with all of your heart, to increase that love you must have a "bigger heart." In other words, our capacity to love must increase. Not long ago I was out soul winning and came to a certain house where the man of the house was very excited. "Pastor," he exclaimed, " I am glad that you dropped by. I want to show you my new car."

I don't think that I have ever seen a man as excited about a car as was this man. His description of it was such that I thought it must be an air-conditioned Cadillac with television in both front and back seats. "Where is the car?" I asked. "I simply must see it." The man's face lit up, his countenance brightened, and he clapped his hands with joy because I wanted to see the car. "Come on," he exclaimed. "It is in the back yard. You wait `til you see it. I have never loved a car like I love this one." Around to the back yard we went and was I ever in for a shock! "Here it is," he exclaimed.

I looked, and to my surprise I saw an old junk heap. The fenders were not the same color as the body; in fact, it looked like a piece of junk.

"What do you think about it?" he asked.

"That IS a car," I replied.

"Isn't that about the prettiest thing you ever saw?" he asked.

I said, "Boy, that is something." (It was "something," and I was having a hard time figuring out what kind of "something" it was.) I stuttered and stammered trying to keep my conversation in the realm of honesty and truth.

He suddenly saved me from embarrassment by saying. "I made it with my own hands, Preacher. I made it with my own hands."

Then I realized the source of his love. He had gone down to the wrecking yard and picked up a piece here and a piece there, an engine here and a fender there, and actually constructed his own car. The strange thing about it is that he had a beautiful new car in the garage, but it was one made by Ford or General Motors or Chrysler Corporation. This one, however, was made with his

own hands. Hence, he could love it more than the others.

How then may we love someone more? How may our capacity to love someone be increased? We must do things for them. We must invest our lives in them and, like the man with the old car, we will find a love that we have never known before.

Mrs. Hyles and I have four children. We have experienced nearly every Christmas what we had the joy of experiencing again this past year. Our youngest daughter, Cindy, had made a Christmas card for us. This she had made at school. We gathered around the Christmas tree early in the morning to open the gifts. Cindy was most excited, not about the ones she was about to receive, but about the card that she had made for Mommy and Daddy. When I would pick up a gift close to the card, she would jump up and down and clap her hands thinking that perhaps I would find the card too. Though she received a new bicycle for Christmas, she did not exclaim as much over this or her doll or her game or any of her other gifts as she did the card she had made for Mother and Dad. We have all seen a child who deposited a new $15.00 doll in the toy box in preference to a homemade rag doll. Would God that we could find the same truth. Happiness is not in receiving but in giving and the more we actually DO in the making of others and the helping of others, the more our love can increase for them. Our friends are deserving of more love from us. If they receive it, we have to learn to love more. May our love grow and mature until we can offer to our friends the greatest love ever. Hence, I must do more for others. I must invest more in the lives of others. I must think more of others. I must give more to others. I must give more to others. I must sacrifice more for others and in so doing. I will know something of the heart of the fellow who made the car, the child who made the doll, and the girl who made the Christmas card. And I will have attained a point a little closer to what the Mater meant when He spoke of "perfect love."

0A.34 Chapter 34. Love

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Love

I rushed out of my Wednesday evening service and out to the airport in time to catch a 10:00 plane for Atlanta, Georgia, and on to Greenville, South Carolina, where I was to speak for a few days at the Bob Jones University. I got to the airport just in time to get the last seat on the plane. I sat down beside a little lady whose hair was in rollers. She was obviously not dressed for traveling. I could tell, however, that she was of some means, for she had a beautiful diamond ring as well as a diamond pin. Courteously I spoke to her and sat down. The next thing I knew we were landing in Cincinnati, Ohio, for a brief layover. I was awakened by the touch of the wheels on the runway. As I roused, the little lady beside me shocked me by saying, "How could you do what you did?" Not realizing what I had done, I inquired as to what she meant.

She said, "We have been through a terrible storm. We have been afraid and nervous, and all the time you just snored away. How could you do that during a storm?"

I replied that I did not know the circumstances but perhaps there were at least two reasons why I could sleep through a storm on an airplane: The first reason was that I fly tens of thousands of miles a year on commercial airliners. The second reason I told her was, "My Father owns the airplane."

She looked at me with a puzzled look on her face and said, "Do I understand you correctly? Your father owns this plane?'

"Yes," I said, "He owns the entire Delta Airlines system." This really aroused her curiosity until I continued. "He not only owns the Delta Airlines, but He also owns the American Airlines."

`Do I understand you correctly?" she asked. "You are the heir to the Delta and the American Airlines."

"That is right," I replied. "That is not all. He owns the Eastern Airlines, the Braniff Airlines, Ozark, United, Continental, and others." By this time she was completely beside herself in ecstasy. "What an honor," she said, "to ride with such a person whose father is so wealthy." Then she asked the name of my father.

I replied that He was the Heavenly Father. When I said these words, she broke out weeping so that folks all around us could hear her. Her body shook as tears poured from her eyes.

"You must be a minister," she said.

"Yes, I am," I replied, "but I am also a Christian."

Then she told me an unusual story. She had worked her husband's way through college, sacrificing her own college education so that he might attain one. He had become very successful and was the manager of a large firm. With the passing of years, he had become ashamed of his wife because she was less educated than he, and now he was suing her for a divorce. When she heard of this, she attempted suicide. (This was just a few minutes before she got on the plane.) Some friends had brought her to the airport, and put her on the airplane to send her to Atlanta, Georgia, where her sister lived.

She looked at me and continued talking, "Oh sir, how unusual that a minister would sit beside me. Just a few minutes ago I tried to kill myself." Then shoe looked at me with a look of horror, fright, and anguish and asked, "Sir, ... does your ... God ... love ... me?"

I will never forget how she looked as she asked me if my God loved her. I was happy to tell her that not only did my God love her, but that I loved her too because Jesus loved her. At twenty-eight thousand feet in the air I told her the wonderful story of Christ and that God did love her. As I went to my hotel room in Atlanta, where I was to sleep for two or three hours before catching a plane to South Carolina, I knelt and prayed, "Dear God, let me love more. The only way people can see Thy love is to see it in me." In order that our love might be more like His, let us examine a few ways to increase our love.

1. Remember it is better to love than to be loved. One can only guarantee fulfillment by loving, not by being loved. If one's happiness is built upon loving, then it can be controlled, but if his happiness is built upon being loved, it is built upon something over which he has no control. One who loves you can withdraw that love, and there is nothing that you can do about it. The happiest people and the people whose happiness is most secure are those who find their joy in loving rather than being loved.

2. Love is often unrecognized and unreturned. As one grows in love he finds himself the possessor of something that the flesh cannot recognize. The carnal mind is at enmity with God, and the flesh cannot determine spiritual traits. Hence, it is entirely possible that the people who love the least will receive credit for loving the most and that the world's greatest lovers will have their love unrecognized by the world. There are many preachers who are described as prophets of love because they never preach against sin, never rebuke their people, etc. On the other hand there are many preachers who are described as prophets of doom and hate who are really full of love for their people. Remember, love is of God, and this old carnal world knows nothing about God and His love. Because of this, the more true love that one has, the less recognition he will get for it. He may find himself being considered unloving by those who have little love but receive praise for being great lovers. Hence, when a person finds his joy and satisfaction in loving, he may have to become accustomed to having that love unrecognized by those about him.

3. Love gives the object its needs, not its wants. The love that the world knows is that which fulfills only the wants of its object. The love which God gives is that which oftentimes forfeits its own recognition in an effort to help. Many people who know true love find that oftentimes words of caution and even abruptness must be used to those you love in an effort to help them. The parent who loves his children enough to discipline them may be called an unloving parent. The pastor who loves his people enough to warn them may be called an unloving pastor. Though his love may go unrecognized on earth, it is certainly accepted and recognized as true love by Him Who is

Love.

4. Love is often heartbroken. Remember that the higher one goes the lonelier he gets, and the more one loves the more he will feel unloved. He then compares his love for others with that which others have for him, finding that their love for him falls short of his love for them. The consequence is often heartbreak. The compensation for this is great, however, for the more we learn to love on earth, the higher will be our level of spiritual maturity and love in Heaven, and the more love we can offer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. We are not to love because of the object."I love her because she is so sweet." "I just love him; he is so nice." These are immature statements that can lead to disappointments. In the first place, if one's love is determined by the object, it can be also lost when the object changes. If you love her because she is sweet, you will quit loving her when she is sour. If you love him because he is nice, you will quit loving him when he is not nice. However, if you love him because God is love and has given you of His love, his changing will not change your love. Hence, our love should not be because of condition of the loved but because of the condition of the lover.

Another reason why this is important is that if we love because of the object, we will not love those who need loving the most. Jesus loved the unlovable, the unloving, and the unloved. To be like Him, we must do likewise.

6. Do not let the object stop your love. If one does not love because of the object, then also he should not stop loving if the object becomes unlovable. I have often said this to the people whom I pastor: "I cannot make you love me, but you cannot keep me from loving you." If one loves because the object is lovable, his love cannot increase unless the object becomes more lovable. In other words, he has no power to increase his love. If, however, one loves because of the love that Christ has placed in his heart, then he can increase his own love by increasing the size of his heart."

7. Keep all love within its proper bounds. If disciplined properly, every relationship can be developed to its fullest. There is love for mother, love for father, love for brother, love for sister, love for husband, love for wife, love for sweetheart, love for friend, etc. Each love should be kept within its own boundaries allowing each relationship to develop to its highest and fullest. It is wise for a person to list his relationships in life. Life is a series of human relationships, and one's happiness is largely determined by the development of each relationship. A list can be made such as the following:

I am a husband to Beverly Hyles.

I am a father to Becky Hyles, David Hyles, Linda Hyles, and Cindy Hyles.

I am a son to Mrs. C. M. Hyles.

I am a brother to Mrs. Earlyne Stephens

I am a pastor to the members of my church.

Now I must develop each of these relationships to its fullest thereby guaranteeing the happiness of each object as well as my own happiness. One does not have to choose between being a good

husband and a good father, between a good father and a good friend, or a good son and a good boss. The late Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. used to say, "Duties never conflict." I can be a good whatever I am. God will give me no relationships that I cannot develop to the fullest.

8. The lover must make all reconciliations. When there is a strained relationship, it is up to the lover to lead in efforts of reconciliation. Remember the weak is usually too weak to make amends. It is up to the stronger to do so.

9. By all means, do not work on being loved. Seeking to be loved makes love impossible, for such actions are selfish, and love cannot be selfish. Selfishness cannot love. Most of the so-called love in our generation is selfish and possessive. It is nothing more than a desire to be with someone who satisfies one of the senses.

Several years ago I notices in the Fort Worth, Texas, newspaper a picture of a lady bending over the dead form of her husband whom she had just killed. As she picked his head up and put it in her lap she said, "Oh, how I loved you." (I told my wife that I didn't want her to love me that much.) The average so-called love of today is nothing more than a desire to be around someone who is pretty or someone whose personality makes us feel good. It is basically wanting to be with someone who likes us. It is selfish and possessive if this is all that is involved. Hence, one should work on his loving and not on being loved. God will take care of giving to us those who loves us if we will take care of developing through Him and in Him the right kind of love flowing out of our own hearts.

10. Express your love. It is a wonderful thing to be able to express your love. This would simply mean being affectionate. Do you love him? Tell him. Do you love her? Tell her. Has she been a blessing to you? Let her know it. There is far too little tenderness and affection exchanged between friends in our generation. Words of love and affection are always in order if they are set within the proper bounds. Notes and letters to friends we love certainly should be written often. This is a very vital part of friendship and love.

Married people reveal their relationship by the wearing of the wedding band. Athletes wear letter sweaters. Soldiers wear uniforms. Our Lord wanted to give His people something as an insignia of their standing, something by which they could be identified. He did not choose rings for our fingers or a certain piece of clothing to cover our bodies. He simply choose love, for He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35)

0A.35 Chapter 35. If I Am Your Friend

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If I Am Your Friend

If I am your friend, I would give you all that a friend could give. If I am your friend, I must love you all that I can love. If I am your friend, I must do for you all that I can do. Since it is with my mind that I love you and with my body that I help you, hence, for your sake as well as for mine, I must keep my mind alert and my body healthy. If I abuse my body, I not only do an injustice to myself but also to you, my friend. Since I am your friend, I pledge you a mind that is healthy and alert so that you can be assured of maximum help. When my mind is gone, I can love you no more. When my body has gone, I can serve you no more. May God help me to keep both well so that I may love you and serve you more and better.

0A.36 Chapter 36. A Yawn

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A Yawn Not long ago Mrs. Hyles and I were riding with some friends when my wife yawned. After a brief chuckle by all of us I reminded my friends that in many respects a yawn is a symbol of love and affection.

How can a yawn be a symbol of love and affection? There are people before whom we would never yawn. We do not know them that well. We do not feel that much liberty in their presence. On the other hand, there are those with whom we feel at home and who are dear and near enough to us to take us as we are. When around such friends as these, we do not hesitate to express ourselves, even if that expression is a yawn.

Now this little thought is certainly not to advocate rudeness or lack of manners. Certainly there are times when even around my dearest friends, a yawn would be inappropriate, but on the other hand, there are times when with those who are very dear to us we open our mouths and have a big yawn. In so doing we say subconsciously, "I love you and you are dear to me!"

0A.37 Chapter 37. How To Be A Friend

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How To Be A Friend

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

"Hello, friend" were the words that I spoke recently to a stranger walking down the sidewalk. Immediately I was rebuked. What a careless use of a most sacred word. Add the word "friend" to the words mother, father, son, daughter, and wife. This is the lofty position that it should hold. Too many of us have taken friendship far too lightly. In the New Testament there are two main words that are translated "friend." One of these words means "comrade, acquaintance, fellow traveler." the other means "one dearly beloved" or "one held precious and dear." Many people never have even one true friend, and few people have many true friends. Cultivating such friendships can become one of life's greatest and most enriching experiences.

1. Be concerned in being a friend, not in having a friend. Many would love to have a true friend, but few are interested in being a true friend. Now it would be an unholy motive for one to be a friend in order that he might have a friend. Nevertheless it is true that to have friends one must be a friend. It is far more noble, however, for one to satisfy himself with being a friend. It is better to be a friend than to have a friend. By being a friend one develops character and integrity. Do not spend your life trying to cultivate one's friendship, but rather try to cultivate your own friendship to others. I recently said to someone, "Being loved is life's second greatest blessing; loving is the greatest." Paraphrased it could be said that having a friend is a great blessing, but being a friend is a greater blessing.

2. Remember what a friend is. A friend is one who is loved dearly. Do not offer such friendship lightly or casually. It is the kind of friendship which has abiding love and endearment. Just as one should weigh his choice of a mate carefully and wisely, even so should he weigh carefully and wisely the offering of true friendship. This does not mean, of course, that one could not be a friend to many in the usual meaning of friend. It simply means that in the true meaning of friend there should be depth and emotion. One should not assume true friendships unless he can offer both depth and emotion.

3. Start doing sacrificial things for others. One of the best places to start in being a friend is living for others. General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, sent a telegram to a Salvation Army Convention during his last days because his health would not permit him to attend personally. The telegram simply said, "Others," and was signed, General Booth.

Others

"Lord, help me live from day to day

In such a self-forgetful way,

That even when I kneel to pray

My prayer shall be for others.

"Others, Lord, yes, others,

Let this my motto be,

Help me to live for others,

That I may live like Thee.

"Help me in all the work I do

To ever be sincere and true,

And know that all I'd do for You

Must needs be done for others.

"Let `Self' be crucified and slain

And buried deep; and all in vain

May efforts be to rise again

Unless to live forothers.

"And when my work on earth is done,

And my new work in Heaven's begun,

May I forget the crown I've won,

While thinking still of others."

4. The need of a friend should be considered your need. When a friend is in need, you should be in need. When a friend has a need, you have a need. This is what the Bible means by compassion. We suffer with those who suffer. We are admonished to do so in the Scriptures: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." (Romans 12:15) As soon as a need is seen in a friend's life, a true friend will begin attempting ways of filling this need.

5. Feel as if you are a member of the family. Often ties of friendship become closer than some family ties. This is especially true if the friendship is in the Lord. The Bible speaks of "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24) One should not feel in such a relationship that he has family privileges, but he should feel that he has family responsibilities.

It is sad for a person to live and die and never develop such friendships. One of the great joys of my life is loving people for whom I would die and having the love of people who would die for me. This kind of relationship carries with it responsibilities. These responsibilities are akin to those caused by family ties. Once some dear friends had a need in their house. Before I knew it, I found myself purchasing that need at a considerable expense. As I examine the reasons behind this

purchase, I found the main one was that I subconsciously felt it was as my need for my house; hence, I must provide it.

6. Build up your friend's friends. Circumstances and distance often make it impossible for us to be or do for our friends as we would like. In such cases there is still a way that we can help provide for the needs of our friends. We may encourage, train, and help others who are in a position to provide the needs of our friends. It may mean some unselfish sacrifice on our part. But if our thoughts are on others, it matters not where the credit goes; it only matters that the friend is helped. As a pastor, with many thousands of members, I find it impossible to do for all of my friends what I would like to do. I can, however, teach their other friends how to be to them what I would like to be and cannot be. This may mean that my friend will feel a closer friendship with the one whom I trained than with me. However, since our goal in this chapter is to be a friend and not have a friend, it still can be reached by using this method.

7. Enjoy the presence of your friends. Man is not omnipresent. This means that he can be in only one place at one time, which is quite a handicap to busy people. This means that there are people with whom we would love to spend many hours but with whom we are privileged to spend just a few. When these opportunities come, they should be enjoyed to their fullest.

8. Spend some time with your friends even in their absence. One should know who his friends are and those to whom he has given his friendship. It has long been my policy to make a list of people to whom I am a true friend. Many times a month I go over this list and spend some time thinking of and praying for those to whom I am a true friend. This is usually done late in the evening in the hours of meditation. This article is being dictated on a jet plane flying to Tokyo, Japan. I have spend and will spend much time on such a trip thinking of those people who may call me their friend and whom I call my friends. It has long been my policy also to spend some time with and thinking about those who were once my friends and are now in Heaven. I try to remember their lives and thank God for the friendship that I once enjoyed with them.

9. Do kind deeds for loved ones of departed friends.It is impossible to do something for those friends who have passed on except as we do it to those of their loved ones who remain. David brought a little crippled fellow by the name of Mephibosheth to his palace to live with him in honor of his departed friend, Jonathan. This was the only way David could do something for Jonathan. The pastor who preceded me at the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, is a godly man. When he left Hammond, he assumed a pastorate in California. The miles prevented our church from regularly doing kind deeds for him. Realizing this, we purchased a little house and gave it to his father rent-free as long as he lived. Upon the death of his father, we then offered it to his aunt with the same arrangement. Now to be sure we loved his father and we love his aunt, and we do such gestures because of that love; however, it is also a way of expressing our love for the former pastor in that we express it now to his loved ones.

Friendship is a very serious and sacred thing. It should be treated as such!

0A.38 Chapter 38. Growth In Grace

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Growth In Grace "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Peter 2:2)

Recently while traveling in a distant state I read of an interview with a coach of a champion football team. He was speaking of the difference between just professional football players and champion football players. He made an interesting comment concerning the difference. He said that all professional football players do 75% of what is expected of them. In other words, to be a professional football player one has to make a fair grade. "Then," he said, "to become a champion one has to master the other 25%." Just making a passing grade is not enough. The difference between just a "pro" and a champion is the mastering of that which is above the calling of duty and above the expected. The same is true with a Christian. To be just a good Christian is not enough. We should want to become the best Christian possible. Of course, there are necessary things that one must do in order to grow in grace. He must live in the Word. He must walk with God. He must witness, attend the services of the church faithfully, etc. The following are a few of the rules of growing in grace that have to do with the other 25%.

1. Do not compare yourself with others. It is not enough to be a better Christian than someone else. It is only enough to become a better Christian than I now am, and to become the best "me" possible to the glory of God. Suppose one became the best Christian in his class or at work. having this as a goal he has limited his growth in grace.

Another danger in comparing one’s self with other Christians is that normally the one that does the comparing comes out with the "long end of the stick." We are prone to give ourselves the benefit of the doubt, and we might come short of what we could have been simply by wanting to satisfy ourselves as becoming a better Christian than someone else.

2. It is important to be around those more mature than we are. Seeing examples is a very important part of growing in grace. Most of us do not have the ability to see intangibles such as ideas, etc. Few people can see or define loyalty, for example. Hence, they must see a loyal person. In order for an average person to comprehend such things as character, integrity, honesty, etc., he must see it incarnate or embodied. This is why it is important for us to be near people whom we would like to emulate.

Here is the mistake of many preachers. We talk about ideas that we can see clearly but which many of our people have a difficult time comprehending. Jesus took great truths and clothed them in simplicity. He spoke of great truths and likened them to getting married, eating bread, drinking water, growing a vineyard, running away from home, losing money, etc. This is just another way of saying "stay in the right crowd." Yet it does in a sense go a little deeper. It implies staying in a crowd that can challenge your best. It implies association with stronger Christians, at least those stronger in certain points.

3. Do not have as your main goal to become a better Christian. This in itself could invite selfishness. Don't forget that one is to lose himself, not measure himself. Someone has said that humility is not just thinking little of yourself, but it is not thinking of yourself at all. In the realm of Christian love, for example, far too many of us want to love more. Now this is not a bad motive. Much holier than this, however, is the motive to have friends whom we want to be loved more, and if we can somehow increase our love and our capacity to love, our friends can have more love. Hence it is nobler not to want to be a greater lover, but to want your friends to receive a greater love, realizing that if our friends do receive a greater love, we must become greater lovers. We then, to an extent, have purified our motive.

4. Do not measure or display your spiritual growth or size. Oftentimes in failing to display Christian maturity, one demonstrates it. A Christian, yea, especially a mature Christian, should learn to meet his fellow Christians on their own level of conversation. Of course, by this I do not mean base conversation, evil speaking, etc. I simply mean that as one grows in grace he finds fewer people who know his vocabulary. The stronger will have to use the vocabulary of the weaker and much of the time the stronger will have to live on the level of the weaker. This means that the more a Christian grows in grace, the lonelier he will become. It also means that he will hunger for someone with whom to talk who has obtained the comparable level of spiritual maturity. This is why oftentimes depth looks shallow and profundity looks simple. This is why a most mature Christian is often not recognized as such because he has attained enough maturity to meet each Christian on his own level.

You recall that Jesus became more lonely as He approached the top of the mountain. He left the multitude and went with the twelve. After a while he left nine of the twelve and took only the three. It was not long until even the three were asleep, and He was alone with the Father. This means that the best Christian may be the loneliest Christian in the world. It also means that he will have to spend much time with God and that he will have to exert understanding and strength in his relationship with weaker Christians. Did you ever stop and think that the burden of reconciliation always rests with the strong and not the weak? Realizing that the sinned against will be more spiritual, God places the burden of reconciliation upon him and not upon the sinner. Hence, Jesus directs His discussion of being reconciled to the brother who is stronger, the person sinned against. When He speaks of being reconciled, He talks to the one whose brother has aught against him, and not primarily to the one who has aught against his brother.

If one is so deep that he cannot be understood by the shallow, how then can he help them? To have these deep thoughts is fine, and to discuss them with light maturity is fine, but to speak always on the level of one's own spiritual attainment is neither profitable nor helpful. In other words, spiritual growth is of little use unless it can be transferred into energy and into the service of God and others. To know a truth simply for the purpose of knowing a truth is vanity. To seek truth just for self edification is selfishness. To seek more truth in order to gain strength to help others is Christlike.

5. One must remember in Christian growth that the more he grows in grace the fewer the number that will think him to be mature.The more one grows in grace, the lonelier he will become. Hence, the fewer the people who will understand him and be qualified to judge his spiritual maturity. Hence, one of the heartbreaks of Christian growth is that it is often unrecognized by others.

Carnality cannot weigh spirituality. Hence the mature Christian will have to find his comparison in being strong enough to help others rather than receiving their acclaim. The greatest person who ever lived was put to death on the cross. The more we become like Him the fewer are those who can understand us. This is why weaker Christians are often judged to be better Christians. Pride cannot judge true humility. Carnality cannot judge true spirituality. The weak cannot properly judge the strong. Hence, many of the great Christians are seldom recognized as such. The flesh, however, does attempt to recognize spiritual qualities. In so doing, the flesh makes its own humility, its own love, its own meekness, etc. When the flesh makes its own qualities, it then tries to satisfy them and meet the requirements. Most of us are far too concerned with being considered a lover than about being a lover. Most of us are more concerned about meeting the fleshly standards of humility than we are about being humble. Hence, the great satisfaction of growing in grace will ultimately have to be in pleasing the Saviour and becoming strong enough to be a help to others.

0A.39 Chapter 39. Too Many Chiefs And Not Enough Indians

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Too Many Chiefs And Not Enough Indians

"Go to the top" is the cry that every young person hears in our generation. Now the truth is that the "top" is rarely as large as the bottom. The farther toward the top of the pyramid one gets, the fewer stones he will find. The simple truth is that everybody cannot go to the top. Actually, going high is simply relative anyway. If everybody gets high, then high is no longer high. If everyone gets educated, then no one will be educated, for these terms are but relative ones. There was a time when a high school graduate was highly educated and considered more qualified than a college graduate is today. This is not to say that one should not accumulate all of the facts possible. Neither is it to say that one should not receive training. However, it seems to me that most of our educational institutions are training people to be leaders. Why shouldn't some schools train some students to be followers? When everyone in a society becomes a leader, anarchy is inevitable. Far too many people who are meant to be Indians are trying to be the chief, and many who are meant to be followers are trying to be leaders. If we have a need today, it is for good Indians. Were there no soldiers, there could be no generals. Were there no children, there could be no parents. Were there no employees, there could be no employers. Were there no citizens, there could be no President, and if there are no Indians, there can be no chiefs. Just as God calls some to be leaders, he calls more to be followers. We need the Aarons and the Hurs to hold up the hands of Moses. We need some to go with Saul to Gibeah-a band of men whose hearts God had touched. We need the seven men full of the Holy Ghost to help the apostles in their work. We need the deacons to hold up the hands of the pastors.

God, give us leaders, to be sure, but God, give us followers also. We have said, "Go to the top, go to the top, go to the top," so long that the top is heavier than the foundation, and it is bound to crumble. Let us simply say, "Go as high as you can," but if you can go no higher than the foundation, you may still be used to hold up the entire building. Thank God for the chief, but praise the Lord for faithful Indians!

0A.40 Chapter 40. Autumn

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Autumn The time of the year that listens to the echoes of the happiness of summer and girds itself for the coming chill of winter is know as autumn. Perhaps no season of the year does as much to the emotions of men as does autumn. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a season of leaves, when the nature dots each leaf with a different color and blends it into a beautiful painting that no artist can capture. It is a season of stacks and piles of leaves and the smell of their burning. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a season of trees, when they, like Joseph of old, put on their coats of many colors and thrill the heart of each observer. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a season of crisp air, when God's air-conditioning is turned on in full blast, causing a spring in the step and a sharpness in the air such as no other season can cause. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a season of melancholy, when mothers who had dreaded summer and the bother of the children find themselves missing Johnny and Susie in the loneliness of a quiet living room after school has snatched them away. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a time of memories-memories of a wonderful summer, the best vacation we ever had, happy meals in roadside restaurants, picnics, ants, flies, car trips, shower baths, and playgrounds. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a time to reflect upon the joys of summer, when the family was closer than at any time of the year. Now we separate to go our several ways with our many activities and varied interests but with memories to keep us together until we pack next year for an ever greater vacation. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a season of explanation, as wide-eyed children tell teachers that this was the best summer ever. They explain with loud voices about the trip to Grandpa's farm, the feeding of the chipmunks in the mountains, and the catching of the biggest fish ever (which must have weighed at least a half pound, and whose picture weighed five pounds, and which weighs twelve pounds in the memory of innocent childhood!). ... Autumn.

Autumn is a season of the sound of footballs and the encouragement of cheerleaders. It is a time when every team is undefeated and has dreams of the championship. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a time of cleaning, when lonely mothers sigh and clean the finger-prints and cluttered closets of little ones whose empty room is suddenly a sanctuary. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a time of tears, when mothers and fathers say good-bye to college students who only last year were in kindergarten. It is a time of wondering where the years have gone, a time of bewilderment as we try to remember just a little of the brief period between kindergarten and

college. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a time of the familiar squeak of unoiled school bus brakes, as we see the well-scrubbed children across the street getting aboard. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a time of reunion, when school friends measure each other to see the growth of the summer and when friends forgotten for weeks seem dearer than ever before. Forgotten are the differences of the past year. Forgotten are the arguments on the ball field. Our friendship suddenly is dearer and sweeter than before. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a season when Mom has time to realize what it means to be a mother. She has been so busy being a mother that she has forgotten what being a mother really is. When the chorus of voices has faded toward the school grounds and the shuffling of little feet has left the carpet for the concrete, Mom sits down with emotion and realizes what it is to be a mother. She bows her head in thanksgiving that she has been called to be a woman that "excellest them all." ... Autumn.

Autumn is a time of weeping. Mother and Dad have wondered for days if little Susie would weep when she went off to school for her first day. Mother has girded little Susie for this occasion and has reminded her to be a good girl and not to cry. Susie, however, forgot to prepare Mother; and as Susie goes off to school skipping and laughing, it is mother who wits down and cries, as Dad is bothered with a recurring sinus condition. ... Autumn.

Autumn is a time when Dad bundles up all the bills to see how much month is left at the end of the money. He shakes his head and listens more carefully to the commercials concerning "Friendly Bob Adams and the Household Finance Corporation" and ponders his "plight to the poorhouse" as he prays for God’s wisdom and help to provide for his family. ... Autumn. But in it all, autumn should be a time of dedication. The turning of the grass, the dropping of the flower seed, the dying of the leaves, the fading of the summer all remind us of the "Corn of Wheat" that fell in the ground two thousand years ago at Calvary. It reminds us that One had to die that we might live. As sure as autumn reminds us of His death, the hope of spring reminds us of His resurrection; for these same trees shall bloom again, the same grass shall grow again, these dying flowers shall blossom again, and our Saviour rose again!

Autumn, finally, is a time to die. It is a time for us, with the flowers, trees, grass, and nature to die. We should die to self, die to our own pleasures, and live unto Christ.

We look back in retrospect at the summer and brace ourselves for the chilling winds of winter. Let us enjoy the most beautiful season of them all - the season, death - for in death nature is at its prettiest, Jesus reached His glory, and we become our best for Him.

0A.41 Chapter 41. A Good Name

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A Good Name

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." (Proverbs 22:1)

"A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth." (Ecclesiastes 7:1)

"Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place." (Proverbs 24:15)

There used to be an old saying, "His word is as good as his signature." The phrase "good name" in Proverbs 22:1 implies more than a name that folks like. It implies a good risk, a good credit name, a good business reputation, integrity, character, honesty, etc. Certainly this is rather to be chosen than great riches. Money cannot give a person a good name, but a good name can get him money. Hence, if one does not have both, it is better to have a good name. It is important to start early in the life of a child teaching him to have such a name. In the first place, children should be taught to be discreet about indebtedness. Exercise care in going into debt and assuming obligations that cannot easily be met. He should be taught that a debt should be paid on or before the day it is due. He should be taught that anything less than this is dishonesty. In spite of the fact that care should be exercised in the making of financial obligations, it is, nevertheless, a definite asset for a person to have good credit. I advise young couples to establish good credit immediately upon marriage. Time and again I have encouraged young couples to go to the bank and borrow a hundred dollars, pay it back in a few days; then borrow a hundred and fifty and pay it back in a few days; then borrow two hundred and pay it back in a few days; then borrow two hundred and pay it back in a few days; then borrow two hundred fifty, etc. until they have extended their maximum borrowing power. This is a good idea for a church as well as an individual. One never know when such a credit standing will come in handy. All of the time he is developing his credit rating.

It is also a good idea for a person to buy a few things on credit from companies other than banks. Again, this can be used to help one to establish credit.

If a child is to have a good name, he should be taught to take pride in his family name. Again and again a child should be reminded of his name. A family spirit should be born. This is akin to school spirit. When I was a Paratrooper in World War II I was taught to take pride in the fact that I wore the wings and boots of the United States Paratrooper. I was taught that when I did something wrong I brought reflection against my branch of service. A child should feel the same way about his family name. He should be taught to protect it and guard it with his life.

Another thing that is important concerning the obtaining of a good name is avoiding the appearance of evil. Many names are ruined by people who do no wrong but fail to avoid the appearance of evil. Someone has said, "Your character is what you are; your reputation is what man thinks you are." How sad it is when one’s reputation does not measure up to his character. His public relations department has fallen behind the production department. He has the goods but cannot deliver them because of a bad reputation. A child should also be taught to be dependable and punctual. He should be taught to be on time and meet his obligations and appointments. This is simply another way of saying, "His word should be as good as bond." Promises should not be made lightly, carelessly, or indifferently, but rather soberly and seriously.

Many people leave their children with nothing but money and not enough character to keep from squandering it. One of the great things that a child can inherit from his mother and father is a good name. If one is so fortunate to inherit this, he should guard it carefully so his children can share it with him.

0A.42 Chapter 42. Helping Others

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Helping Others The only things that you can keep for yourself are those which you give to others.

There is no life so "empty" as the "self-centered" life: there is no life so "centered" as the "self-emptied" life. Miserable is that man who thinks of himself. Happy is that man who thinks of others. Someone has well said, "Happiness is stumbled upon in the pathway of duty."

How may I help others?

1. I must ask myself, "What can I do to help in every need I see?" I must not think, "What can another do to help?" but rather, "What can I do to help?" I must associate myself with the needs of others. Pity is not enough. Sympathy is not enough. Even compassion is not enough. I must always ask, "What can I do to help?"

2. Another's need must be by challenge. Two men had passed by the wounded one before the good Samaritan stopped to help. He did not ask, "Should I help?" but rather said, "I must help!" To see another in need was his challenge. This is true not only for the needs of a fellow that is half dead beside the road, but it is true even for the small needs of a friend. I must identify myself with him so that not only will his needs be a challenge to me, but an opportunity. His needs must be as my needs.

Perhaps being a pastor for so many years makes one feel more identified with others than he would normally feel. I find myself feeling as a part of every family of my church so that when a particular family has a decision to make, I feel that it is "our" decision. When a family has a problem, I feel that it is "our" problem. One will never know the true secret of helping others until he is challenged by their needs.

3. I must listen for the wants of others. If that want will not do harm to my friend, I must attempt to satisfy it. Recently I was preaching in a distant state and noticed a beautiful "tie tac" worn by a fellow pastor. I commented to him about the beauty of the "tie tac." The next evening he handed me a little envelope. As I drove off from the service I opened the envelop and found the "tie tac" that I had admired before. (The next night I bragged on his suit, but to no avail.)

4. I must determine the answer to another's needs even if I am not asked.Of course, I will not offer the answer unless I am asked to do so. I must not appear to be a know-it- all, yet I must always attempt to find the answers to the needs of others. A few years ago I was leaving for a trip to the Middle East when a friend of mine said with a smile on his face, "Jack, I would suggest that you not go to Milan, Italy."

I inquired as to the reason for this suggestion, and then he said, "That is the location of the `Leaning Tower' and knowing you as I do, you would try to straighten it up while there." This is my point: I must remind myself, however, to be very careful not to volunteer my solutions, but at the

same time, I must always have tried to think of a solution in order to be able to help when asked.

5. I must not consider what others have done for me. I am debtor to all men. Whether or not someone would do it for me has nothing to do with my decision to help him. The Apostle Paul said that he was debtor to all men, to the Jew, to the Greek, to the Barbarian, yea, to every man. I, too, am such a man. I am a debtor to those who love me just because they love me. I am a debtor to those who hate me because they need me. Our Lord reminds us that it is no longer an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth, but we are to bless those who curse us, pray for those who despitefully use us, and love those who hate us. This is the law of Grace and the law of Love. I must not help others because they help me; I must help others because they need help. My motivation should not be caused by external stimuli but internal love and compassion. The unkind may need more than the kind, the ugly more than the pretty, the bad more than the good, the weak more than the strong, so I must remember never to let what others do for me motivate my deeds for them.

6. I must be careful that what I do is best for others and not what others think I should do for them. My satisfaction should not come from satisfying others but from helping others. My goal should not be to be loved and admired by others but to help others. Hence, I must not always do for another what he thinks should be done for him. This means that oftentimes those whom I love most will understand me the least. It means sometimes the ones for whom I do the most will think I do them harm. It may not be until we are in Heaven that my brother will understand that I have helped him, but help him I must, and help him I will! My goal is not to please him but to help him. To be sure, to please him is a welcome bonus; to help him is the great reward.

7. I must wait for vindication when misunderstood. The One Who helped others the most was crucified, misunderstood, hated, and rejected of men. Could it be that the more I become like Him the more I, too, will be misunderstood, rejected, and hated of men? When, and if, I am so honored to be counted worthy to suffer with Him, may it be because I, with Him, have tried to help others. And may I leave to Him the vindication and the retaliation.

I know a preacher who was hated by another. He sought no retaliation, but instead did anonymous favors for his enemy. In due time he was completely vindicated, and his enemy fell into sin and reproach. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Romans 12:19) I must help those who need help the most. The one who does me evil is in the most need of my help.

8. I must not be happy about my vindication. It has been a wonderful thing through the years to watch the hand of God upon my ministry. Miraculous things have happened as God has vindicated His Word and soul winning through the years. Unfortunate things have happened to people who have lifted up their hands against God’s anointed. Though I rejoice in God’s protecting hand, I must not rejoice when misfortune falls to others as God vindicates me. I must remember to let God care for the vengeance, and I must comfort my enemies even while they suffer such vengeance. I must be happy about God’s protection of me, but I must not be happy when another suffers.

9. I must claim wisdom to help others. I do not always know the needs of another. Since his wants may not be his needs, and since I, too, am limited by human frailties, I must seek divine help and wisdom to determine his needs. I have this promise from the Holy Spirit: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, That giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5) I must claim this promise. Without it, I could misinterpret the needs of

others and do them harm instead of good.

How then may I get wisdom? I may get it by reading diligently the book of Proverbs, which is the book of wisdom. I may get it by fellowship with those who are wise. In fact, there is a bit of wisdom that I can get from every man. Every man knows something that I do not know; I must probe until I find it; hence, all men are my teachers.

Others

"Lord, help me live from day to day

In such a self-forgetful way,

That even when I kneel to pray

My prayer shall be for others.

"Others, Lord, yes, others,

Let this my motto be,

Help me to live for others,

That I may live like Thee.

"Help me in all the work I do

To ever be sincere and true,

And know that all I'd do for You

Must needs be done for others.

"Let `Self' be crucified and slain

And buried deep; and all in vain

May efforts be to rise again

Unless to live for others.

0A.43 Chapter 43. Gentleness

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Gentleness In Galatians 5:22 we find mentioned the fruit of the Spirit. Notice very carefully that this does not say the "fruits" of the Spirit. Each of these graces or qualities is a portion of one "fruit." Oftentimes people erroneously teach that soul winning is only one of the fruits and try to prove their point with Galatians 5:22. You will notice, however, that soul winning is not a part of the fruit of the Spirit. Neither is it a part of the gifts of the Spirit. Every Christian is to be a soul winner.

Let’s use the simple illustration of a fire department. Every fireman is to put out fires, but there is a certain way that firemen should behave. They should have clean uniforms and clean fire trucks. They should know the streets of the city. They should be courteous. They should be physically strong, etc. No one, however, would say that a fireman should spend all of his time doing calisthenics just to be physically strong. Neither would one say that having a clean uniform would substitute for putting out fires. It is understood that every fireman is to put out fires, but there are some things that firemen should do as they put out fires and as firemen. The Great Commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," is given to every Christian. Soul winning is not one of the gifts; it is every Christian’s job. However, as we win folks to Christ, there is a fruit that we are to have, and that fruit is the fruit of the Spirit as mentioned in Galatians 5:1-26. As we go soul winning we are to have love. As we go soul winning we are to have meekness. As we go soul winning we are to have joy, etc.

One part of this fruit is gentleness. Gentleness is not a substitute for soul winning, but is a supplement for soul winning. In other words, we are to be gentle as we serve God.

If a person refuses to obey Christ in carrying out the Great Commission, he will have to find a synthetic fruit. One who works mainly at having love will have a synthetic kind of love. One who works mainly at having any part of the fruit of the Spirit will find it something that is tacked on and not built-in. When one gets the fulness of the Holy Spirit for soul winning, he will then have an inbred fruit of the Spirit. This kind will not fail him in a crisis. It is a part of him. Such is the case about gentleness.

1. There are several words in the Greek which are translated "gentleness." One is a word which comes from two words which mean "into" and "fitting." Putting them together we come up with "fitting into" or better still, "appropriate." We must learn to be appropriate. This would include manners, ethics, etc. Christian people should know how to dress to fit the occasion. They should know the proper eating manners and social graces. They should learn to be appropriate.

Much care should be taken that in teaching such things we do not rear children to become "snobs." The having of manners should not be an end in itself but rather a means to an end. We must remember that manners are only customs. The Japanese sits on the floor while he eats. When eating in a Japanese home one should do likewise. To set a strict, rigid rule for manners is unwise. All such things are relative and one should be more interested in being appropriate than in

adhering to a rigid set of rules that make him offensive. However, one should know what is considered proper and be able and willing to be appropriate as long as being appropriate does not mean the giving up of conviction.

I was in a certain home recently as a guest at a meal. It was a poor home and one inhabited by godly people, yet people who did not know what normally would be considered good manners. The head of the house grabbed the fork in one hand, the knife in the other, put his elbows on the table, lowered his mouth three or four inches from the plate and began to "shovel it in." Now I was not equipped with the talent necessary to copy him. I did, however, ask if he would give me permission to divide my biscuit and sop the gravy. (Now in most circles this would not be proper.) Not only did he give me permission, but he said, "You are a regular fellow. I like you! You are not like most preachers!" The story is told that Abraham Lincoln was once eating at a formal banquet when a fellow next to him poured his coffee into his saucer and drank from the saucer. The elite audience was shocked at such a gesture. Abraham Lincoln realized the man's embarrassment and likewise poured his coffee into his saucer and began to drink from it. Perhaps the greatness of Abraham Lincoln is manifested in such acts as this as well as in his statesmanship and leadership.

I have often thought that perhaps real education is knowing enough to fit into any situation that is moral and not feel uncomfortable or cause others to feel uncomfortable. If one's education allows him only to behave with the educated, he is yet lacking. On the other hand, for one to be unwilling because of prejudice to know how to fit in gracefully with the educated also shows a sign of character deficiency. We must remember, however, that the purpose of all of this is not that we be good appropriate people. This in itself would be an unholy motive. We must remember the purpose is that all classes of people need help, and by learning the true meaning of the word "gentleness" we may not only be able to reach all but also to help all. The rich man needs help as well as the poor. The elite one needs help as much as the uncouth. The up-and-outers need help as well as the down-and-outers.

I tell my boy that I want him to be at home on the ball field, when company comes, at church, at a symphony concert, or at the fishing hole. Appropriate manners, appropriate dress, appropriate conversation, etc. should be a vital part of every child's education. One would not want to wear a tuxedo on a fishing trip. Neither would he want to wear a leather jacket to a wedding. This is the first use of gentleness in the Bible. this particular word is found in Titus 3:2, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."

2. There is another word translated "gentleness" in the Bible. This could be called "firm care." This is found in 2 Timothy 2:24, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient." Gentleness is not weakness. It is not even what the average person calls meekness. It is not softness. Gentleness is firmness. Gentleness is strength. It is love wrapped in character. It is as the nurse with the child. She does not yield to the child's whims but loves the child enough to be firm to do things for the healing of the child. Gentleness is the teacher handling the slow student. It is not the overlooking of the student's weaknesses, but the firm leadership of the student that he may do better. Gentleness is the parent handling the trying child. It is disciplining with a tear for the good of the child. This is the reason that a child needs a mother and dad. The softness of a mother with the firmness of a father are chosen by God to be used as a beautiful blend in the rearing of children.

3. Still another word used in the New Testament for gentleness could be translated "evenness." We have learned as we have discussed the subject of meekness that meekness is not looking down upon or up to anyone, not thinking ourselves better or worse than anyone, not thinking of ourselves at all, but looking at everyone equally. Now gentleness could be called "the acting out of meekness." Meekness is the feeling that we have to all men; gentleness is the acting out of that feeling. It is the laboratory of the theory of meekness. In other words, there should be an evenness about our handling of people. We should be as nice to the poor as to the rich. We should be as courteous to those who need our help as to those who help us.

How can we do this and live Bible gentleness? First, we can learn to know all types of people. For a person to become a well-rounded, gentle Christian, he must learn to walk with the illiterate and also with the scholar without feeling uneasy or causing uneasiness. To do this one must plan to rub shoulders with all classes in order that he may know their needs, their heartbreaks, their sorrows, their joys, their victories, and their defeats. For one to limit his contacts to any certain class of people is to limit his opportunity to help people.

Then one must learn to do many things. The pianist could well afford to learn to play sports. The sportsman could wisely learn something about music. One’s interest must be varied if he is to help people in all walks of life.

We should also read a variety of things. For many years now I have read such magazines as the Nation’s Business, National Geographic, Reader’s Digest, and even Better Homes and Gardens. (Yes, you read it right.) I have read sports magazines and other educational publications. All of this is simply to reach people and help people in all walks of life. Since I have tried to help so many ladies, I should know something of their interests. Since I want to help businessmen, I must know something of the business and economic condition of our nation.

There are many other things that would lead a person to be able to help people in all walks of life and all classes. It is important, for example, that every child be influenced by a mother and father. It is important that we learn to keep our hobbies as hobbies and not get the cart before the horse. And of course, it is important that we walk daily with Him. He could talk to a ruler one day and a fallen woman at the well another. He could speak intelligently about bread to the baker, about the stars to the astrologer, about water to the woman, about a vine to the husbandman, about truth to the philosopher, about sheep to the shepherd, about plowing to the farmer, about mediation to lawyer, about fishing to the fisherman, and about marriage to the lover. He is our example of gentleness.

0A.44 Chapter 44. The Christian's Cabinet

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The Christian’s Cabinet The wise man said, "... in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Even the President of the United States realizes this and chooses for himself a group of men whom he calls his cabinet. These men are experts in different fields in which the President has to make decisions. He meets with them for counsel and advice.

Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. said, "You can borrow brains, but you cannot borrow character." Perhaps it could be said that one who does not need to borrow character will inevitably borrow brains.

Each person should have several people on his cabinet. "For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety." (Proverbs 24:6) "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established." (Proverbs 15:22) "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." (Proverbs 11:14)

Pity the know-it-all. Pity the person who has come to the place where he thinks he does not need advice and counsel. Of course, one should be very careful that he chooses only Christian counselors. "Blessed is the man that walketh no in the counsel of the ungodly ..." (Psalms 1:1) It is dangerous and unwise for a high school student to seek the counsel of so-called senior counselors if they are not Christians. To be sure, the students should not be rude to them, and they should listen to them but not consider the things that they have to say.

Now who should be on one’s cabinet?

1. The Pastor.Before making any serious decision certainly one would want to counsel with his pastor. This could be done oftentimes in a private conference. Other times simply a telephone conversation will do, but the wise person will seek the counsel of his pastor before making life’s great decisions. This is the reason that parents should build the pastor up in the minds of their children. The day may come when a young person will have to have the help of a counselor. It well might be that the pastor is the only one that can help. At that time the parent will be glad that he has taught his children to respect the pastor. The parents who criticize the pastor at home are teaching them not to go to the pastor when they need his counsel and advice, and in the long run, they do irreparable harm to the child. When the child needs the counsel of his pastor, he will not seek his advice nor follow it. Many lives could have been saved had parents been more careful in their conversation about the pastor around their family circle. The godly pastor longs to help his people. He will be glad to counsel with you. Seek his advice. He should be on your cabinet.

2. Choose someone with the gift of wisdom. The Apostle Paul speaks in his first letter to the Corinthian church about the gifts of the Spirit. One of these gifts is the gift of wisdom. God graciously gives to some a double portion of discernment and wisdom. Each person should seek out such people and have one or more on his cabinet. One should not be afraid to seek their

advice. Such a person is inevitably interested in the lives of others as this trait is inseparable with this gift.

3. A sincere friend. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." (Proverbs 27:9) This should not be someone given to extravagant flattery, but who is friend enough to be honest, sincere, and frank. This counselor should be one who knows you well, loves you dearly in spite of your faults, and would counsel you for your own good and not for his own personal benefit of standing with you.

4. Someone who is successful in your field or in the field you plan to enter. If, for example, a young person is going to be a school teacher, he should also have a cabinet member who is successful in the teaching profession. To be sure this person should be a Christian. Every person should have such a cabinet member.

5. Parents (if Christians). Each child should feel that he is able to go talk to his mother and father. Oftentimes parents say such things as, "You don't know how hard it is for kids to talk to their parents," or "The hardest person to talk to is someone in your own family." This should not be so, and it need not be so. There are several things parents can do to avoid such a catastrophe, and it is definitely a catastrophe!

(1) Start early in the child's life having regular talks with the child. This will help develop an at-homeness between the parent and the child. One of the problems concerning the line of communication between parents and child is the fact that we wait so long to start developing such habits that we find it awkward to do so. Because of this, regular talks should begin early in the life of the child.

(2) Nothing should appear to be funny to the parent. Appear to be interested. Their problems may seem trivial to you, but they are dead serious to your children. If they feel that you think the problems are humorous, they will not return to you with their problems the next time. Be interested, listen carefully, and never make light of their conversation no matter how trivial it may seem.

(3) Treat them as adults. Never talk about their love as being puppy love, and never let the child feel that you look down at him as he shares with you his problems.

(4) Listen carefully to everything they say. Let them present their case. Do not interrupt with premature advice. Be sure the entire case has been presented before the jury gives its verdict. Many times this s the main thing that a child wants - just someone to listen to him.

(5) Always have time for private conversation with the child. If the parent does not take time for the child when the child is young, the child will not take time for the parent when he is old. Do not make the child feel that you are rushed. Give him ample time and let him know that he is tremendously important to you.

(6) Be on the lookout for times when the child might want to talk to his parent. Sometimes the young person might be a bit timid to talk to Mom and Dad. Oftentimes a wise mother or father will suggest that they talk as he sees the need arising in the life of a child. Be on the lookout for such times and give ample opportunity for them to discuss their problems with you.

(7) Always be confidential. When the child talks to the parent in confidence, it should be kept in strict confidence. Once the parent has betrayed this the child will be reluctant to share his problems with the parent again or to return to the parent for counsel.

(8) Build up the child's confidence in the parent. There should be a definite understanding that Mom and Dad are big and important people. A child should be trained to believe that Dad's advice is as good as the school teacher's and that Mom's is as good as any special counselor's. Do not make such statements as, "Dad is not an expert here." Lead the child to believe that Mother and Dad are loving experts who can give advice worthy of being followed.

We have been discussing the Christian's cabinet. On that cabinet should be the Pastor, the parents, someone with the gift of wisdom, sincere friends, and people successful in your chosen field. Take a moment now and list your cabinet. Write their names on a piece of paper. Keep the list accessible. When there is a decision to make, go to your cabinet members and ask their counsel and advice. Of course, the decision is yours, but it should no be made without consulting the cabinet.

0A.45 Chapter 45. Education

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Education

"Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." (Proverbs 4:7) "To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion." (Proverbs 1:4) "My son, attend unto my wisdom , and bow thine ear to my understanding." (Proverbs 5:1)

"How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!" (Proverbs 16:16) "He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good." (Proverbs 19:8)

Education is the acquiring of knowledge and the wisdom with which to use it properly. Few things have been as perverted in our generation as the concept of what education really is.

1. Formal education is just one form of education. To be sure, it is a very vital one, but it is not the only one. There are those among us, sad to say, who feel that the only way to acquire an education is through formal training. Some have even made a god of formal education and have fallen into the pit of judging every person by how many schools and what schools he has attended. Someone has said, "There is no fool like an educated fool." Perhaps an educated fool is one of those persons who feels that one’s social standing should be determined by the number of hours he has spent in formal training. The truth is that some of the most educated people that I have ever met had very little formal training. This is not to discount the importance of formal training; it is simply to attempt to keep others from discounting the importance of the acquiring of knowledge and wisdom from every source and not just one. How tragic it is to find someone so self-centered and so perverted that he feels the only way to acquire knowledge is in the use of the particular methods he used. Someone has said, "The only difference between college graduates and those who have never been to college is that they are uneducated in different subjects."

2. Education is more than knowledge. How tragic it is when one comes to a time in life when he feels that becoming an educated person is simply to become a dictionary with a fleshly binding. A truly educated person has more than an accumulation of facts. He has the wisdom with which to use those facts. When this wisdom is obtained one also becomes tolerant to those with fewer facts. Someone has said, "The most dangerous thing in the word is a man with a brain that is well educated but who does not have enough character to know how to use it.

3. All people are educated to a degree. Of course, some are educated more than others, and the truth is that most of the most educated people whom I have ever known were very limited in formal training. For example, some of the most successful preachers in history have been men with little formal training. In some cases, the pastors of the world’s largest churches are men whom some would consider unqualified to pastor and whom smaller churches would not even consider. This is

not to minimize the importance of formal training, for certainly, the usual case should allow for such training. We are simply pleading for the case of allowing some possibility that a person without the formal training could be very educated. The average pulpit committee would not consider a man with the formal training of a Dwight Moody or Billy Sunday. How sad!

4. Successful people without the formal training are the exception rather than the rule.It is usually best for young people to pursue the normal preparation required for a certain field. I recommend to my young men who are called to preach that they go to college, and if possible, seminary. A young man once went to a seminary professor on his first day in school and said, "I want to preach." The seminary president asked, "Do you have any sermons?"

"No," replied the young preacher, "but God will put the words in my heart." The president then very wisely said, "All right, go down to a certain street and a certain place and I will have an appointment for you to preach there on the street corner Saturday afternoon." The young man looked at the seminary president with a puzzled expression and said, "Why sir, that is in the Mexican area of town. Those people speak Spanish."

"Well," replied the president, "Since God is going to put the words in your heart, He may as well put Spanish as English."

Someone once said to a famous preacher, "God doesn’t need your education." The preacher wisely replied, "God doesn’t need your ignorance either."

Hence, it is the usual and safest course for young people to pursue the formal education generally required for success in their chosen fields. There must be, however, room allowed for the success of those who have climbed the ladder without this particular form of training.

5. Taste is not a sign of education.One of the most disgusting things in the world to sane people is to find someone who thinks he is more educated than another because he likes a certain kind of music, a certain kind of art, etc. These things are relative. There is no such thing as better music or better art. It so happens that I like what is commonly called better music and better art, but who is to say which is better of the things that are purely relative. In our day a fellow can throw a tomato on a canvas, squirt some mustard all over it, pour on a little black pepper, stir it beyond recognition and call it modern art. One can get an old rim of a tire, beat it with a hammer, cover it with canvas and unveil it as sculpture. Many people develop superiority complexes and even an excess of pride because they have the idea that education is in developing the certain tastes and appreciations that they have been brainwashed to believe are the criterion of being an educated person. Folly! The question then comes, "How can we become educated persons?" One way is to know the Bible. The Bible is the basis of truth. Nothing is true which is contrary to the Word of God. Not only will the knowing of the Bible make a person more educated, but the reading of the Bible will improve his English, literature appreciation, and refinement.

Another way to become an educated person is to watch and observe great people. Some great people are teaching in schools. Many are not. Regardless of where greatness is found, one should avail himself of the opportunity of observing it.

Someone told me this when I was a kid preacher. I subsequently invited every great man I could to preach in my churches. What a tremendous contribution this has made to my life. What a privilege

it has been for me to observe greatness and watch great people. I trust that some of it has "rubbed off."

Another way to obtain an education is by reading. Many have said that formal education is simply teaching a person how to read. To say the least, one's education can be extended by constant use of books and good literature. It is wise for one not only to become well educated in his field, but somewhat educated in almost every field. For the person who has little or no opportunity for formal training, reading affords him all of the opportunities necessary for success.

Then there is the necessary thing of studying hard in school. The wise youth will make the most of his days in school. He will study hard and prepare himself for life. One of the main reasons for this is that life's habits are formed so early. One's character is molded at such at early age. One who works hard in school will probably work hard after graduation. One who just barely gets by in school will barely get by after he graduates. During school days habits are made and character is molded that will determine the success or failure of a life. Hence, every person in school should do his best and accumulate every possible bit of knowledge so that he might be used to his fullest in life.

One of the finest ways to become educated is through travel. As often as possible a person should avail himself of travel opportunities. When such opportunities arise, care should be taken in the planning of activities so as to make the trip educational as well as a pleasure.

One of the most important things in the securing of an education is the wise choice of the proper college. A college should be chosen that builds character as well as minds. It should be remembered that the type of training to be received is far more important than the prestige that comes with the diploma. Nothing is as highly exaggerated as the accreditation, etc. It is too bad that many parents are more concerned about their children getting talent than character. When a person develops character, he will develop the talent necessary to succeed in his chosen field. Oftentimes a talented person thinks he can make it without hard work, and consequently, runs from character. Character without talent will acquire the talent necessary. Talent without character is usually lazy and flabby. A college should be chosen on the basis of what it will do for the young person, not what opportunities it will give him after he graduates. The right kind off character will make the opportunities and seize upon them. Education is not the acquiring of a chance, or the acquiring of an opportunity; it is the acquiring of character and knowledge. These should be the things considered in choosing a college. In these days when communism and almost every kind of "ism" in the world can be found on college campuses, it is also vitally important that great consideration be given to Christian colleges and universities, and much counsel and advice should be received from successful spiritual people concerning the choice of a college. Thousands and thousands of godly parents have worked, saved, and even sacrificed in order that their child might get what "they were not privileged to get" - an education. Through blood, sweat, and tears they provided an education for their child, only to have his faith shaken in the Word of God and the principles he had learned at the feet of his mother and father. This is nothing more than robbery and deceit on the part of colleges and universities. Especially is this true when an institution carries the name of Christian and yet breaks down the Christian faith. In the opinion of this author it is better for a young person to go to an out-and-out secular college, where he will have his guard up and not be deceived, than to be led to believe that the school is Christian, but where he walks

away with a diploma that he did not have and without faith in the Word of God which he did have.

It is a good idea for parents to find the names of colleges that not only are places of culture, refinement, and education but places where the Word of God is honored, believed and taught. Parents should start early in the life of a child by helping create in his mind a desire to go to that college or university.

Some of the most highly educated people that I have ever known have many degrees. On the other hand, some of the most highly educated people that I have ever known have no degrees. May God give us His leadership and wisdom with which to utilize every opportunity of life in receiving an education. Then may He give us enough sense to realize that one may achieve success and become educated without following the particular route that we followed.

0A.46 Chapter 46. Rearing Children

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Rearing Children As a boy I often spent time throwing a ball up and catching it in the front yard. When my dad would walk out of the house, I would ask him to play catch with me, but he was always too busy, I can recall as a little boy saying to myself, "I will be glad when I grow up to be a daddy. I will take time to play catch with my boy."

Now for nearly seventeen years I have been a daddy. I trust I have been the kind pleasing to God and helpful to my children. When my first daughter, Becky, was born, I stood at the window of the maternity ward with a big, loose-leaf Scofield Reference Bible in my hand. I showed it to Becky through the window, and explained to her that this was the Bible and that the Bible was the Word of God. I did this to the delight and amusement of onlookers. The first night that Becky was home from the hospital I talked to her about the plan of salvation. I took her from the Garden of Eden to the New Jerusalem, and though she seemed unimpressed, I continued doing so until she was old enough to be saved.

Oh, for America to return to the kind of homes that rear children with character and integrity!

1. The rules should be clearly defined at an early age. When our children were yet infants, learning how to walk, we took them on a guided tour of the house. We pointed to the things they were not to touch and said, "No, no, no, no, no." We taught them to say, "No, no, no, no, no." Then when one of the off-limits things was touched, the child was spanked. I am talking about a one-year old. Hence, we never had to move any vases off our tables. Our children didn't rearrange our furniture or our schedule. They were taught very clearly what the rules were, and they have abided by those rules through the years.

2. Expect rigid adherence to the rules. For example, at our house eleven o'clock is curfew time. Unless special permission is granted, this is always the time for the youngsters to be at home. One minute after eleven o'clock is too late and causes disciplinary measures to be taken.

3. Strict punishment should be given when the rules are broken. The punishment should be worse than the reward is good. A child should always be taught that doing wrong is a bad bargain. If a youngster can stay out an hour late and get nothing but a spank on the wrist, he will decide that another hour with his girl friend is worth a spank on the wrist. However, if being an hour late keeps him from going out with his girl friend for a week, he will be on time from then on.

One Saturday afternoon before Christmas, my boy David went Christmas shopping. He was to be home by three o'clock. He came in eleven minutes late. I took him to his room and then explained why I was going to spank him. I bent him over my knee and gave him a good thrashing. I sat him beside me and asked him, "Now, little man, just what were you doing that was so important that you could not be on time?" With quivering lips and tear-dripping eyes, he murmured, "I was getting your Christmas present gift wrapped." To be sure, I felt like a heel, and yet, I would spank him

again. A rule is a rule and it should be kept. In the long run we will make better children and law-abiding adults if we will impress upon them the importance of obeying the rules.

4. Just what is a spanking?I have never felt that a child should be spanked immediately or in public. It should not be the parent giving vent to his anger or release to his emotions. It should be a time of reminding the child that wrong does not turn out right and that he must pay for the doing of it. With our children I have followed this procedure: When the child does something deserving a spanking, I say sternly but quietly, "Go to your room." I then follow him to his room, sit down across from him, look him straight in the eye, and explain to him what he has done that is wrong. I then ask him to explain to me the wrong that has been committed. When he knows what he did and I am convinced that he knows, I then say to him, "Bend over Daddy's knee." This he does under his own power. In the case of the girls, they are asked to pull up their skirts. I then proceed to spank and spank hard. How long do I spank? I spank until the will of the child is broken. When the child is crying and is obviously broken hearted, I cease the spanking. When the spanking is finished, I ask the child to sit across from me again and explain to me again why I spanked him. After a brief word of prayer asking God's forgiveness, I then leave him in the room by himself to think about what he has done. This period of meditation usually lasts ten or fifteen minutes. Hence, from the time that the act is committed until the time the procedure is over is about thirty minutes. This makes a spanking an ordeal. A few spankings of this kind will take the place of many of the little temper tantrums that parents usually have and refer to as spankings. By the time our children got eight or ten years old, spankings were very infrequent. They knew what they were. They knew what to expect, and they knew they would get what they expected if they did wrong. Wrong had become very distasteful by this time.

People often ask with lamentation what is wrong with our generation. "Why the anarchy?" It does not take the thoughtful person long to decide where the trouble lies. It was only about twenty years ago that a new theory came out that we should not spank children. Now we have raised that generation. They have become anarchists, hippies, hoods, and lawbreakers. They have been taught as infants that wrong is not punished. They have been reared by this philosophy. Now we realize what we find in God's Word will work.

5. Keep the communication line open between parent and child.It should always be understood that the child can talk to the parent. Questions about life should be directed to the parent. The child should feel that Mom and Dad are always interested in his problems and always willing to talk about them. The following is a letter received in 1968 from my thirteen-year-old son, David, showing the importance of the father-son relationship! Dear Dad,

I am the luckiest boy in the world to have parents like you and Mom. I think you are the greatest man in the world, and I wouldn't trade you for any other father in the world.

In my eyes, Dad, you are the greatest preacher in the world. A lot of times at school I hear kids talking about their old man. I couldn't picture a kid of yours doing that because you take us places, buy our clothes and food and other things, and take care of us.

In my opinion you are the greatest Christian and soul winner and preacher in the world. And I'm always proud to tell my teachers and friends at school about you. You spend time with me. Not many fathers do that and I appreciate it.

I want to thank you for the things you got me in Japan and for taking me to Washington. I really enjoyed it. I also want to thank you for all you do for me.

If I can be half as great a man as you, I'll be glad. I love you and thank God for having a dad like you. And I'm proud you're my dad and love you as much as I possibly could.

I love you.

Your son,

Dave

P.S. I pray that you will always preach like you do and be as good a Christian as you are.

Enjoy this statement because I'll probably never say it again. I'm proud to have a good-looking dad. Now you will read a copy of the answer from Dad to son: Mr. David Hyles

8232 Greenwood

Munster, Indiana

Dear David:

I have read and re-read your recent letter to me. There are several things that came to my mind as I read it.

1. I am honored to have a son who shows gratitude. One of the most important things in life is to be grateful. As a preacher's son, and later as a preacher, many things will be given to you, and much attention will be showered upon you. It will be easy to take things for granted and to think the world owes you something. All the world owes any of us is a chance to succeed, and this you will have. I am glad that you take time to write thank-you notes and that you are grateful.

2. Naturally I am glad that you have confidence in me. I have prayed for you from the day that I heard that you were coming to our home. I have prayed for God to make me the right kind of example. I pray He will help me to continue to be the kind of example of which you can be proud.

3. You do not know how much I enjoy being with you. All these years we have spent many hundreds of hours together. We have played ball, gone to ball games, gone fishing, taken trips, and in general, been real buddies. Now as you grow older, I dread the day when you will not be with me; but I am grateful that we have four more years, at least, together. To be with you is always a joy and always fun. I cut up with you a lot, of course, but that is because you are my buddy, my pal, my son.

4. I am proud of you because you are willing to express your love. A lot of boys your age would think it "sissy" to be loving, but that is not true. I love you, and as you said, you love me; and we should let each other know about it. I am glad that you take time to let me know that you love me.

5. I have a lot of dreams wrapped up in you, son. I would not tell you to be a preacher. I would not tell you what to be. I would simply tell you to be clean, to be honest, and to stay in the will of God. If you do those three things, I will be the proudest dad in the world.

If I had my choice to pick any boy in the world as my son, I would pick you again. You are all that I have dreamed my boy would be. May God help you to always be that.

Now in closing, may I say this: You will have many decisions to make in the next few years. There are many questions, perhaps, that you would like to ask concerning life, etc., and I want you to feel free to come to me and say, "Hey, Dad, can I talk with you?" We will make an appointment, and you may talk about anything in the world. I want it to always be that way, just as it has been in the past.

God bless you, son. I always wanted to be a dad, and I always wanted to have a boy. I am proud of you.

Sincerely,

Dad JH:es

It is tragic how many children feel that they cannot talk to their parents. How vital it is to keep the line of communication open.

6. The parents should certainly share the high hours with the child.Things that do not seem to big to us are very big to young people and children. One need only to think back to his youth and remember for a while. Then he will understand the bigness of the decisions and the events of youth. The following is a letter that I wrote to my daughter Becky as she entered high school. It was a very important letter as far as the father-daughter relationship was concerned. September 8, 1966 Miss Becky Hyles

8232 Greenwood

Munster, Indiana

Dear Becky:

As you enter high school, I want you to know a few things and remember others. First, I want you to know what a wonderful day it was in the lives of your mother and me when we heard you were coming. You brought a new dimension to our lives. You are our oldest and will always hold a special place in our hearts.

We began praying for you nearly seven months before you were born. Thousands of days have passed since then, but we have not stopped praying for you daily. Naturally I am proud that you are in high school; but I am prouder that you are a fine, Christian girl. To be sure, there have been times we have had to scold you and even discipline you, but all of these experiences have been used to make better people out of all of us. I trust God will use them to bring about His will in your life.

Now you are going to high school, Becky. You carry with you many hopes and dreams from your mother and me. We hope you have a wonderful life in high school, and we know that you will come out of high school and go into college the same fine, clean, dedicated Christian that you are now. In order to make his possible, let me make a few suggestions:

1. Always be courteous to the teachers, but remember that no person is perfect. Do not talk back to the teachers nor express your views when they are in opposition unless the teachers ask for your views. Even then, do it in a kind, sweet, Christian way. Remember, your father has taken the courses they have taken. I have been to college, I have been to seminary, I have my doctor's degree, I have been president of a college, and I have preached in many colleges and seminaries across America. You will not have a teacher who knows more about general education than your father. I am simply saying, if you have any question concerning any subject, please ask me. If they bring up something that is contrary to the Bible that you want explained, please ask me. Also remember this: Most of the great universities in the world (even though they do not believe the Bible now) were founded by Bible-believing people. This is true in the case of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, etc.

2. Even though you are in high school every day, be sure that your best friends are Christian friends at First Baptist. This is one thing that I am proud of you for. In junior high and elementary school you kept your best friends your church friends. This is so wise. Do not even consider a date with an unsaved boy or a boy who is not dedicated. I pray that God will always let you go with boys from our own church or churches of like faith.

3. I trust that you will always trust your dad and mom and our advice and counsel. We want what is best for you and never try to advise you selfishly or for our own good. There may be times when you think our judgment is not best. If you will trust us, later on you will understand.

4. As I have said before, Becky, I think you have been privileged to have been placed in a preacher's home. To be sure, there are many inconveniences, but I think the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. Our rules may be a little stricter than even those of your Christian friends at church, but remember that the rules by which your mother and I live are also stricter that the rules by which the other parents live. There are many things that we, as pastor and wife, cannot enjoy, but it is worth it. I hope you will look at it this way as a pastor's daughter. You have been very sweet in accepting the rules thus far. One day we will all look back upon them and rejoice because of them.

Becky, you were a real delight during our vacation. I enjoyed being with you. Your mother enjoyed it tremendously and told me that she never saw you any more cheerful or any more the life of the party. I hope that you will always be that way. Remember, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." God has endowed you with a wonderful personality, and I am grateful for that.

I have prayed for you a great deal during the time you and Kenny were breaking up and the days following, and I know a little bit how heavy your heart has been. I think you have been a real trooper through it all, and I am proud of you. I am praying for you that God will have His way concerning the boys you should go with and other important decisions and phases of your life.

I just wanted to write this little note since you are going to high school and remind you again as you go to high school that you carry with you fifteen years of your parent's love, dreams, hopes, work, and in some small way, maybe even sacrifice. I would rather die than for you not to be all that God wants you to be. We will do our part to see to it that you become what He would have you to be, and I know you will do yours.

You have only four years with us here at home. Let's make them the best. I love you.

Sincerely,

Dad JH:es

7. The parents should always realize the bigness of the decisions that the children have to make.My boy David is a good athlete. He wanted to go out for basketball in school. Now, I did not care if he played basketball, but I had some preference that he not. He is going to be a preacher, and I wanted him to center his life around his church and not his school. The decision was a big one for him, and consequently, a big one for me. Below is the letter that was written to Dave concerning this decision.

November 3, 1966 David Hyles

8232 Greenwood

Munster, Indiana

Dear Dave:

I know it is a big thing in your life to have the opportunity to go out for basketball. It is also a big thing in my life for you to make the right decision. When I was your age, I dreamed of having a son, which means that I have looked forward to having you for twenty-eight years or more. I always dreamed of what my son would be like. You have been that and more. At least five times in the last week people have approached me telling what a fine boy you are and what a gentleman you are. Of course, this makes me proud.

I could not have asked for a finer son. My only request is that you continue to be what you have been. People all across America know you and have confidence in you. Many of my preacher brethren have told me they hoped their sons turn out to be what you are. The other day while in Wichita, Kansas, Brother Bill Harvey told me that you were one of the finest boys he has ever met.

Now I am sure you understand that any advice I give you would be because I love you and because I want your reputation to always be the same as it is now, so let me repeat what I told you briefly this morning: I would prefer that you not play on the school ball teams, but I will leave the decision up to you.

I naturally want you to run with the best of boys. These, of course, are to be found at church. However, I do not doubt for a minute that if you would play ball at school, you would still be a fine boy. I trust you completely. However, I would prefer that your companions always be the very best.

Do you remember last night when I was teaching you and the other boys in front of the teachers and officers? I mentioned there are some good things that are wrong to do. This does not mean that you will be sinning if you play basketball. It does mean that you will be sinning if you do anything that is not in God’s will.

You make the decision, Dave, and I know it is a big one. Mother and the girls could not understand how big it is, but I know. If you decide to play basketball, I will be proud of you, and I will lead the cheering section. If you decide not to play, I will be equally as proud of you and will lead the cheering section. You will not be disobeying me if you choose to play; but again, I say, I have some preference that you don’t play.

If you decide not to play, I will find a hundred ways to make it up to you. Now you pray about it and do what you think the Lord wants you to do. You are a good Christian and the Lord will lead you, I am sure.

Sincerely,

Dad JH:es

He gladly and happily made his decision not to play basketball. As I dictate this chapter, he and I are at the Bill Rice Ranch in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, together. He flew down with me yesterday. We have been real buddies in every way, and I think he is glad for his decision. This is not to say that it is wrong for a boy to play basketball. It is to say that it is right for parents to be vitally concerned about decisions their children have to make.

8. Boys should be led to become masculine, and girls should be led to become feminine.Dads should see to it that boys become real boys, and moms should see to it that girls become real girls. When David was five years of age, I got a baseball glove, a bat, and a baseball. I hit him some grounders nearly too hard for him to catch. I told him that I would give him a nickel for each one he caught. The ball hit him in the chin, on the arm, on the thumb, and most every place except the glove. He didn't make any money but he was becoming a man. He was beginning to take the knocks of life. I then got some boxing gloves and had a kid a little older than David come over and box with him. The boy was just enough better at boxing than Dave to beat him a little bit. He knew what it was to get hit in the nose and to be whipped. He was still becoming a man! I have worked hard to teach him proper coordination of his body and to lead him to become a man. It has been worth it a thousand times. Dads, see to it your boys do not become sissies. Moms, see to it that your girls become ladies with all of the charm, poise, and grace that accompanies being lady-like. This chapter is in no way an attempt to teach child rearing. It is simply a few of the meditations of a father who lies on his back at the Bill Rice Ranch late on a summer evening and who is proud of his son.

0A.47 Chapter 47. Christmas Is Over

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Christmas Is Over The Christmas season is now over. The holidays from school have ended. We are sitting around the table for breakfast on the day the children are returning to school. I look over and see tears swelling in the eyes of my youngest daughter.

"What is wrong, sweetheart?" I asked.

"I don’t want to go back to school." She replies.

Then I remember how I felt on the same day of the year. I felt the same way at bedtime on Christmas night and in the closing moments of my birthday.

What causes such a feeling in the life of a child, or for that matter, in the life of an adult? Who among us has not felt the loneliness and melancholy of hating to see a delightful experience end? End they must, as all delightful experiences must in this life.

Because of this it is best that we understand our emotions at such occasions. Why this sad feeling? Something has died. Death is an absence of life, and with the passing of each day another day has died. It will never come again. The thrill of going to be d Christmas Eve night, the beauty of the tree Christmas morning, the opening of the presents, the playing with the toys, the delicious and beautiful Christmas dinner have now joined all of the other days and experiences of the past. These particular ones will never come again. Of course, the sadness comes from looking back, Yesterday is always dead; tomorrow is alive. Looking backward may bring sadness, but looking forward will bring gladness. One of the secrets of the Christian life is looking forward to tomorrow. Remember that on the day before yesterday, yesterday was tomorrow, and yesterday, today was tomorrow. As long as there is a tomorrow with its hopes, there can be a happy today.

How can my child (and her father) overcome such a feeling of melancholy?

1. Learn the art of enjoying today. It is wonderful to look forward to tomorrow; it is more wonderful to enjoy tomorrow on the morrow. One must work hard in filling yesterday’s expectations for today. In so doing, not only does it enhance the joy of today and increase the joy of yesterday, but it brightens the prospects for joy tomorrow. Far too many of us have never know to enjoy today up to yesterday’s predictions. In other words, let us be happy while having happiness. It is not enough to look forward to the happiness we are going to have tomorrow nor to look backward to the happiness we had yesterday. We must recognize the happiness we are having today. Most of us look forward to having friends before we get them, weep because of their loss after we have had them, but fail to enjoy their friendship while we have them. How many ladies look forward twenty years to becoming a mother and look backward for forty years or more to having been active in fulfilling the duties of a mother and yet complained during the twenty years in which they were that for which they had looked forward and now to which they look backward. Let us be careful to let the day fulfill the expectations of yesterday, and our enjoyment of today will be as much today as it

will be in tomorrow’s memories.

2. Plan joy in giving and not receiving. If one’s Christmas is receiving, he can only have Christmas when someone decides to give to him. If one’s Christmas is in giving, then every day can be a Christmas for him. Our wills cannot determine how much we receive nor how often we can receive. They can, however, determine how often we can give. If Christmas to us is unwrapping, then it can only come periodically. If it is wrapping, it can come daily. Let us look forward to being the giver and not the receiver. Then on the evening of Christmas we an still look forward to Christmas tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

3. Raise the floor of our lives and not the roof. One’s happiness depends not on the height of his heights but the height of his depths. How high are you on your lowest day? How high you are on your lowest day determines your happiness, not how high you are on your highest day. How happy are you on March 24? July 18? October 3? When you lowest days become happier days, then the steps down from Christmas will not be such a big one. Hence, let us not stress so much the raising of the roof as the raising of the floor.

0A.48 Chapter 48. The Glory Of Your Absence

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The Glory Of Your Absence Your presence yesterday was sweet, and the hope of seeing you tomorrow is blessed; yet today I have stumbled across a rare jewel that I named, THE GLORY OF YOUR ABSENCE. I had not planned for it, and I died when you left yesterday and had not planned a resurrection until I see you tomorrow. Yet rise I did in the energy of THE GLORY OF YOUR ABSENCE. In your absence I have measured you. This I could not do properly yesterday, for I was with you. Now, in THE GLORY OF YOUR ABSENCE, I measure you without the persuasion of your beauty and find you are today exactly what I thought you were yesterday and what I dream you will be tomorrow. In THE GLORY OF YOUR ABSENCE I can see you with the soul and not be hampered by our "glass darkly's." In THE GLORY OF YOUR ABSENCE my love is proven to you in a new way, for now it is only your soul that makes captive my attention.

It is during the GLORY OF YOUR ABSENCE when I pledge to never again take for granted your presence. Only then can I properly savor the times of your presence yesterday and prepare for your presence tomorrow, that I may learn to adequately appreciate tomorrow's fellowship. So THE GLORY OF YOUR ABSENCE is really THE GLORY OF YOUR PRESENCE, for in a mysterious way we are knitted. Hence, absence is impossible, for we are always present, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the soul.

Oh, I still prefer the blessing of your presence and will leap at your footsteps tomorrow, but today our souls shall walk together in THE GLORY OF YOUR ABSENCE.

0A.49 Chapter 49. Strength And Beauty

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Strength And Beauty

"It is not easy to lose, but often more is won in loss than in victory."

"Great victories in the future are often won by graceful losses in the past."

"A request from a friend is a royal command."

"A tear today is an investment in a laugh tomorrow."

"Gentleness is love wrapped in character."

"Silence says what the silent man is."

"To please a friend is a welcome bonus; to help him is the great reward."

"Greatness is always wrapped in simplicity."

"Even a task is not worthy of you, diligence is!"

"Being loved is life's second greatest blessing; loving is the greatest."

"Even if the task you do is not big, the way you do it can be big."

"Faith is doing everything I can do and trusting God to do what I cannot do. God can do what I cannot do, but He will not do what I can do if I refuse to do it!"

"Our difference is caused by the sum total of our differences."

"It is easy to be grateful for a bonus; it is character to be grateful for a salary."

"The more you appreciate the little the more you will enjoy the average."

"If I live for self, I can live only for one; if I live for others, I can live for 3,000,000,000."

"If you take away the God of the morals, you no longer have the morals of God."

"There is no life as `empty' as the `self-centered' life; there is no life as `centered' as the `self-emptied' life."

"If you have won the right to know how if feels to lose, your entire ministry will be wrapped up in making winners out of losers."

"Make no provision for failure."

"Life is like a game. To lose the first down does not mean loss of the game. To be behind at the end of the first quarter does not mean the game will be lost."

"Character is the subconscious doing of right."

"Personality will grow old, but character does not."

"The existence of love is because of character; the degree of the love is because of the object of this love."

"It is better to be too blunt than two-faced!"

"Personality without wisdom is `a character.'"

"Don't ever tell all you know on any subject; someone may ask you a question when you're through."

"A person who will not take care of little things will not take care of big things, for big things are but an accumulation of little things."

"Use your work to build your people, not your people to build your work."

"If you'll work at doing the things you ought to do, the Lord will help you NOT do the things you ought not do."

"You are not dependent upon people thinking you are humble as long as God knows you are."

"I'd rather be a free man in slavery than to be enslaved to a group which will offer me freedom."

"Every man knows something I do not know. I must probe until I find it; hence, all men are my teachers."

"I'd rather be a good Christian than a good preacher."

"I'd rather do right wrongly than wrong rightly."

"The time spent between the opportunity to do right and the doing of right is time spent justifying the doing of wrong."

"Once you've tasted the heavenly manna of forgiveness you'll never want to eat from the Devil's garbage can of vindicativeness again."

"I'd rather conserve two (converts) out of 100 than one out of one."

"It's good to obtain knowledge through the study; it is better to obtain both knowledge and character through study and obedience."

"The only lasting thing you can ever get for yourself comes from the leftover when you give to others."

"Forced gentleness is weakness."

"Love is hate turned inside out."

"Contrast is essential for a quality to exist."

"There's no way to have any virtue unless you have the potential for its opposite."

"He who knows no tempest knows no calm."

"Goodness that comes without temptation is not true goodness, for it is based on necessity, not conviction."

"Forced humility is inferiority."

"Without a potential for temper, gentleness is mere cowardice."

"You’re not a good Christian because you reach heights, but you’re a good Christian because you don’t reach depths."

Chapter 51

1.00. How to Boost Your Church Attendance

1958 How to Boost Your Church Attendance by Jack Hyles

Dedicated to my wife,

BEVERLY, who has shared with me in the successes and failures, joys and heartaches, in the learning and using of the material contained in this book.

PREFACE In December, 1952, I was called to become pastor of the Miller Road Baptist Church in Garland, Texas, a church with an annual budget of $3,000 and ninety-two members. The church had property valued at $6,000. In the five years of our fellowship and work together God has seen fit to increase those figures to over 3,400 members, a budget of $182,000 annually, and property evaluated at $500,000.

During these five years many pastors have come to me wanting to know about our methods and ideas concerning the church program. After four years of these inquiries and conferences, we conducted in our church a pastors' school. At the conclusion of the pastors' school the brethren suggested that the information and data be compiled in book form. This book was written from the notes that were presented in the pastors' school.

Many churches, especially small ones, have used the ideas presented in this book to great benefit. No one pastor will agree with all of the ideas suggested. Neither will all of the ideas work in all situations; however, it is hoped that from the suggestions a few points may be applicable to each minister, and that some suggestions will be helpful to each church. May the God of heaven bless these promotional ideas and suggestions to the bringing of souls to our Saviour.

Garland, Texas

JACK HYLES

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1.01. Practical Pointers for the Pastor and His People

1. Practical Pointers for the Pastor and His People

One of the most disheartening things in the modern church is the seeming disharmony between many pastors and their people. I believe that one of the most sacred relationships in all of the world is the relationship that the pastor of a church should have with his people. God is not pleased when the people are dissatisfied with the pastor. Neither is God pleased when the pastor has a bitter attitude toward his people. God wants the pastor and the people to love each other, to pray together, work together, serve together, worship together, win souls together, give together. Following are some suggestions that will help the pastor understand his people.

1. Love Your People. Ask God to give you a heart full of love for the people you serve. This does not mean that you can always condone what they do. Many times a parent who loves his child will have to spank him hard, and the child may doubt the parent's love; however, behind the heart of a true parent there is a love that realizes it is best for the child to receive punishment for his errors. This is also true with a pastor. A pastor who scolds his people because he is tired of their sinning, is wrong. A pastor whose heart is broken because of the sins of his people, and scolds them for their own good, is right. Many evangelical ministers have failed in this respect because of the lack of a deep, abiding love for their people.

2. Be Expressive in Your Love for Your People. Some preachers carry a little pad around with them, and a pencil, and when they think of some member who has been a blessing to them, they jot the name down and later write the member a note or express appreciation personally to one who has been a blessing. Our people do much for us-they pray for us, overlook our faults, forget our mistakes and make us what we are. Let us express to them our love and appreciation.

3. Pray for Your People. The pastor should call the names of his people in prayer, especially those who have burdens and heartaches. When a home is having trouble, the pastor should pray for them. When Johnny has the measles, or Mary has the mumps, the pastor should pray for them. Many times a little note to Johnny will be an encouragement to him; or a phone call to Mary might be a blessing. It is always good for a pastor to pray for his people.

4. Do not Use Your People to Build a Great Work, But Use Your Work to Build Great People. Some have the idea that it is the job of the preacher to build churches. This is not true. It is the job of the preacher to build people to be great Christians. To use the people to build a work is wrong; to use the work to build great people is right. The greatest product of a pastor is a steadfast Christian, and not a sanctuary. The greatest work of a pastor is to see a Christian grow in the grace of the Lord, and not to see the membership grow. Individuals are important. When a preacher can see his people individually and rejoice more over a Christian who grows than over a building that goes up, then he has developed a true pastor's heart. To use our people as stepping stones for our ministry is not fair; neither is it Christlike.

5. Make Your People Feel That You Are Theirs. People like to feel as if they have a pastor. They like to feel as if the pastor belongs to them, and that they belong to him. Do not let your people feel secondary. Spend your time with them. Many preachers spend so much time with each other that their people feel they cannot have fellowship with their pastor. Live with your people, love them, pray for them, work with them and seek their good-not your own.

6. Eat in the Homes of Your People. It is good for the pastor to be in the homes of the people. When your people invite you for a meal, try never to reject such an invitation. It is a mutual blessing. The people need the fellowship with the pastor; the pastor needs the fellowship of the people. Children know the pastor better when he comes into their homes. If he is kind, thoughtful and understanding to the children, they will become his pals, and will feel that he belongs to them.

7. Give the People Some Time at Home. Many of our people are tired. We preach to them hard and long that they should have a Christian home, and then give them no time to have a Christian home. A preacher should encourage his people to spend some time at home. Then, he should not plan such a heavy church program that it will take all of their nights, so that they do not have the opportunity to have a Christian home. It is difficult to come in at midnight with sleepy children and have a family altar. However, with some nights at home together with the family, it becomes easier to pray together and stay together. When the families realize that the preacher is concerned about their problems, then they will love and appreciate him more.

8. Be with Them in Hours of Need. When a person is to have an operation, go to the hospital and have a period of prayer with him. When a couple is married, spend some time with them. When a baby comes, rejoice over the coming of the baby. It has long been my conviction that the pastor should not receive remuneration for the things he does for his members. It seems to me that marrying the church members is a part of the pastor’s duties; hence, it would seem inadvisable to accept a fee for marrying one of my church members. Little things like these make a pastor dear to the hearts of his people. Of course, it should not be our desire or our aim to become dear to the hearts of the people. These things should come naturally to the true man of God who loves his people.

9. Remember That Your People Make You What You Are. A good church can make a good preacher; a poor church can make a poor preacher. All that we are, we have been made by the Lord, and God has used our dear people to make us what we are. Many times people come to me at Miller Road Church and say, "Pastor, God has used you to make me what I am." Then, I go home and think -God has used my church to make me what I am. Our soul winners, and those who pray and are faithful, have helped to make our church what it is. Because of that, the pastor has opportunities open to him that he would not have had, had the people not worked for the Lord Jesus. Never forget, dear pastor friend, that what you are is largely a work of Christ as He has used your people to make you what you are.

10. Never Reject Anything From Your People. Dr. Truett used to say, "Even if all they offer you is a glass of water, drink it. They are offering it as unto the Lord." You are God’s man, and they are offering you something as God’s man; hence, never reject it. Accept it, and be grateful to God, regardless of how small the gift.

1.02. How to Get People to Visit

2. How to Get People to Visit The problem in every church seems to center around visitation. Other pastors are constantly asking me, "How do you get your people to visit?" "How can you get folks on the field?" They are always trying to find new methods and new ways to encourage people to visit for Jesus. Following are some suggestions for the pastor on this subject.

1. Make Every Service Evangelistic. If people go out to win souls to Christ, and bring lost people to a service in which there is not a spirit of evangelism, those who visit will be discouraged. It is the pastor's job to be sure that the services are evangelistic and not disappointing. Many times people will visit, bring a lost person to the service and then the pastor preaches a sermon on budget-raising or some other similar subject and the lost person has no conviction whatsoever. Someone has said that when Jesus wanted some money to pay His taxes, He found the money in the fish's mouth. It seems that it would be wise for us to spend our time getting fish. When they are caught and converted, then the money will be in their mouths. To say the least, every service should end with an evangelistic appeal to let the sinner know that others are concerned about him, and to let the soul winner know that any time he brings a lost person to the services, there will be a sincere appeal made for his salvation.

2. Visit and Let the People Know It. Each pastor and each leader of the church should be a personal soul winner. If you are not a soul winner, you cannot train your people to be soul winners. If you do not visit regularly, you cannot train your people to visit regularly. Be sure that your people are conscious of the fact that you are a perennial visitor and soul winner. To be such a person will be exceedingly difficult. The devil will block you at every hand to discourage your regular visitation program. I would suggest that as a pastor or special worker you set aside at least two days each week in which you do nothing but visit prospects, and let nothing except an emergency hinder your visitation program. When your people know that you are a fervent, consistent soul winner, then you will be leading them and not pushing them.

3. Make Visitation Seem the Most Important Thing in the Church. Many people think that being a deacon is more important than being a soul winner. That is not true. Many people think that being a Sunday school or youth worker is more important than being a soul winner. That is not true, either. The greatest job in the world is the job of bringing people to Christ. If the pastor will magnify the job of soul winning above the other jobs of seeming importance in the church, then the people will get the idea that soul winning is the most important thing in the church.

4. Choose Your Teachers from Those Who Visit. Show your people that you believe soul winning is important by selecting your teachers and officers from those who visit regularly. This will encourage visitation on the part of those who are not teachers.

5. Do Not Work People on "Odds and Ends" Too Much.

Many people are so busy working around the church doing such jobs as carpenter work or decorating, that they feel this is their service for God. I realize that many churches must be built by

the members, and that is well and good. It is always good for a plumber to use his profession and talent at the church. It is good for carpenters and electricians to use their talents at the church -but keep before the people the fact that this is not their complete service for Christ. Keep reminding them that Christ expects them to be soul winners and witnesses apart from their other work at the church. Many of us have taught our people the wrong interpretation of the parable of the talents. We say that if all you can do is shake hands at the door, then do it the best you can. Or, if all that you can do is put flowers in the vase, do it the best you can. Dear friend, when Jesus gave us the commission to go into all the world and teach all nations, He was giving it to each of us. Every Christian should be a witness. Certainly we should use our talents at the church, yet the commission is still true. Each of God's people is to be a soul winner. Let us not discourage our people from doing the main thing by encouraging them too much in doing other things.

6. Have a Soul Winning and Visitation Course Annually. At least once each year in our church we have a course on soul winning and visitation, teaching our people how to win souls to Christ in a simple, straightforward way. This should be done, I believe, from the Bible, with no other textbook, unless it is used only as a supplement.

After the first year you will need to provide two courses-one for advanced soul winners and one for beginners. We have made it a practice not to worry about awards at the end of the course. The greatest award or examination that one could ever receive or pass would be to see someone converted through his efforts. The examination is on the battlefield for God, and the awards will be given at the Judgment Seat.

Make this a practical study course in soul winning. A following chapter will be given to soul winning, and will be a good chapter to consult in teaching the course.

7. Get Committals on Wednesday Night. Our visitation program is on Thursday. Since it is, we encourage our people at the midweek service on Wednesday night to come to visitation on Thursday. Many times we stress it more than at other times by asking the people to raise their hands or stand, and promise to come. If they will commit themselves on Wednesday night, usually they will come on Thursday night.

If your visitation is on Monday or Tuesday, then perhaps a committal on Sunday night would be in order.

8. Do Not Over Stress It Every Week. It could become a ritual. People can become so used to hearing you stress a certain point that it becomes habit and they scarcely hear what you say; hence, do not stress it to the same extent each week. Stress it vehemently periodically, then just slightly between times.

9. When You Know of Someone Who Is Ready to Be Saved, Give His Name to Someone Other than Yourself on Visitation Night. When you know of someone who wants to be saved, and he is ready to be saved, and you feel sure that he can be won-send someone else to visit him rather than going yourself. This will give the one who goes a blessing and cement him into the visitation program of the church.

10. After You Win Someone, Send Another by to See Him before Sunday. After you have won someone to Christ yourself, as a leader in the church, why not go to one of your people whom you

wish to encourage and give him the name of the person? Ask him to go by and visit the person whom you have won. Then, on Sunday when the person you won walks the aisle to make profession, it will be a blessing to the person who went to visit him, and encourage him to continue in the visitation program of the church. This may also prove successful with folks who have voiced their intentions of moving their membership. Send some of the members by to visit them. This will give them a feeling that they have had a part in reaching this family, and will give them a blessing.

11. Have Different Persons Go Visiting with You. As a leader in the church you can train soul winners by inviting people who are not soul winners to go with you in witnessing. As they see you win souls, they have themselves been instructed and taught how to win someone. The best soul winners we have in our church are people who have been with the pastor or some other soul winner and have personally seen the miracle happen.

12. Opening Assembly Program. One of the most effective ways to train soul winners is to show them. When you have won a soul during the week, have that person come with you to the opening assembly of Sunday school or the youth group and present a "skit" for the people. Show exactly what happened as you won the Person, from start to finish. That will give your people firsthand information about how to win a soul.

13. When a Member Wins a Soul Include This Fact in Your Sermon. When you hear of one of your members winning a soul to Christ, give him just praise and reward in a public way by telling the people-either in announcing it, or including it in your sermon. Or, when the person comes down the aisle, let the soul winner come and stand beside the convert, and give due reward and credit to the soul winner.

14. Do Not Wear the People Out. There is such a thing as getting people tired in the service of the Lord. Certainly we should never tire of service for the Lord-but we can give our people so many things, including a number of nonessentials, that they can fail to be good witnesses for the Lord Jesus. If a church program is kept simple (teach the Bible, pray, visit) without too many "frills" on the side, then the people will not be so worn out they do not have time to visit.

15. Give the People Some Nights to Stay at Home.

Many of our people are so busy doing other things that they feel they simply must have some nights at home, so they take the night at home which is usually given to visitation. It is my observation that if people know the pastor is trying to let them have some nights at home, then they will give the church more nights of service for Christ.

We have found it advisable to have two nights each week called "Stay at Home Nights," or "Lights Out at the Church Nights." Tuesday and Friday nights are good. We encourage our people not to go to any class meetngs, parties or any other church gatherings on these two nights, except during revivals or Bible conferences.

1.03. How to Organize a Visitation Program

3. How to Organize a Visitation Program

How should a visitation program be organized? What methods should be used? These and other questions are asked continually by church leaders, especially pastors. Some suggestions will be given in this chapter for use in organizing a visitation program.

1. Have a Card File. You may use a simple card file for your prospect cards. The NAME and ADDRESS' of the prospect are all that you need on the card. Then, use the back of the card for writing a report on the results of your visit, and the date of the visit. This will keep the next visitor informed of the results of the previous visit. Any helpful information should be written on the back of the card for the visitor. The pastor should go through the card file personally, and choose the people to be visited. As he goes through the file, he should pick out the ones whom he feels need visiting this particular week. The best prospects are those who have visited in the regular church services, the "new moves" into the city, and others who voice interest in coming.

It is good to separate the card file and set it up by town sections. This has been the most effective method for us. We have our city divided into twenty sections, and the cards are placed in their corresponding section. Below is a sample of one of our 4 x 6 prospect cards, which we mimeograph in our office.

There are many visitation card files you may use. All of them are good and may be found anywhere. However, the important thing in a visitation program is not the file-it is the way the file is used. This chapter is not to (cut of one of our prospect cards)

PROSPECT CARD

NAME: John Doe

DATE:11-20-57.

ADDRESS:123 Main Street New Move to City:

(check one) DATE OF VISIT:VISITED BY:

New Address: Other:

RESULTS OF VISIT:

11-21-57 – Smith & Jones-Just moved in. Baptist. Promised to visit us Sunday. Nice.

(over) give you filing suggestions, or card suggestions, but to give you practical ways to use the files that have already been made.

2. Do Not Have More Than Two Visitation Programs Each Week. By having not more than two visitation programs each week, the efforts will be concentrated. Perhaps the wisest thing to do is to

have the visitation program on one day-one session in the morning and one in the evening. The ladies may visit in the morning and the men at night, along with the ladies who work during the day.

3. Do Not Have Too Many Other Activities in the Church Program. Make visitation the biggest thing-make soul winning the most important thing in your church. Then the people will have time to do that which Jesus told us to do. Many churches are occupied with such varied activities that soul winning is pushed under the carpet. The visitation program should be the largest thing in the church. It should be better attended than softball games and other functions. Some churches have found it best not to have the other activities, but major entirely on the soul winning and visitation itself.

4. Thursday Is Often the Best Day for Visitation. Our visitation program is on Thursday morning and Thursday night. The ladies come on Thursday morning (with some of the men who work at night) at ten o'clock; and the working ladies and men come at seven o'clock on Thursday night. Thursday is a good time for two reasons: First, it is close enough to Wednesday night so that no one forgets visitation. A reminder on Wednesday night is always in order. Second, it is near enough to Sunday that people who are visited can easily remember the promise they made. Monday is a good day to go visiting, but it is so far from the next Sunday that it is less effective than Thursday. However, I would suggest Monday as the second best for a visitation program. People forget easily. It is easier to get folks to come to the church on Monday or Thursday than any other time, because it is fresh on their minds after the services on Sunday and Wednesday.

5. Have a Place for Everyone. We have found it advisable to have something planned for each age group on visitation night. For example, in our church we have all of our nurseries open. We also have a planned period for the beginners and primaries. Workers from a different beginner or primary department are in charge of the beginner and primary children whose parents come to visit each week. This program includes singing, games (modeling clay, picture puzzles, etc.) conduct or child life stories, Bible stories (flannelgraph) and handwork of some kind. The handwork may be simple (color sheets or something to make from construction paper, etc.). Sometimes the children go outside for games and refreshments.

We also have a special program for our juniors on visitation night. They meet in the back yards of some of the workers' homes each week where they have a special time of fellowship and Bible study. This program for juniors may include special Bible memory work con tests, and the children may be rewarded for their efforts. We have our youth choir on Thursday night, which takes care of the young people. This leaves only the adults free to visit. A place is provided for everyone in the family. For a long time we noticed that a husband would come to visitation and his wife would stay home. Hence, we have practically doubled our efficiency by providing a place for each member of the family on Thursday morning and Thursday night.

6. The Pastor Should Meet the People as They Come.

I have always tried to make it a practice before the services to stand outside and meet the people as they come -especially at visitation. If the people can meet the pastor, and chat for a while before they go visiting, it is a blessing. They feel that they have had God's man fellowshiping with them for a while.

7. Compliment the people for Coming. Many of us are hard on people who do not visit; it would be better to concentrate on being nice to those who do visit. A "God bless you," or a "I'm glad to see you tonight, John," or "It's a blessing to see you, Joe," means something to people. Also, a letter of thanks to those who have come for the first time will be appreciated by them, and will encourage them to participate regularly in the visitation program.

8. Visit by Family Rather than by Age Group. We have found it best to set our files up by families rather than by age group. For example, if there are five people in a family and the visiting is done by the Sunday school classes, one family will get five visitsand four families will go unvisited. If we visit by families, not only does it mean that more families will be contacted, but it also means that people who work in the Sunday school with the younger children will have the opportunity to witness to adults. It also helps to keep the church one family, rather than several small churches within a church. We, therefore, have only one card for each family in our prospect files, rather than having one for each member of the family, set up by Sunday school age groups.,

9. Have a Short Service Before You Go. We find it helpful to have a song and a few testimonies-and just a short service before leaving to visit. Also, a period of prayer puts the people in a spiritual attitude before they go.

10. Go Two by Two. When the people arrive at the church, many of them have already chosen their visitation partners. Those who do not have partners should be carefully aided by the pastor in selecting visitation partners. People of mutual interests and social standing should be chosen to go together if at all possible.

11. An Experienced and an Inexperienced Visitor Should Go Together. Often the pastor should encourage the people to take inexperienced partners with them to visit. If two inexperienced people go together to visit, they might become discouraged and fail to return to visitation. However, if you can send an experienced visitor with each new person who comes, that will be an encouragement, as well as instruction to the new visitor.

12. Give Only Five or Six Cards to Each Team Which Goes Visiting. If a person can make two or three good visits a night he has done well. To do this, five or six cards would seem advisable. About fifty per cent of the people will not be at home; hence, the reason for giving several cards to each team.

13. Place a Promising Prospect in Each Group of Cards. If each group of cards has one good prospect in it, then each person who goes visiting will receive a blessing. As you group the cards, prior to visitation time, try to see that there is one good prospect in each group of cards, thereby assuring each visitor of at least one blessing. If they can come back from visiting feeling that they have done some good in at least one place, they will likely come back the next week.

14. Leave In An Orderly Manner. Be careful as you give the cards to the visitors. Some people can visit better in certain sections of town than others. This selection may be done tactfully and carefully. Also, as the teams come by for their cards, give them doorknob hangers, literature about the church, tracts, and other items which can be used successfully in the visitation program.

15. Have the Team Pray for Persons on Each Card.

One of the most successful things that we have ever done is to have a period of prayer by the team, after they are in their car, as they look at each card which has been given them. They call the name of the person on each card in prayer before they go.

16. The Pastor Should Be Waiting for Them as They Return from Visiting. Many people have won victories on visitation and they want to share them with the pastor. Many have had reversals they want to tell the pastor about. The pastor can rejoice with those who are rejoicing, and lament with those who are lamenting, encourage those who have not had good visits and thank them from the bottom of his heart for coming. This encourages the people, and gives them an opportunity to see the pastor before they leave to go home.

Another idea in getting folks to visit is to have folks who already come to visitation regularly solicit someone who does not come, previous to the visitation day, to go with them. If this could be done one particular week, the visitation crowd could be doubled in a week.

Chapter 55

1.04. How to Win a Soul to Jesus

4. How to Win a Soul to Jesus The purpose of this chapter is not to deal with witnessing in public, but it primarily concerns the winning of souls to Christ in the home. It deals with the proper approach and some practical pointers to help one be a more effective soul winner. I have tried to put these principles into practice for a number of years, and God has blessed them with the salvation of literally hundreds of souls being won to Him in homes. May God use them to bless you and make you a winner of souls for Christ.

Last year alone over three hundred of our people won someone to Christ. Each of them was instructed through the following method, which is simple and easy enough for anyone to understand.

1. Be Clean and Neat. If a person is going to be a soul winner he must not be offensive to the people with whom he talks. It is a definite asset for a soul winner to be careful to bathe often, to avoid body odor. Teeth should be brushed, and the breath should be tested. Carry mints in your pockets or some good flavored chewing gum which will help keep the breath from being offensive. One of the most damaging things in soul winning is the effect of halitosis. By all means, a soul winner should watch this carefully. The soul winner should also be neatly dressed. A lady should be dressed conservatively, and I think it is best for a man to at least wear a shirt with a tie.

2. Carry a Testament with You All the Time. One of the most effective methods that we have used is the carrying of two Testaments-one for you to read as you seek to win the person, and one for the unsaved person to read, or follow as you read. After he has given his heart to Jesus, then you may present him with the Testament that he has read from as a gift.

Testaments which are adequate for this type of work may be bought at most bookstores for about twenty-five cents each. It is our suggestion that a Testament is better to use than a Bible because it does not "give you away." As you get out of your car to walk to a house, a person might possibly see you carrying a Bible and immediately think that you are representing some cult or some false "ism" and build a mental barrier against you. Hence, it is usually better to carry a Testament in your pocket.

3. Be Soul Conscious. By this I simply mean to be aware everywhere you go that the people to whom you talk are going to spend eternity somewhere . . . the man who cuts your hair, the boy who shines your shoes, the man who fills your car with gas, the bread man, the milk man, the grocery man, the clerk at the drugstore, and the saleslady at the clothing store are all going to spend eternity somewhere. Make it a habit to ask people if they are Christians. This will be a blessing to you, and will give you a chance to witness to them. It is good to carry gospel tracts with you at all times in order that you may present one to a person who is not a Christian, that he may read it after you leave. This is effective to use when witnessing to people at work, who cannot stop their work for you to give them the plan of salvation.

Recently one of our soul winners was getting a shoe shine. Just before he asked the colored shine boy if he were a Christian, the shine boy looked up and asked the man if he were a Christian. Our church member responded with an affirmative answer, "Yes, you must be a Christian, too." The colored boy replied, "Yes, sir, one of those Miller Road Baptist members won me to Jesus the other day while I was shining his shoes."

4. Go Two by Two. This is important! There are several reasons why God sent His disciples out in pairs, and certainly we should follow His example. Also, there is strength in numbers, and with another Christian present as a prayer warrior the soul winner is encouraged. However, the most important reasons that another person should go with you, apart from Scriptural reason, are to pave the way for absolute quietness, and to avoid any unneccessary disturbances while the soul winner is talking to the unsaved person. Such things as caring for the children, changing the baby, answering the door, turning the radio or television off can certainly be of value in the winning of souls to Christ.

5. Go with Diferent People. Many people think it is wise to team up with the same soul winning partner all of the time. However, this discourages the making of new soul winners. It seems advisable for a person who is an active soul winner to take a different person with him periodically so that the new visitor might actually see the winning of a soul. This is better than any study course a Christian can take.

6. Pray and Claim the Spirit Fullness before Going.

Before you go to the field you need to spend a few moments in prayer, simply asking God to bless you and to help you be a blessing to others. Also, claim His Spirit fullness by faith, asking Him to bless you as you go, and to prepare the hearts of those to whom you will talk.

7. Go Believing. The thing that transformed my soul winning life more than anything else was this one thing! Many times I would go to the fields to witness for Christ, not expecting to win anyone. When and if someone was converted I would actually be subconsciously surprised. However, it dawned on me one day that God wants to save people, and that as God was sending me out, He would save people. So, rather than going out defeated, an effort was made to go expecting to see someone saved. The increase that God gave to this attitude of faith was amazing.

8. Be Nice. Remember that the person to whom you are talking did not ask you to come. You are a guest in his home, and many times, an unwanted guest. A soul winner in a home cannot use the same frankness that the preacher can in the pulpit. It is necessary that a soul winner be nice and courteous, kind and understanding, as he goes into someone’s home to talk to him about the Lord.

9. Be Careful about Going In. If a person is busy and obviously does not want to be disturbed, many times it is wise to tell him that you will not come in at this particular time, and suggest that you make an appointment for a later date when you may come back and talk to him about the Lord. This has proven effective in many cases.

10. Be Complimentary. As you enter someone’s home, it is always good to be complimentary. If the children are sweet, tell them so. If the home is lovely mention it. It is good to be complimentary.

11. Let the One You are Visiting Talk of His Interests for a While. Ask him about his work, about the family, about his home town, and things of that nature. He will enjoy talking with you and

speaking of his interests. One of the best points that a person can use is to be a good listener.

12. Have Only One Person Do the Talking. As you seek to win the person to Christ, let only one soul winner do the talking. Do not interrupt with your "two cents." You keep the road clear and keep the way paved for their privacy and pray! Do not pray with your eyes closed, however, as you may miss a chance to be of help by giving a child a drink, answering the door, or other things which might cause the lost person not to be free to listen carefully to the soul winner.

13. Stay on the Subject. Many times as you try to win a person he will ask questions that are irrelevant to salvation. When such a question is asked, it is usually good to say, "That is a good question. Remind me in a moment and I will answer that." Then, continue talking about the plan of salvation. Do not let yourself be sidetracked on less important issues.

14. Stay in the Same Book of the Bible. It seems that it would be confusing to a sinner for a soul winner to go all over the Bible in trying to explain his point. With isolated verses taken from all over the Scriptures anything can be proved; however, when a person stays in the same book of the Bible, near the same pages, the lost person can readily see that you are not trying to confuse him by taking isolated verses to prove your point. A good book to use is John, another one is Isaiah; however, I have found the most effective book to be Romans.

15. Draw a Map in Your Testament. Many people are young Christians and do not have the Scriptures memorized, nor can they find the ones that they must use to deal with the plan of salvation. To aid in this, a plan has been devised of drawing a map in the Bible or Testament one is using. For example, start with Romans 3:10. Then, beside Romans 3:10; write Romans 3:23; the next verse you will turn to. After you have explained Romans 3:23; have written beside this verse Romans 5:12; which shows you where to go from there. Then, Romans 6:23; Romans 5:8; and finally Romans 10:9-11. The lost person will not necessarily see what you have written in your Bible, as he will be looking on from the other Testament which you have handed him to use. This way you can direct yourself to the next Scripture, even though you may not know a single Scripture by heart, or do not know where to find the Scriptures pertaining to the plan of salvation.

16. Three Basic Questions Should Be Asked in the Conversation. First ask, "Are you a Christian?" Second, "Would you like to be a Christian?" Third, "If I were to show you in the Bible how to be a Christian, would you be willing to do what God says?" The first of these three questions has often been disputed. Some prefer to ask "Are you saved?", or, "Are you born again?", or, "Do you know Jesus?" However, the simple question, "Are you a Christian?" might lead to asking other questions. The way the person answers your question would determine whether or not you should inquire further as to the sincerity of his profession. Then, if he wants to be a Christian, you may proceed. Remember this-it is God’s business to prepare a soul. You cannot argue anyone into being a Christian. He must be ready; if he is not ready, you cannot argue him into it. Then, if he commits himself by saying he would be saved if he knew how, you have a definite committal that he will respond. If he says he will, then proceed immediately to show him the aforementioned Scriptures.

Following is the structure of the conversation that I have found helpful in dealing with most unsaved people with whom I talk:

Soul winner: "First, Mr. Blank, if a person is going to be saved, he needs to be saved from something. Let me show you why a person needs to be saved. Notice in Romans 3:10; `As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.' The word righteous means good; hence, there is none good, no, not one. If there is not one good-then I am not good. Is that right? If there is not one good, then you are not good. Is that right? Now, let us turn to Romans 3:23; `For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' If all have sinned, then that means that I have sinned. If all have sinned, that means you have sinned. So, you see that all of the people in the world are sinners. There is none that doeth good. We are all gone out of the way; we are together become unprofitable, and we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

"Now, Mr. Blank, may I show you where the sin came from? Notice in Romans 5:12; `Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' You recall that one man brought sin into all the world. You will also remember that this man was Adam in the garden of Eden. God made Adam and Eve. He put them in the garden. He told them that they could eat of every tree in the garden but one, and if and when they ate of that tree, they would die. Do your remember, Mr. Blank, whether or not they ate of that tree?"

Mr. Blank: "Yes, they did."

Soul Winner: "Yes, they did. When they did, they were separated from God. They died spiritually, and they became sinners. So, when they had children, their children were sinners, and their children were sinners, and their children were sinners-until finally, Mr. Blank, one day you were born, and the Bible says that you were born in sin. Though you were not accountable for it until you realized that you were a sinner, you were born going away from God. Mr. Blank, you are still going away from God; hence, you are a child of Adam.

"Now, would you look at and read Romans 6:23; `For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord'?

"Mr. Blank, God, in order to be a just God, must make us pay for our sins. God has said that you will not get by with sin-so, God must make us pay for sin. The price on sin is death. This death is a spiritual death which culminates in the second death, mentioned in Revelation 21:8 and Revelation 20:14; which is the Lake of Fire. Therefore, the ultimate price that man must pay for his sins is to suffer in the Lake of Fire-or to go to hell. That means, Mr. Blank, according to your own statement that you are not a Christian, and according to the Word of God, if you died today you would go to hell. Is that right?"

Mr. Blank: "Yes."

Soul Winner: "Mr Blank, I am happy to tell you that God does not want you to go to hell. God loves you as you love your children. Just as you would make a way to save any wayward children of yours, even so God has made a plan to save you. Here is His plan. Please read Romans 5:8; `But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Mr. Blank, God looked down and saw that you were a sinner, and saw that you were going to hell. He did not want you to go to hell, so He came to earth in the form of a Man. His name was Jesus Christ. For thirty-three years He lived upon the earth-not once did He sin. Mr. Blank, if Jesus had sinned once, and the price of sin finally is the Lake of Fire, where would Jesus have had to go

when He died?"

Mr. Blank: "To the Lake of Fire."

Soul Winner: "Exactly so. But He did not sin, did He?"

Mr. Blank: "No."

Soul Winner: "He was perfect. Not once did He have an evil thought, not once did He say a nasty word, not once did He drink a bottle of beer, not once did He do anything that was contrary to His Father's will. But Mr. Blank, on the Cross of Calvary Jesus Christ suffered spiritual separation from God, or the same thing that the sinner must suffer in hell. If He was not suffering it for His own sins, then He must have been suffering for someone else's sins. Do you have any idea for whom He was suffering?"

Mr. Blank: "He was suffering for you and me."

Soul Winner: "Exactly so. Now, if He was suffering for you and me, He was paying our debt. Is that right?"

Mr. Blank: "Yes."

Soul Winner: "Mr. Blank, if I went to the bank today, and paid off all of your debts at the bank, they would send a representative out to tell you about my payment. You would have one of two choices. You could say, `No, I will not accept his payment; I will pay my own debts.' If that were your answer, even though I had paid the price, you would still be in debt. However, on the other hand, you could say, `Of course, I will accept payment. I will receive the gift that Mr. Soul Winner gave me.' That moment, Mr. Blank, you would be free of debt. That moment the bank would wipe your debts completely clean. Now, Mr. Blank, you are in debt to God. You have sinned. Your record is in heaven. Jesus Christ went to the bank of heaven, as it were, and paid the full payment for all of your debts. He has paid for all of your sins. He sent me as His representative today to tell you about this. You can say one of two things: You can say, `No, I will pay my own debts. I will go to hell for myself.' Or, you can say, `Of course, I will accept a Saviour like that. I will accept His gift of eternal life, and receive Him as my Saviour.' That moment, Mr. Blank, you become a child of God, by receiving Christ as a Substitute for your sin, and taking Him in your heart as your Saviour.

"Now, Mr. Blank, let us sum up what we have said. Do you realize that you are a sinner?"

Mr. Blank: "Yes."

Soul Winner: "Do you realize that if you died today you would go to hell?" Mr. Blank: "Yes." Soul Winner: "Do you realize that Jesus died in your place, and suffered spiritual separation from God in your place?"

Mr. Blank: "Yes."

Soul Winner: "Do you realize that if you were to bow here, and seek God's forgiveness and take Christ as your Saviour today, by faith, God would make you His child?" Mr. Blank: "Yes."

Soul Winner: "Then, Mr. Blank, could we just bow our heads and hearts in prayer, and let me pray for you? While I pray you can consider giving your heart to the Lord Jesus. Shall we kneel?"

(Turn to Romans 10:13 -read it to him and have him put his hand on that Scripture. You pray. Pray sincerely, simply and briefly. As you conclude your prayer, do not say "Amen.")

Soul Winner: "With our heads bowed, Mr. Blank, wouldn't you like to ask God to forgive your sins right now? Tell Him that you are sorry for your sins, tell Him you want to receive Christ as your Saviour now. Will you do it?" (Mr. Blank may pray a simple prayer. If not, you might ask him to pray after you sincerely.)

Soul Winner: "Mr. Blank, if you are willing now, the best you know how, to turn from sin, and give your heart to Christ in faith, would you please take my hand as if it were the hand of Jesus as a token thereof?" (Mr. Blank takes the soul winner's hand. The soul winner, while holding the convert's hand, should offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for saving him.)

Soul Winner: "God bless you, Mr. Blank. Now, let me ask you a question. If the Bible is true-where would you go if you died now?"

Mr. Blank: "I would go to heaven."

Soul Winner: "Isn't that wonderful? Isn't God good to give eternal life to those who will receive him by faith?"

17. Lead Him to a Profession. After the person has been converted, ask him to promise to come to church the next possible service, and walk the aisle and let the pastor tell the people that he has been saved. It seems unwise to ask him to be baptized until he has made his profession. Then, at the altar, when he is making his profession, or later, the minister can speak with him about baptism.

18. Go by and Get the Convert the Next Sunday. It is an unusual experience for many new converts to come to church. Many of them have not been to church for months, or years. It would be much easier for them to come if you will offer to go by and bring them with you.

19. Sit with the Convert in the Service.

20. At the Close of the Service Offer to Go Down the Aisle with Him.

21. After He Has Made His Profession, United with the Church and Been Baptized, He is Still Your Child. Continue to watch over him, and help him. Ask him over to your house for refreshments. Fellowship with him, and make him feel at home in the service of the Lord.

22. Appoint a Committee to Go by and See the New Converts, as Well as the New Church Members. The week after they join the church, it is good to have a committee to go by and see the new converts and new members. This group may carry a certificate of baptism, a copy of the church budget, a copy of some book advising young Christians how to grow in grace, any books written by the pastor, etc. These will be helpful and appreciated by the new converts and new church members.

23. Use the "Buddy" System. After the Sunday services each week, call someone who lives near the new convert and "assign" him the new convert. It is good for him to have the new convert over for refreshments, to make a visit into his home, and perhaps have his family over for a meal to try to get him acquainted with some of the church members. This person's job also would be to help

integrate the convert into the church program, and introduce him to as many people as possible.

1.05. Our New Visitation Program

5. Our New Visitation Program By JIM LYONS, Associate Pastor Our church has been fortunate in that the city in which we are located has, for a number of years, been one of the fastest growing cities in the State of Texas. Hundreds of prospects were moving into the city every month. This meant that our pastor could encourage all of the members to come out to our visitation program, and be able to supply each of them with some prospects to visit.

However, in the past year our city has ceased its rapid growth, and now only a few people move into our city each month. This meant, of course, that we would either have to find some other place to secure prospects-or else not encourage all of our people to come to the visitation program. We did not wish to choose the latter, as visitation is one of the biggest blessings that the church membership can have. So the eight following means of visitation are carried out each Thursday night by the Miller Road Baptist Church in our new visitation plan.

1. The Jails. Two of our finest Christian men do no form of visiting on Thursday nights other than jail visitation. Our city jail will usually have at least a couple of people in it each week, and sometimes has as many as ten or twelve. We feel that when Jesus died for every one certainly we should overlook no one in our visitation program. These two men have been highly success in their jail visitation, and have seen numbers of couple saved since the institution of our new visitation program, which included visiting the jails each week.

2. The Hospitals. Each week two or three teams composed of husbands and wives go to local and Dallas hospitals to visit those of our membership who are in the hospitals, and others who have been reported to the church office. They go for two purposes: First, to have prayer with those who are sick and ask God to heal their bodies. Second, they go to witness to those others who are in the rooms with the hospital patients from our church. Just recently one of our men went to see a person from our church who was in the hospital, and while visiting with the patient next to him, was able to win an eighty-year-old man to the Lord.

3. Tract Distribution in Shopping Centers. Each week we have three teams of four men each which distribute gospel tracts in shopping centers all over Dallas County. These men also go every time there is a great gathering of people for some special occasion-for instance, at the time our state fair was in progress, these men went each Thursday night and distributed thousands of tracts to people who were attending the fair. Hardly a week goes by that we do not receive a tract back through the mail, signed by someone saying that he has accepted Christ as his Saviour. Recently several of our fellows were passing out tracts in a shopping center that was just being opened. Many gifts were being given away on the formal opening night. The people at the shopping center, naturally thinking of the gifts that were being given out, formed a line to receive gospel tracts. Soon a long line had formed, and people were waiting to receive a gospel tract. You can imagine the surprised look on their faces when they got to the person who was handing out the tracts and found that they had stood in line to receive the Gospel.

4. Beer Joints. Our church is primarily a men's church. We have probably as large a percentage of men in our church as any church in the world. Many of these fellows only a few years ago, were drunkards far down in sin. Beer joints are nothing new to these men, and several of them go each week to pass out tracts and witness to those in the beer joints, honky tonks and night clubs around Dallas County. This group is headed by a man who, by his own testimony, in a period of ten years did not see over ten days during which he failed to take a drink of liquor. This man was saved a few years ago, and now spends much of his time witnessing to the same crowd he once drank with. Hardly a week passes that this group does not bring one or several people to our church services on Sunday whom they have won on visitation night.

5. Bus Stations. One group of our men makes a regular Thursday night itinerary, which includes several of the bus stations and train terminals in Dallas. Many a person has found Jesus on Thursday night while sitting in a terminal waiting for his bus or train. Recently a young man seventeen years of age who had run away from his home in Kentucky, was found at the bus terminal. This young man gave his heart to Christ, came to the church and was baptized, has now found a job and is making his home in Garland. He is faithful to all services of the church.

6. Absentee Visitation. When a church reaches the size that our church has, there are many, many absentees each Sunday. We have found that the best way to visit these is in the church-wide visitation program on Thursday night. Each week someone from each class takes the "Absentee Book" and visits those who were not in Sunday school the previous Sunday from that particular class. This, of course, brings our people in contact with the entire family, giving them an opportunity to witness to those in the family who are not saved.

7. House to House Visitation. The last group to leave on Thursday nights from our chapel where we assemble for visitation, is the group which goes to visit in the homes in Garland. Even after sending someone to the jails, the hospitals, the shopping centers, the beer joints, the bus stations and to visit absentees, we still have quite a number of people left to visit from house to house in Garland. This group visits in pairs. They go to visit those who have just moved into our city, those who have visited in our church services, or those whose names have been turned in to the office as possible prospects for the church, or persons who need to be witnessed to. Many, many people have been won to Christ in our house to house visitation by the members of our church. On a recent Sunday morning a couple came down the aisle and united with our church. In talking to them, we found that the man had been won to Christ by two of our men while visiting from house to house in our city. After talking a little further, we found also that at a different time, one of our ladies had gone by and had won the wife to Christ. What a blessing it is to see people come to Christ, regardless of where they are found.

8. Visiting New Members. Our last type of visitation on Thursday nights is the visiting of those people who have come into the fellowship of our church. One of our deacons, accompanied by his wife, goes and visits each person who joins our church. We have found this to be an effective means of visitation, in that others in the family who are lost or unchurched are contacted in this way. Recently while visiting a new member of our church, our deacon found that a couple was visiting from out of the city. Before long, this couple had given their hearts to Christ there in the home. Our church, in the period of time since it has been organized, has received many, many blessings, but perhaps the greatest blessings that we have received have been trying to carry out

the Great Commission in the vicinity in which we live.

Chapter 57

1.06. A Realistic Approach to an Evangelistic Preaching Service

6. A Realistic Approach to an Evangelistic Preaching Service

One of the most important things that the preacher does is preach. Of utmost importance in the life of the church is the public worship service. It is the time when the Gospel is preached and sinners are invited to the Lord Jesus Christ. The public service is the important thing in the life of a church!

Following are a number of rules which might be helpful in conducting an evangelistic worship service:

1. The Pastor Should Be There. It is important that the pastor be in his own pulpit. I have made it a policy through the years to be in my own pulpit every Sunday. Some preachers would not feel this advisable, and certainly that is understandable. However, as much as possible, the pastor should be in his own pulpit.

2. Claim the Spirit Fullness. If a preacher is prayed up as he should be, and talks to the Lord periodically, he should be able to preach all the time. Simply a prayer of claiming the Spirit fullness before he goes into the pulpit, is sufficient many times. Many preachers ruin their disposition, their sermon and their spirit by waiting too late on Saturday night to agonize, or, by waiting too late on Sunday morning. The agonizing should be done previous to the service, and a simple claiming by faith the fullness of God’s spirit will many times suffice before the service. This does not discount the agonizing in prayer and the many hours a preacher should pray for the services and for the power of God-but the preacher should realize that God wants to fill him, and if he has met the conditions of God all week long in his life, then he can have His fullness on Sunday.

3. Have Real Humility. Humility is not cowardice; neither is it timidity. Humility is a feeling that "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." There is a fine line of distinction between a person who is "cocky," and a person who is humble. A cocky person says, "I can do all things." A humble person says, "I can do all things . . . through Christ."

4. Work on Yourself before the Service. Before the service, go alone and ask God to put you in the mood of the sermon. If you are going to preach against sin, think how awful sin is-ask God to stir your heart against it, and make you realize how dirty and black it is. If you are going to preach on heaven, try to walk the golden streets a while before you go into the pulpit. If you are going to preach on hell, turn the lights out for a while and think about how awful hell must be, and ask God to put you in the right mood for the sermon. This is important!

5. Get Everyone to Participate in the Preaching Service. That is one reason for the song service. If the people sing, and participate in the first part of the service, they will be relaxed for the invitation. Many churches find it wise to have the people shake hands at the first part of the service. This may become a formality if not handled properly. The people should definitely be loosened up in the early part of the service, and feel themselves a part of it. Many people never feel like part of the service, but like spectators. This should not be.

There are several ways the right feeling can be achieved. As mentioned before, hand-shaking is a good way. Then, a definite effort to get all of the congregation to sing in the song service is good. To do this, some old songs must be used, which all of the people will know.

Also, it is good to have a time to recognize visitors to have them stand, say a few words about them, make them feel at home.

6. Get concerned People to Lift Their Hands. Sometimes in the early part of the service, it is often good to have the people bow their heads for prayer. Then ask the people who are praying for an unsaved friend in the service to lift their hands. This will do several things: First, it will let you know if you have many prospects. Again, it will let you know the people in your church who bring lost souls to the services. Also, the person who raises his hand indicating that he is interested in a lost one, will usually be sitting next to or near the unsaved friend. This will let you know who the unsaved are so that you will be able to give them special attention later in the service.

7. Preach to Get Results. Preach to get results! Never become the teacher type or the lecturer type, and never get used to a "dry haul." When you preach a sermon on tithing, expect people to start tithing. When you preach against a certain sin, expect people to give it up. Always expect additions and conversions in the services. Preach to get results!

8. Train the People to Be Openly for You. This should be especially true when the preacher is a frank person. The visitors in the service, especially the unsaved, need to be conscious of the fact that the people there are for you, and believe what you are preaching. If they feel as if you are fighting an uphill battle and that the people are against what you say, your sermon will be ineffective. However, if they feel that in the power of the Spirit you are preaching Jesus in such a way that your people are for you, then they, too, will be impressed with the service.

Train your people to say "Amen" often. It is certainly helpful in an evangelistic preaching service.

9. Do Not Reveal the Closing Point. Many of us in our preaching will make such statements as, "Now, in conclusion"; "Finally, may I say"; "My last point is . . . ."

These statements are sometimes dangerous. The sinner knows five minutes before you finish; hence, he digs in and prepares himself for the invitation so that he does not respond. However, if your closing is abrupt and a lost person does not suspect that you are about finished, you have crept up on him and he will not have time to prepare himself for the invitation. Many people may be reached, using this method.

One of the most glaring errors of many churches is that just as the preacher nears the conclusion in his sermon, the organist tiptoes like a sniper in battle, to the organ, letting the people in the congregation know that invitation time is near-and letting the lost person brace himself for the invitation. Then the choir director whispers the number to the choir, and they begin to shuffle pages. We eliminate that in our church by using the same invitation hymn at the close of each service. If there is a change, the pastor announces the number at the beginning of the service. The invitation should be abruptthe people should not have their attention diverted until time for the invitation itself.

10. Do Not Fuss over Past Sins. Many preachers ruin their effectiveness by preaching against the sins the members committed during the past week. They cannot undo a single one of them.

However, they would do well to preach against the sins they might commit next week, and lead them to avoid those.

11. Do Not Close the Service on a Low Note. It is good to start the service on a high spiritual plane and to close the service on a high spiritual plane. If there is any skinning, or roof-raising to be done, do it in the middle of the sermon. Then, bring the sermon back up to a high spiritual level. People have a way of remembering the last part of the service. If the service is closed on a complaining, fussing note, then the people subconsciously register that and are not as prone to return. However, if the service is closed on a high note, a victorious note, all the time, then the people will subconsciously have the desire to come back.

12. Do Not Ask for Rededications Until Souls Have Been Reaped. Reap the souls first. Many times preachers have people come to kneel at the altar to rededicate their lives, begin family altars or begin tithing, and clog the aisles so that the lost people cannot get down them. Always try to reap the sinners first. Then, afterwards turn to the Christians and lead them to a deeper life. Do not block the aisles with Christians so that the lost will be discouraged from coming.

13. Use Soul Winners in the Invitation. This is dangerous sometimes; however, it can be used effectively. Have some key people in your church (many times some deacons) observe as the hands are raised for prayer in the invitation. Then, after singing a while, if these who raised their hands do not come, they may be approached by the soul winners, who may be able to lead them to Christ.

Promiscuous wandering around during the invitation is often hurtful. It should be guarded carefully in order not to hurt people, and lead folks farther away from Christ. However, when a person raises his hand, he is under conviction, and usually can be won by an effective, tactful, Spirit-filled soul winner.

It is hoped that the foregoing suggestions will be helpful to many pastors as they lead their churches to be evangelistic centers. God knows that if we worship in Spirit and in truth we will bring sinners to Christ week by week. For the past forty-two months in the Miller Road Baptist Church someone has been saved every week, and someone has been ready for baptism each Sunday evening. May God be praised! These methods have been used of the Lord week after week in the bringing of souls to Christ. May God use them to bless your heart.

1.07. Big Days and Special Occasions

7. Big Days and Special Occasions

Big days are important in the lives of all Americans. Whether we like to admit it or not, we make much of big days and special occasions. Few are the families who do not get together during the Christmas season. Many thousands of us observe with joy the Thanksgiving season; Labor Day weekend also means much to Americans. We look forward with anticipation to big days, special occasions, long weekends and the holiday seasons. If this is so effective commercially and politically, then certainly it could be useful when carried into the life of a church. Many churches have found it advisable to use big days and special occasions with which to keep their people happy and aggressive, and to build their attendance. These days have been used effectively in places where I have been in Bible conferences and revivals. One church went from an attendance of 289 one Sunday to 1, 080 the following Sunday! Many pastors and churches will testify to the help gained from the use of these and other suggestions for big days and special occasions. This chapter is devoted largely to describing a number of the big days that we found helpful in our church program. Certainly no one person will agree with all of these occasions; and yet, if perchance a few might gain an idea or suggestion which will help their church work and increase their attendance, thereby bringing more souls to Christ, we will be grateful to the Lord Jesus.

1.07.01. Old-Fashioned Day

OLD-FASHIONED DAY

Old-Fashioned Day is one of the most joyous days in our church. We do not set a specific attendance goal on this day, but we do try to have it on a weekend that would normally have a lower attendance than usual. For example, a good time for Old-Fashioned Day is the Fourth of July weekend, or the Labor Day weekend. We usually send out some sort of a mimeographed letter inviting our folk to the services on this day. This day is filled with wonderful events which always bring a great deal of joy to our people. Let us note some of the things that we do on Old-Fashioned Day:

1. Collection of Antiques. After Old-Fashioned Day has been announced, and we begin to publicize it, we ask our people to bring antique items for display on the platform. Such items as old-fashioned churns, wash pots, spinning wheels, clocks, Bibles, curling irons and smoothing irons are brought and displayed for this special day. Many, many people have old-fashioned items which they like to bring and display. Then, on Old-Fashioned Sun-day, these items are taken one by one and shown and explained to the congregation. It is always a source of joy and enthusiasm when these items are shown and memories are recalled.

Especially is this good for the older people. In many of our churches the program is geared for the younger people so much that the older people are forgotten. On an occasion like this, it gives the older members of the church a real opportunity to participate, to be blessed and to have a good time in the Lord Jesus.

2. Pump Organ. In order to help us have the old-fashioned spirit on this day, we have an old-fashioned pump organ on the platform. The organist usually plays a solo on the pump organ. Also, the offertory is played on the pump organ, which lends an old-fashioned atmosphere to the service.

It is a good idea to have two organists available to play the organ. After "pumping" for a while, a member of this modern generation will tire of pumping an organ. So, it is good to have a "spare" in case fatigue overtakes the first organist. This also gives the people a little levity, which helps the service.

3. Hats Passed Instead of Plates. Someone is appointed in advance to be chairman of the "Hat Committee," and he secures enough hats to pass to take the offering on this day.

4. Mourner’s Bench. Someone is appointed to be in charge of a "Mourner’s Bench." Any kind of old bench may be used, with some old quilts thrown over it. The Mourner’s Bench across the altar lends much to the old-fashioned atmosphere on Old-Fashioned Day. Remember, many people were converted at the old-fashioned Mourner’s Bench, under a brush arbor or in a tent campaign. It will recall many memories to have the Mourner’s Bench. In fact, every church should provide some kneeling place at the altar where sinners may come and confess their sins and talk to God in

the altar of the church.

5. Creek Baptizing. When promoting Old-Fashioned Day make much of the Creek Baptizing. The church members assemble about 3:30 in the afternoon and form a processional of cars to a nearby creek, and the converts for that week are baptized in the creek. Pictures of the creek baptizing are always taken.

Sometimes it is good to secure a Model T Ford to lead the processional. A good time is in store for everyone, as well as a spiritual blessing in the old-fashioned creek baptizing.

6. Coal Oil Lamps and Lanterns. On Old-Fashioned Day the only lighting that is used is coal oil lamps and lanterns. About three weeks in advance of this special day, the pastor may appoint a committee to assemble enough lamps and lanterns to light the auditorium fairly well. These may be lit for the morning service; and then they also provide all of the necessary light for the eve-ning service. The evening service on Old-Fashioned Day is truly a blessing, as the people come and worship God, sing and hear the Word of God preached in an old-fashioned atmosphere with coal oil lamps and lanterns.

7. Old-Fashioned Costumes. Some may want to wear old-fashioned costumes, or maybe overalls for the men, on this day. However, in our own particular situation, it is unadvisable. We do, however, for the opening as-sembly of the Sunday school, have all of the adults assemble for a skit, using old-fashioned gay nineties costumes. The preacher wears a tall black hat, with cut-away coat. Other leaders in the church wear similar costumes. This is good only for an opening assembly and not for the regular service, as it would detract from the purpose of the service. This is a joyous occasion.

Costumes for this occasion may be secured from any costume shop and are certainly in keeping with the occasion. These costumes may also be worn in the Model T Ford on the way to the baptismal service in the afternoon.

8. Other Suggestions. Keep in mind during Old-Fashioned Day and other special occasions the idea of taking pictures. Numbers of the people will want to bring their cameras, some will bring movie cameras and can preserve the spirit of the day for future years. These pictures will certainly be a blessing as the years go by.

It is good for the song leader to select old-fashioned songs, for the pastor to preach a sermon on the old time religion and have some old-fashioned testimonies. This is especially good in the night service when the coal oil lamps and lanterns furnish the only light.

Old-Fashioned Day is one of the highlights of our church year. A number of people are converted on this day each year. God has been good to us on this wonderful day. There is not a day in the year when our people are happier in the Lord than they are on Old-Fashioned Day. Of course, one must remember to keep Jesus in the center of it all, remember that He is an old-fashioned Saviour, with an old-fashioned Gospel, that will take people to an old-fashioned heaven and save them from an old-fashioned hell, by the way of the old-fashioned Cross, written about in the old-fashioned Book empowered by the old-fashioned Spirit of God.

Below is a sample of one of the letters which we mail to each member of our church and Sunday school the week preceding Old-Fashioned Day.

OLD-FASHIONED DAY SUNDAY, JULY 14TH

Telephone, visit, or write your FRIENDS, RELATIVES and NEIGHBORS and invite them to be with us for Old-Fashioned Day, THIS SUNDAY!! Be sure to come in time for Sunday school at 9:30 a. m.! In the Adult Assembly there will be a SPECIAL program, with the deacons in their overalls, the pastor and Brother Bill in old-fashioned suits, a display of old-fashioned items on the platform-good old-fashioned singing, and many other interesting things in store for you at SUNDAY SCHOOL! Plan to Attend Every Service This Sunday!!

Below is a wonderful piece of poetry (?) written by the pastor, which will tell you more about OLD-FASHIONED DAY. A BREEF AND KORECK PEECE OF POITRI Bi Edger Alin Po I ain't much uv a poet, you kno, I hav the hardes' tyme Makin' the lions come out jist rite An makin' the virses rime, But Ole-fashuned Day iz hear again. THIS SUNDAY iz the day Whin we ditch this modernn stuph And do the ole tyme way.

We're goin' to hav a mournir's binch Wher folks kan kneel and pray And git our kold harts rite with God Just lyke the old time way.

Wee shud be verry dignafide So miny peeple say, But I'd ruther sing and shout "amen"

Az they did en yistarday.

We're goin' to hav an old pump orgin For Mrs. Lions to pla We're goin' to sing the old time songs And preech the old time way.

I'm goin' to babtiz en the creak Just like John the Baptist did.

Miny use a baptistri;

We're goin' to uze the creke instid.

We're goin' to burn cole oil lamps And laturns on that day Won't it be funn to wurshipp God En the ole-fashuned way?

Bily Rosenbum iz goin' to sing With the quartett duin' itz part.

They're goin' to sing that ole song "I've gott that old tyme relijun in mi hart."

Yes, ther iz goin' two be lotz of funn Down on Miller Rode So kome to Sunday skul and church And brink a hole kar lode.

1.07.02. The Church's Birthday

THE CHURCH'S BIRTHDAY

Secure the birthday or anniversary of the church, and once each year celebrate the church's birthday. We have this big day in our church in March each year. Some of the things that we consider important on this day are as follows:

1. A Birthday Cake. Our birthday cake is usually a huge one. The most recent one that we had weighed over five hundred pounds and was quite expensive; however, smaller cakes may be used effectively.

One thing to note in making the cake is that you may make the cake appear to be much larger than it is by building a form and putting cake around it. Much of it may be wood with icing over it, which makes it look larger.

We have made it a practice each year to raise money to pay for the cake apart from the church budget. It has long been our conviction that the money given in tithes and offerings should be used for spreading the Gospel; hence, there are ways, such as special offerings, whereby money for the birthday cake may be raised. This is advisable in many churches where this idea has been used.

Another idea for the cake is that it may be designed in various shapes. One year ours was a cross and a Bible. The most recent and the largest cake that we have used was a replica of our church buildings. This was the most popular cake that we have ever used.

2. The Candles. One way we promote attendance on our birthday is by mailing a letter to each person enrolled in our Sunday school the week preceding the birthday. A small birthday candle is enclosed in each letter. Each member is asked to bring his candle to Sunday school on Sunday morning. The candles may be collected dur-ing Sunday school and turned in with the records. Then, they are all placed on the cake at the same time. Be sure that each child is mailed a candle. It gives an incentive to come to the birthday party, when they will have their own candles placed on the cake.

Many times attendance goals are set for each class or department. We have large candles available for each teacher or department who reaches the goal. At the close of the Sunday school hour, after everyone is assembled in the auditorium, just before the morning service, the teachers or superintendents who reached their goals are recognized. They light their large candles and place them on the cake. The candles are blown out by the deacons, as the congregation sings "Happy Birthday."

3. In the Afternoon. On our "Birthday Sunday" the church meets outside someplace in the afternoon, or perhaps in a community house, to eat the cake. The drinks are usually provided by some of the members or by a special offering.

It is a good time of fellowship as the members get together and eat cake, with some soft drinks. Usually we have so much cake because of the size that ours have been, that many members take home a pound or so with them.

4. Special Guests. On the church's birthday celebration it is always good to invite people who are acquainted with the founding of the church and the early days of the church's history, to come in to give testimonies about the church. Converts may also be recognized, as well as charter members. This is not only a good day for remembering the history of the church, but also to make vows for the future.

5. Birthday Party Letter:

Please Come to the Big Birthday Party of the Miller Road Baptist Church This Sunday, March 13th,

9:45 A. M.

You will have "loads of fun" if you will do the following:

1. Bring the enclosed CANDLE with you to Sunday school so we can put it on our huge 200 pound cake!

2. Be here, by all means, at 9:45 to help us reach our attendance goal of ". . . 1003 on the day we'Revelation 3:1-22 . . . ."

3. Be at the Community House at 5:00 p. m. where we will serve our cake.

4. Be in training union at 6:30 p. m. to hear Dr. Fred Schwarz, a noted authority on Communism.

5. BY ALL MEANS, be here in time for Sunday school . . .

SPECIAL RECOGNITION will be given in the preaching service to each class or department reaching their goal.

See you at the party . . .

SUNDAY 9:45!

1.07.03. Back to School Day

BACK TO SCHOOL DAY

Another day which we make much of at our church is Back to School Day. This day is celebrated on the first or second Sunday after school has started each fall. Following are some of the ideas that we use for this day:

1. Personal Letters to School Students. The pastor writes a personal letter to all of the school students-one to each child, whether in the first grade or a senior in high school. In this letter he reminds them of Back to School Day in their honor the following Sunday, and invites them to come. He also reminds them of the special gift to be given to each pupil who comes. Of course, this special day has been publicized from the pulpit several times previous to the time that the letters are sent out. This letter may be mimeographed; however, it is a good idea to leave the salutation blank so that each child's name may be written in longhand-for example, "Dear Sally," or "Dear John." Also, if possible, it is a good idea not to mimeograph the signature, but rather for the pastor to sign each letter personally. This makes the child feel that it is a personal letter, especially to him. Children, especially the smaller ones, have not yet heard about mimeograph machines. It will be like getting a personal letter from their pastor. Many children have been thrilled over receiving such correspondence, and you might be surprised at the increase it makes in the Sunday school attendance. Below is a sample letter:

MILLER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH GARLAND, TEXAS from the OFFICE OF THE PASTOR September 10, 1956. Did you start back to school last week?? If you did, this is a "personal" letter from ME to You! I want to tell you about the BIG DAY that we are having in your honor at Sunday school and church THIS Sunday morning, September 16th!!

First, let me congratulate you on the step you have taken in starting the school year. Next, let me invite you to be SURE and be in Sunday school next Sunday morning at 9:30! Here are the reasons that I ESPECIALLY want You to come:

(1) I have a nice gift to give you. Every school student who attends Sunday school this Sunday will receive a nice gift. It will be something that you will want to keepsomething that you can take to school with you every day-something that we have never given away on back-to-school day before. It is a nice ball point pen with the name of your church and a verse of Scripture printed on it!! It will be a beautiful pen that you will enjoy using and will want to keep always! THE ONLY WAY THAT YOU CAN GET ONE IS TO BE IN SUNDAY SCHOOL THIS SUNDAY MORNING AT 9:30!! It will be a daily witness for Jesus in school!

(2) We will recognize you in the preaching service. We want you to stand up so that the entire congregation can see you!

(3) I will be preaching a special sermon in your honor, and I want you to hear it.

DON’T FORGET NOW . . . THIS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th, at 9:30 a. m.!! Hope to see You then.

I hope that you will have a good school year, that you will study hard and make good grades, and be a real Christian young person for Jesus.

Sincerely your pastor,

2. The Gifts. On Back to School Day each school child receives a special gift during the Sunday school hour. There are a number of gift items which may be used. One year we presented the students with little combs with a verse of Scripture on them, along with rulers. Another year we gave pencils with a Scripture on them. In more recent years we have given nicer gifts. For example, one year we gave tablets with the church’s name at the top of each sheet, with a Scripture verse and "Jesus Saves" at the bottom of each page. Still another year we gave each child a ball point pen, with the name of the church, the pastor and a verse of Scripture on each pen. This is one good way to help the students in their witnessing at school.

3. Special Reserved Section. It is sometimes good to reserve a special section in the auditorium for the school children, if there is room for such. This makes them feel more honored. At any rate, they should be given special recognition in the church service.

4. Using the Students in the Service. It is good if you can use school students to take the offering, act as ushers, sing the special music, give a testimony and other things in the service which seem advisable.

5. Inviting the School Teachers. Something that we have not used heretofore, but which we plan to use next year, is the idea of having a special reserved section for all of the school teachers of the children. Insist for several weeks ahead that each child solicit the attendance of his school teacher on Back to School Sunday. Of course, this will necessitate having the day several weeks after school starts, perhaps near the first of October. Many teachers would be blessed and honored by such a service. Perhaps, also, the Gospel might be preached to some who otherwise would not hear it. If the teachers could feel the spirit of a warm, spiritual service, it would perhaps open their minds toward many churches which may be considered a little "narrow-minded" because of convictions. At least it would help the relationship between the school and the church.

6. The Sermon. The preacher may adapt his sermon to the school students, preaching such subjects as "Back to School with Jesus," "How to Live for Christ at School," or some other appropriate subject for the day.

Many school students may be reached for Christ through a special day like Back to School Day who would not otherwise come to Sunday school and the morning service.

1.07.04. Baby Day

BABY DAY

Every church would do well to have Baby Day. This is a big day in our church and we usually have it in the spring. Many parents have babies who were born during the winter months and who have never been to church. The parents may be out of the habit of coming, and a special day in honor of the babies will get them back to God's house. Also, it serves as a time of dedication for the precious babies that God has given us during the past ear.

If your church is small, you may recognize and honor all of the children, three years of age and under. In large churches, however, only the small babies can be recognized -those who have not reached their first birthday.

1. Special Letter. For this occasion you may send out a special letter to the baby. Address it to the baby, tell-ing him that you have a corsage for his mother, and that you are having a special day for him. Explain to him that you are happy that he is here. Who knows but what it will be the first letter ever addressed to the new baby. This is the letter we sent:

Dear Parents,

Each year in our church we set aside one Sunday to honor all of the children in the nursery departments of our Sunday school. This Sunday, May 5th, is the day for this special occasion-BABY DAY!!

We know that You will want to have your child present for this special day in their honor. Here's what we will do:

Immediately at the close of the Sunday school hour, bring your child from the Nursery Department into the AUDITORIUM. BEFORE the preaching service, there will be a PARADE of all the nursery children around the auditorium and across the platform. All babies who have not reached their first birthday will be introduced from behind the pulpit!!!

Little pink corsages will be presented to all mothers of little girls; little blue corsages to all mothers of little boys!!! This is one of the sweetest days in our church year. DON'T MISS IT!!! This gives all of our people an opportunity to see and meet your baby. Many of us who do not have occasion to go to the nursery department miss the blessing of seeing the nursery children.

ALSO, it gives the people a chance to meet the nursery workers who faithfully care for the children each Sunday while we worship.

So, be SURE to have your child here THIS SUNDAY morning at 9:30 a. m. for Sunday school, and for the BABY PARADE immediately following Sunday school!!!

There will be a special place reserved in the auditorium for the parents of the nursery children to sit during the preaching service!!!

We are counting on YOU to help us make this the BIGGEST and BEST "BABY DAY" we have ever had!!!

Sincerely, Your Pastor

2. The Nursery Workers. At the morning service special recognition is given to those who work with the babies all of the time. The nursery teachers in the Sunday school, as well as the paid nursery workers, should be recognized. Each worker is presented with a lovely corsage, as she is introduced to the congregation by the pastor.

3. Baby Parade. At the conclusion of the Sunday school hour, each parent goes to the nursery and gets his child, and brings him to the auditorium. The parents, with their babies, are lined up around the auditorium. After the nursery workers have been introduced and presented with their corsages, the pianist or organist plays "Jesus Loves Me" or some other appropriate song, as the parents "pa-rade" their babies around the auditorium. Each parent comes behind the microphone on the platform, shows the congregation the baby, and tells his or her name.

4. Corsages. You may present small corsages to each mother of a new baby-that is, mothers of babies born since last Baby Day, or who are less than one year old. Mothers of little boys may be presented with blue corsages, mothers of little girls with pink corsages. These may be bought inexpensively, and may be made of just one carnation and some ribbon.

These corsages may be presented to the mothers during the Baby Parade as they come behind the pulpit to introduce their babies. The paid nursery workers may assist the pastor or Sunday school superintendent in presenting the corsages, thereby saving some time.

5. Altar Dedication Service. After corsages have been presented to the workers and to the mothers, and the babies have been "paraded"-just before they are returned to the nurseries-each parent may bring his baby to the altar and the pastor may have a special prayer of dedication, for God to bless the life of each baby, that Jesus might have His will in their lives and in the lives of the parents.

It is also fitting to have a special musical number while the parents are at the altar, with heads bowed. There are many special numbers about children, or perhaps the music director might write one suitable for the occasion. The song may be sung first, after which the pastor may lead in the prayer of dedication.

6. Reserve Section for Parents. After the parade and dedication service, the babies are taken back to the nurseries, and the parents return to sit in a section of the auditorium which has been reserved for them. Have this reserved section as near to a door as possible, near the front. Many of the parents will have a difficult time getting their babies back to sleep in the nursery, and will be a little late in getting to the service. Hence, the nearer the reserved section to the door, the less disturbance will be involved as the parents return to the service.

7. Special Sermon. The pastor may preach a message on a dedicated child, or some other appropriate sermon in honor of children, trying to reach the parents for Jesus.

1.07.05. Homecoming Day

HOMECOMING DAY

Homecoming Day is usually conducted in our church On the Thanksgiving weekend to help counterbalance the natural slump of this weekend. Because of the school holidays for this weekend many people will go Out of town. However, many, many of them will stay at home and invite their friends and relatives to spend the holidays with them, if there is something special at the church, We have found that our people respond well to days such as this, as they are many times able to reach lost loved ones for Christ in these special services.

1. Letters. We mail letters to each of our members, reminding them of Homecoming Day, telling them of the special features for the day, encouraging them to bring friends and relatives. A little artwork helps to add sparkle to the invitation.

2. Special Letter. A letter is sent to all former members who can be located, giving them a special invitation to be with us for Homecoming Day. A number of old-timers coming back to the services will more than overcome the loss of those people who go out of town for the weekend; hence, the attendance for the holiday weekend will stay high. There are many former members who would like to spend their holiday weekend visiting the church, if they are invited to a Homecoming Day or special service. Our Homecoming letter read like this: The time has come again for our ANNUAL HOMECOMING DAY!! Each year our church family gets together for a great big "dinner on the grounds." THIS SUNDAY, November 27th, is the big day!

We will have our regular Sunday school and preaching service on Sunday morning; then we will go in a body to the Community House in the City Park, where we will all eat lunch together.

After lunch we will return to the auditorium at 3:00 p. m. for a homecoming service. Brother Joe Boyd will bring the homecoming message, and the Singing Spencers will render the special music.

Following is a list of important items for YOU to do:

(1) By all means, have your entire family in Sunday school Sunday!

(2) Contact any former members of our church that you know of and invite them to our services!

(3) Plan to BRING YOUR LUNCH and stay with us for the noon meal! DON’T be a "wet blanket" now and go home after the morning service.

(4) If you like, you may take your food to the Community House BEFORE Sunday school. Bring it upstairs where we will have a committee to receive it and arrange it on the tables. If you prefer, you may just bring your lunch with you as you come from the services Sunday morning.

(5) Just to make a complete day of it, plan to come back to the auditorium at 3:00 o’clock for the homecoming service to hear Brother Boyd and the Spencers!

(6) The nurseries will be open for those who want to leave their children 3 years and under until after the homecoming service! The fellowship here at Miller Road is one of the sweetest in all the world. It will be to your benefit to take advantage of the opportunities of this Sunday. You will have the opportunity to fellowship with former members of our church, members of the Spring Creek Chapel, the Open Door Baptist Church and Eastern Hills Baptist Church (which were missions of our church).

Bring your FRIENDS . . . RELATIVES . . . NEIGHBORS! EVERYBODY is invited! THIS SUNDAY-9:45 a. m.

3. Dinner on the Grounds. For several weeks prior to Homecoming Day our people are reminded of the services, and the "dinner on the grounds." Our own people are encouraged to stay for dinner, and are asked to bring a little extra to take care of our visitors. This is a wonderful time of fellowship.

We have found it advisable in our church to reserve the community house for our lunch in case of rain, cold weather, etc. This also gives a suitable place for the food to be left as the people come to Sunday school if they so desire.

4. Afternoon Service. After the "dinner on the grounds" and a time of fellowship, the people come back to the auditorium for an afternoon service. At this service the old-timers are recognized, and other special guests are introduced. A "sing-song" or a "singing" is usually advisable here, followed by a message from some well-known speaker. Testimonies as to what the church has meant to the lives of the people are also in order at this afternoon service, as well as introducing former pastors, etc.

1.07.06. Picture Taking Day

PICTURE TAKING DAY

Picture Taking Day is usually conducted just before Promotion Day each year. August is a good time for this, as the classes will be promoted in a few weeks, and the teachers and pupils will want pictures by which to re-member their old classes and departments.

1. Letters. Sent Out. Letters are mailed to each member of the Sunday school the previous week, reminding them of Picture Taking Day. Be sure to tell why the pictures are being taken-and when!-and where! Invite the whole family. Following is a copy of one of the letters we have used for this:

We are going to publish a BIG PHOTOGRAPH BOOK entitled "The Miller Road Miracle in Pictures." This book will be much like a high school annual, with pictures and stories all about the Miller Road Baptist Church.

We want YOUR picture to be in this book. The pictures will be taken THIS SUNDAY, August 5th, which has been designated as – "PICTURE TAKING DAY"

Picture taking will start promptly at 9:30 Sunday morning – So dress all the children up in their "Sunday best," put on all of the "frills," and be here for this occasion! !

Each CLASS will have its picture made, and each Picture will be placed in our new book, which will be published in a few weeks. Copies of this book will be sold all over the country!!

DON’T FORGET . . Be here promptly at 9:30 with ALL the family, as pictures will be taken of EVERY person who attends our Sunday school THIS Sunday-from the smallest baby in the nursery-to the oldest Adult!!!

SEE YOU SUNDAY!!

2. Photographer. We secure a photographer to take the pictures-a professional photographer, if possible. How-ever, some churches find it advisable to use a member of the church who has a camera and equipment and is good at taking pictures. If the groups are small enough, this can be done easily.

3. To Create Interest. In promoting Picture Taking Day a good way to stir interest is to award free pictures to the department or class having the largest percentage of enrollment present. This challenges the teachers, as well as the class members, and results in a significant in-crease in attendance on this day.

4. Orders for Pictures. Announce well in advance the price for the pictures. Orders may be taken for the pictures on the day that they are taken, rather than waiting for proofs, then ordering. Each teacher or departmental superintendent should keep an accurate list of the ones who have ordered pictures, and indicate those who have paid. This list should be kept until all pictures are

delivered.

5. Church Annual. We have thought it wise before to use these pictures taken on Picture Taking Day, and other pictures taken throughout the year on special occasions, in a church annual-much like a high school annual. This book may be sold to the members for a nominal fee to cover expenses. Former members and other friends might also be interested in such a booklet.

If this is done, by all means take the orders for the annuals before they are ordered by the church. It is a good idea to get the money in advance, also. This way, you will know how many annuals to order.

Picture Taking Day is always fun. All people love to have their pictures taken, and especially like to have them for remembering their classes and departments. This is a successful day each year in our church.

Picture Taking Day may be "stretched out." For example, the Miller Road Baptist Church has grown to such proportions that now we have a special Picture Taking Day for the nursery departments, another for the beginner departments, another for the primaries, another for juniors, another for intermediates and young people, and another for adults. This helps the attendance and creates interest for a number of weeks, rather than just the one Sunday. Too, it is difficult in larger Sunday schools for the photographer to successfully take each class in one Sunday.

If you do have a Picture Taking Day for each group, rather than taking them all one Sunday, be sure that you send out letters to each group the week before they are to have their pictures taken.

1.07.07. Record Breaking Day

RECORD BREAKING DAY This idea can be used effectively almost anywhere. This day may also be advertised and publicized through letters, in your church bulletin or from the pulpit. Get some phonograph records and display them on the platform, or some other conspicuous place in the church-over one write the words "SUNDAY SCHOOL," over another "YOUTH GROUP," over another "OFFERING," and any other church organization that you wish to "break the record." Announce what the previous record attendance is for each one, and then challenge the people to "break the records." On Record Breaking Sunday, as each goal is reached, the leader of that organization must have the corresponding phonograph record broken over his head. These records are broken at the close of the Sunday school hour, just before the morning service; and at the close of Youth meeting, just prior to the evening service.

Each member will work hard to break all previous records in order to see the phonograph record broken over the superintendent or leader’s head.

1.07.08. Absentee Sunday

ABSENTEE SUNDAY The general idea here is not to have any absentees in Sunday school on a certain Sunday, but to have every member present. A letter may be sent out to each member with no "T’s" in it, because of so many absent T’s lately. Also you may want to send out a "T"-either a golf tee, a tea bag, or just a letter "T," asking each person to bring his T to Sunday school so that there will be no absent T. My dear friend,

We cerxainly are hoping xhax you can be in Sunday school xhis nexx Sunday ax xhe Miller Road Bapxisx Church. Because of xhe Chrisxmas season and xhe large amounx of sickness, many of our people have been absenx for several Sundays. We wanx xo sxarx xhe New Year wixh a big boom in axxendance xhis Sunday. Plan now xo be in your place. Bring all of xhe children and lex’s go over xhe xop for xhe Lord Jesus.

1953 was a banner year for xhe Miller Road Bapxisx Church. Our Sunday school grew by leaps and bounds. We are hoping xhax xhe same xhing can be said ax xhe end of 1954. By xhe way, I guess xhax by now you are wondering why we have lefx oux all of xhe "T’s" in xhis lexxer. THE REASON IS THAT WE HAVE BEEN HAVING SO MANY ABSENT "T’s" LATELY, WE JUST DIDN’T HAVE ENOUGH TO USE IN THIS LETTER.

DON’T BE AN ABSENTEE SUNDAY.

Sincerely, Your Pastor

1.07.09. B-1 Sunday

B-1 SUNDAY

Get some vitamin B-1, or some tablets containing vitamin B-1 at the drugstore. Send a letter to each member of the Sunday school, enclosing one of the tablets, asking him to take it so he can B-1 in Sunday school the following Sunday. A letter such as the one below creates interest and increases the attendance:

Enclosed you will find a little pill containing Vitamin B -1. Please take this pill so that YOU CAN B -1 of 2, 000 in Sunday school at the MILLER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH on NOVEMBER 13th . . . As you know, each year in November we set a "High Attendance Day" as a sort of anniversary of the growth of our church. Two years ago our motto was "From 44 to 444 in one year"; last year it was "From 44 to 1, 044 in two years"; this year it is "From 44 to 2, 000 in three years"! ! To encourage you to B -1 of this 2, 000 on November 13th, the following features have been arranged:

(1) Mrs. Billy Sunday, wife of the famous evangelist of yesteryear, will be our guest and speak to us during the Sunday school hour.

(2) Billy Rosenbaum will sing again! As you know, Brother Billy has been at the point of death for 16 weeks, and has recuperated enough to sing in the quartet for the "Big Day." He will do this even though he is still taking his nourishment through a tube. I know you will want to be here to hear Billy sing!

(3) Another famous quartet will sing! This quartet is known as "The Big Four," composed of Brother and Mrs. Hyles and Brother and Mrs. Keys. They will sing during the opening assembly of the Sunday school!!

(4) A "String Ensemble" composed of four of our church members will play!

(5) A tent will be erected on church property and a Baylor University football player will preach to all the young people at 11:00 a. m. under the tent. He is BILL GLASS 6 ft., 4 inch 225 lb. tackle!

(6) During the opening assembly of Sunday school the Singing Spencers will bring us two numbers!

PLEASE, dear friend, take this tablet and B-1 . . . and BRING 1 for the "BIG DAY" on NOVEMBER 13th . . . .

1.07.10. Good Neighbor Sunday

GOOD NEIGHBOR SUNDAY

Ask each person to bring a neighbor as his special guest this Sunday. Anyone who brings a neighbor will receive a gift. For example, a nice Bible might be awarded to one who brings as many as ten, or twenty neighbors. A neighbor might be anyone who lives within a fifteen mile radius of the church.

Many good prospects are lined up on Good Neighbor Sunday. Let your members stand and introduce their neighbors in the service. The sermon topic might be "Who Is My Neighbor?"- the Good Samaritan story, or some other appropriate sermon.

1.07.11. Fruitful February

FRUITFUL FEBRUARY

One of the most successful things that we have ever tried in our church is "Fruitful February." We cut down some medium sized trees and placed them in buckets of dirt, and placed them in the auditorium. One tree was called an "apple tree" to represent the Sunday school, another was a "pear tree" to represent the youth group, and the other was an "orange tree" for the midweek service. We covered the buckets or cans that contained the trees with red, yellow and orange crepe paper.

We mimeographed apples on red, pears on yellow and oranges on orange construction paper. On each apple, pear and orange there was a place indicated for the person to sign his name. These apples, pears and oranges were given to the Sunday school and youth workers to cut out, and it was their job to get everyone signed up who would promise to be in Sunday school, the youth meeting, and the midweek service every Sunday or Wednesday of the month of February. If they promised to be in Sunday school each Sunday of the month, they became an apple on the apple tree, and so on. These were signed up for each member of the family, and turned back into the office by the workers after they were signed. The apples, pears and oranges were then strung on the trees in the auditorium. It was interesting to see the "trees" fill with fruit as the people signed up to come each Sunday and Wednesday night of the month.

Use of this promotion of Fruitful February should be started four to five weeks early in order to build the attendance for the entire month. This is a workable idea for all age groups. The people promise to come each Sunday and Wednesday night for an entire month. At the end of the month, most of them, after having been faithful to all of the services for four weeks in a row, have now developed a good habit and will continue to come.

Here is the letter we sent as a reminder:

JUST ARRIVED!!! OUR "ANNUAL" . . . The "MIRACLE of MILLER ROAD in pictures" . . .

Many of you have been asking when this book would be ready-As you know, we had previously announced that it would be here Feb. 10th, BUT we are happy to announce that THE BOOK IS NOW READY, and will be available this Sunday, during the Sunday school hour, February 3rd!!! The book contains pictures of the pastor and his family, Brother Harvey, the church staff, the deacons, ALL Of our BUILDINGS, and ALL of the pictures of the Sunday school classes and departments that we took on "Picture Taking Day"-plus many, many other pictures which you will enjoy and want to keep always. Interesting articles about the history and growth of our church are also contained in this book!! I know that you are ANXIOUS to get this book of "The Miracle of Miller Road" in pictures . . . . FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE . . . This Sunday morning-9:30 a. m.-February 3rd!!

ALSO …. This Sunday begins our "FRUITFUL FEBRUARY" Have You . . . .

"Put an apple on the apple tree for Sunday school all month long A pear on the pear tree says you'll be in Training Union with a song . . . An orange on the orange tree says we'll see you every Wednesday night!!

So, get up a tree for a "FRUITFUL FEBRUARY" That's all right!!!

If you have not already "signed up" to be faithful to all of the services of the church, do help us have a "Fruitful February."

Enclosed with this letter you will find an apple which we ask that you sign (you may sign the whole family on this one apple) and BRING IT WITH YOU TO SUNDAY SCHOOL this Sunday.

We are counting on You to help us get off to a good start at 9:30 on Sunday morning.

1.07.12. Vacation Bible School Sunday

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SUNDAY

It is good either at the beginning of vacation Bible school or at the close of it, to have a Sunday honoring vacation Bible school. On this day the workers may be honored, and the children who attended, or who will attend, recognized.

If this special day is held at the close of the school, the work and things accomplished during Bible school might be displayed for a general assembly in the auditorium. Also, the various Bible school characters that are used may appear before the parents. An interesting program in connection with Bible school may be worked out with a little planning. The parents are interested in the things their children do and learn at Bible school, and since many of them never get to work in the school, they do not have an opportunity to see firsthand what goes on at vacation Bible school. This is good to have during part of the Sunday school hour, and not in the preaching service, as it detracts from the purpose of the service.

1.07.13. Christmas Sunday

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY A good time to have a special day is on the Sunday nearest Christmas. On this Sunday a small gift of some type might be presented to each member, or to each family attending. We have found a good thing to give is a Scripture text calendar, with the church's name (and perhaps a picture of the church) on it. One year we gave a New Testament to each child present, with the child's name written on it in gold. This is easily done, as you may obtain gold foil from your office supply or art supply store, and the teachers may write the children's names in gold on the Testaments before they are given to the children on the special Sunday. Some churches permit a "real" Santa Claus to come and present these gifts to the children-other churches with different convictions do not feel it wise.

It seems that since many people go out of town for Christmas anyway, the day should be carefully planned in order to keep the attendance up.

There are many other suggestions which could be given about special days. The ones given here are only to whet your appetite-to help you think of some for yourself. The field is inexhaustible. Literally hundreds have been reached for Christ on these days. God has signally blessed them to His glory, to the saving of sinners, to the edifying of the saved, and to the increased joy of His people. This chapter is not given to cause conflict in opinions concerning big days. Some will think the above suggestions are too sensational; others will perhaps add even more color to them. Please take what is usable for you, and use it to His glory.

1.08. Suggestions on How to Promote Big Days

8. Suggestions on How to Promote Big Days

Just to say that we are going to have a big day is not enough. Just a dignified announcement and a few letters is not enough. There must be a definite planned pro-gram of promotion. If the big day is successful, then the pastor must lead in the promotion of it from the pulpit. The pastor must first get excited over it, if he is to lead his people to get enthused and to work hard to make the special day a success. Following are some promotion suggestions:

1. Plan Your Big Days a Year in Advance. At the beginning of each year I take my calendar and plan the big days. It is sometimes necessary, of course, to make changes during the year; and yet, in order to know the direction that the church is going, and in order to secure speakers for the special occasions, it is good to plan the days far in advance.

2. Start the Promotion of a Big Day Early. Start promotion of each big day or special occasion four to six weeks in advance. Announce it from the pulpit at every service. Get excited about it yourself. Stir up the interest in the people at each service for four to six weeks prior to the big day. Your people will not think the day any more important than you do; they will not get any more excited about it than you do. How hard the people work to make the day successful largely depends on how you start promotion of it from the pulpit.

3. Have Fun as You Prepare for the Big Day. Churches are so staid in our generation that it seems it would be good for the big days to create freedom of expression. So be sure that the people are in a good frame of mind and are joyful as you look forward to the big day.

4. Do Not Have a Big Day on a Normal Big Day. By this I mean that on Easter Sunday your crowds are always good anyway, so it is not wise to have a big day on this Sunday. Have the big days on the difficult Sundays of the year.

5. Do Not Have a Big Day During a Revival. A revival, in itself, is something special. Of course, you should strive for a large attendance. By saying do not have a big day I mean this: Do not use your other ideas during a revival, as you will have wasted the ideas. A revival will take care of itself. The spirit runs high during a revival-a special occasion should be when the spirit does not normally run high, in order to level off the church program for the entire year.

6. Make the Special Occasions Periodic. One big "record-breaking" day each year is enough. Then, one special occasion each quarter we find to be advisable. Along with these, a special occasion once each month is good. In other words, use one special occasion each month, something extra special each three months, and something super once each year-which gives a total of sixteen big days each year. Of course, there are other occasions which may be observed throughout the year, but these, I feel, will be enough to keep a church busy and happy.

7. Do Not Set Too Many Goals. One or two goals each year is sufficient. It is a bad thing for a church to set a goal and not reach it. It lets the people know that they can fail. Do not ever set a

goal unless you are positively sure that you can reach it, thereby encouraging the people to set further goals. My suggestion is that goals be set seldom. The primary purpose of the big days is not to reach a definite goal, but to reach more people and to create a good spirit among your own people.

8. When a Goal Is Set, Set It High. A church will come nearer reaching a high goal than a low one. For example, a church with 150 in Sunday school will come nearer reaching 300 than 200. The people must be challenged. They will respond to a big challenge more than they will to something that does not tax their energy. When our church had 44 in Sunday school attendance we set a goal for 173 and had 191. When we had an attendance of 200 in Sunday school we set a goal for 325 and had 339. When we had 300 in Sunday school, we set a goal for 444 and had 618. When we had 450 in Sunday school attendance we set a goal for 666 and had 952. When we had 700 in Sunday school, we set a goal for 1, 080 and had 1, 181. When we had around 750 to 800 in attendance, we set a goal for 1, 300 and had 1, 601. Since we have been having 1, 000 and over in attendance, we have set goals of 2, 000 and had 2, 212-and a goal of 3, 000 and had 3, 163. Something big challenges people. The bigness of the challenge will encourage the people to bring their friends and relatives.

9. Sign Up Methods. It is sometimes good to use sign up methods, such as bananas to be "one of the bunch," or a link in a chain, or some similar idea. This is good occasionally; however, it can be over used. Perhaps once each year is enough for a sign up method. A sign up method seems to do more in a revival effort than at any other time, because the pastor has each night of the meeting to ask people to sign up and promise to come.

10. Get Your People to Bring Their Friends and Relatives. Suggest that the members bring their relatives from out of town for the big day, or friends from a neighboring city, or anyone who can come from churches that are not real soul winning, Bible preaching churches. There are a number of things that getting people from out of town will do, though it will not build your own church immediately: Many of them will be saved. People who live outside your city are just as much in need of Christ as those who live in your city. Many of them will come with relatives for a big occasion and be converted.

It will help the people who come so that they will go back and encourage their own churches to be on fire for God. Many times just one person who is encouraged in a special service in your church can go back to his own church and ignite a flame that will burn in soul winning zeal for months to come.

It will bring publicity to your church. Every church needs publicity. If your city is one of any size, almost everyone has friends and is constantly meeting people who live close enough to be reached by your church; hence, it is a good way to build for the future.

Many people are in liberal churches which do not be-lieve in the new birth. They need to be taken from these churches. Their attendance at your church on a big day may make them dissatisfied with their liberal church, so that they will return home and place their membership in a church that believes in the new birth, soul winning, and other basic Christian beliefs. On an extra special day people from three or four states and scores of other towns come to visit the services. Put special emphasis on making it a "family affair" and many will come to be reunited with loved ones. At each

service for four or five weeks prior to the big day, ask for a show of hands of people who have already gotten promises. Find out how many promises you have. Give special attention to those who have already gotten people to promise to come with them. It is a good idea to spend at least five minutes at each public service in the promotion of the big day.

11. Build Your Big Days around the Pastor. If you build your big days around visiting speakers, then people will not see the church in a normal service. They will come and enjoy the visiting speaker, go back home and wish they could go to a church like that all of the time. Then, the next Sunday they will come to hear you, perhaps. The special occasion is over; you are back to normal -the prospects are not there, the souls do not walk the aisles in good number as they did previously on the big day. The people think it is the preaching of the visit-ing speaker that did it, and that the pastor is not as capable. Hence, they will not come back.

However, if they come on a big occasion and hear your pastor and feel the spirit and see the souls saved, they will realize they can see that every Sunday, and will want to come back and hear the pastor regularly. Be sure that the pastor is the speaker on big occasions.

12. Make Much Use of the Mail. The week prior to the big day, after it has been announced and publicized in the public church services, send out letters publicizing the special day. Sometimes we send out two letters in one week-one at the first of the week, another later in the week. Or, a letter at the first of the week and a postal card later in the week is good. These are sent out to each member enrolled in our Sunday school most of the time which means that each member of the family will get a letter. The second letter sent out the same week might be sent out to the church roll, one letter to each family.

Chapter 73

1.09. Some Practical Pointers Concerning the Sunday School

9. Some Practical Pointers Concerning the Sunday School The life's blood of any church is in the Sunday school. This teaching period of the Word of God is vitally important to all New Testament churches. The twentieth century church is built around its Sunday school. When someone wants to know the size of a church, he immediately asks what the Sunday school attendance is. The preaching service attendance, youth groups attendance and midweek service attendance depend largely upon the Sunday school. If this is true, then our Sunday school must be important. Below are some pointers and suggestions for the Sunday school.

1. The Enlistment of Workers. In order to have the proper kind of meal, there must be the proper kind of cook. To have the proper kind of cars, there must be the proper kind of mechanics. It is important to choose carefully the teachers for the Sunday school.

Election. Teachers should be elected by the church once each year; however, no teacher should be chosen in the church unless previously approved by the pastor. The pastor should have the right to approve or disap-prove each worker in the church.

Training Course. At the beginning of each year, immediately following the election of teachers and officers, a course in teaching should be offered. It is good to have such a course on the first of October each year, if your new church year begins on October first. One suggestion for such a course is to have the pastor teach the adult workers, and perhaps include young people's and intermediate teachers. Then, have some junior specialist teach the junior workers, and then have a special course for the elementary workers, giving instruction for four or five nights to all of those who will lead the Sunday school for the new year.

Check List. Some churches use pledge cards, but through the years I have tried to stay away from the signing of any kind of pledges; however, we do ask our workers to do several things, and present them with a check list so they may see whether or not they are doing the things expected. The following is a check list we use with our workers:

WHAT KIND of TEACHER AM I?

1. Do I live a separated life?

2. Do I have a daily private devotion?

3. Is my thought life pure?

4. Do I start studying my lesson on Monday?

5. Do I have the right motives? (love for my pupils) 6. Am I prepared physically to teach?

7. Am I prepared mentally to teach?

8. Am I prepared spiritually to teach?

9. Do I pray daily for each pupil?

10 Have I visited in the home of each pupil this quarter?

11. Do I visit all of my absentees?

12. Am I a pastor to my pupils?

13. Do I attend teacher’s meeting?

14. Do I support the entire church program?

15. Am I faithful?

16. When I am absent, do I contact my superintendent by Wednesday night?

17. Have I had a monthly class meeting?

18. Is my class properly organized?

19. Do I get up early enough on Sunday mornings?

20. Do I "brush over" my lesson again on Sunday mornings?

21. Do I make my classroom attractive?

22. Do I greet my class members as they come in?

23. Do I meet any visitors before class?

24. Are my visitors properly introduced in class?

25. Do I enlist any new members?

26. Does my class spend a maximum of five minutes on announcements and business?

27. Do I get all visitors to properly fill out visitors’ slips?

28. Do I tithe?

29. Do I leave my quarterly at home?

30. Do I teach only from the Bible?

31. Do I remember not to make any pupil read or talk?

32. Do I have an interest getter for my lesson?

33. Do I have a written aim?

34. Am I the right age for my pupils?

35. Do I stay on the subject?

36. Do I teach until the bell rings?

37. Do I go from class straight to the auditorium?

38. Do I sit with the lost, if I have any in my class?

39. Do I keep the Lord's Day holy?

40. Is my class of utmost importance in my life?

Dismissal of Workers. When a worker's life becomes contrary to the teachings of the church morally, then it is the duty of the pastor, or some leader, to go to him and ask him to resign his position. This maybe done tactfully sometimes; other times it must be done frankly and candidly. It is better to lose the worker than to pollute the Sunday school and rob the church of its needed power.

Elementary Program Planning. One person should be enlisted to be in charge of the elementary work of the Sunday school. Each group of workers in the various departments should have a monthly planning meeting. This meeting is apart from the regular weekly officers' and teachers' meeting. All of the primary workers should have a meeting to plan their work; the same is true with beginner and the nursery workers. At these meetings they may discuss their problems and plan their handwork and interest centers for the coming month.

2. Weekly Officers and Teachers' Meeting. The weekly officers' and teachers' meeting may be conducted forty-five minutes preceding the midweek service. A good time is from seven o'clock to seven forty-five. In our church the first twenty minutes of the meeting are devoted to promotion, planning, looking forward to big days and discussing the various problems of the workers. The last twenty-five minutes are devoted to teaching the Sunday school lesson. The pastor teaches the lesson. He has a mimeographed outline of the lesson, as he interprets it, then teaches it to the teachers on Wednesday night. This has proven helpful in many Sunday schools. There is no weekly departmental teachers' meeting. This is taken care of by the departments themselves as they feel the need. Most of our departments have a monthly planning meeting where they plan their work for each month. This is good, especially when it is spontaneous and carried out by the workers.

3. Division of Departments and Classes. It is good to have a graded Sunday school. By this I mean have the classes divided by ages. Following are some suggestions as to division of classes:

According to Number of Qualified Teachers. Many suggest that adult classes should be divided into groups of fifteen to twenty-five each. However, many churches do not have enough qualified adult teachers to divide the classes into small groups. It is better to have just one large class if only one qualified teacher is available. However, if you have more teachers who are qualified, then more classes may be made. The classes should not be too large-or too small. The enrollment of the adult classes here in the Miller Road Baptist Church varies from 30 to 80, with an average attendance in each class of approximately 20 to 25. This seems practical-there are enough in each class to make it interesting, yet it is small enough to care for the needs of each member individually.

According to Facilities. Many churches do not have the facilities that other churches do; hence, the classes must be smaller in some cases. If the classrooms are smaller, have smaller classes. The church must be adapted to its buildings, and to each situation. One of the greatest mistakes being made today is the idea that all churches should be alike and that every situation is the same. This

is not true. Some churches may find it wise to have large classes; others, to have smaller ones. No two churches have the same field, the same oppor-tunities, the same possibilities, the same likes and dis-likes, or the same constituency. Each church must adapt its division of classes to its own local situation.

Division of Elementary Groups. In our elementary groups, of course, we have the nurseries, beginners and primaries. The number of departments or classes that you have in each group, of course, would depend upon the number of children. However, we do suggest that you have at least one separate department for each of the above three groups-nursery is composed of those through age three; beginners are the four- and five-year-old children, and the primaries are ages six through eight. If you have enough children it is good to have a department for each year-for example, one for the six-year-olds, one for the seven-year-old pupils, and on. If at all possible, never mix the preschool age children with those who are already attending public school, as their abilities and attention span are not the same.

4. Sunday School Helps. There are many quarterlies and many commentaries that can help the teachers. Although any teacher may secure a copy of any teaching literature he needs, we have found it best through the years to use the following:

We provide all of our adult teachers with the Bible Expositor and Illuminator. For the most part, this is a good help. The teachers in our church are favorable in their comments on it. This may be secured from the Union Gospel Press, Cleveland, Ohio. The pastor presents a mimeographed outline to his workers each week. In preparing this outline the pastor does not use any help but the Bible. It is his own interpretation of the lesson from the Bible. The teacher should make his own outline for Sunday, and study his lesson apart from outside helps, asking God to lead him to the truths of the Scripture.

There are other good helps such as Higley’s Bible Commentary, Peloubet’s Commentary, and others.

It is always good to have a Bible dictionary and a concordance. These are two of the finest helps that a teacher can have.

1.10. Training Union or Yourth Group Suggestions

10. Training Union or Youth Group Suggestions

One of the most difficult services in which to build attendance and create interest is in the training union or youth hour. This hour usually is each Sunday evening, just preceding the evening worship service. It can be a definite help to a church, if properly operated, in the building of the spirit and attendance of the Sunday night service, and also in the training of the church members. Several suggestions are given here to help in providing effective Sunday evening meetings:

1. Church-Wide Appointment of All Officers. Most groups elect their own officers. In many cases they elect new officers each three months. It has been found wise in some churches to have the officers-such as presidents, vice-presidents, group captains, Bible quiz leaders, etc., elected by the church, and hold a church-elected office for one year. This may make the people feel that their job is more important, and it may cease to be just push-ing an office off on someone who did not have the resistance to say "no."

2. The Pastor Should Approve the Lesson. Each week the pastor should review the program in the quarterly. If it is advisable to use it, well and good. If not, he should see that the group has one which will be helpful -either prepare one of his own, or find another one. No quarterly is perfect, and since the pastor is accountable for what the people receive in his church, he should be careful to scan the material used. If it is good, use it. If not, prepare something else in its place. This is done each week in our church.

3. Weekly Planning Meetings. At the Miller Baptist Church. A weekly training union program planning meeting is conducted at six o’clock on Sunday evening. The program is planned for the following Sunday. A new idea is presented each week at this meeting to help the leaders in the presentation of their program. A Bible drill suggestion is also given each week. Just a giving of the parts is not enough. A unique and unusual way to present the program for the following week is given each Sunday evening. Also, at this meeting problems are discussed and necessary adjustment made. It is a helpful meeting for presidents, vice-presidents, group captains and Bible drill leaders in adult, young people and intermedi-ate groups.

4. Elementary Work. The elementary groups in our church use the Gardner System. This literature and work books may be found at most book stores. This work is headed by an elementary director, who oversees all of the work of the nursery, beginner and primary departments. The elementary director has a monthly planning meeting on the last Sunday afternoon in each month. At this meeting the director passes out our mimeographed planning sheets, which give suggestions for presenting each program for the month, along with interest center suggestions and samples, handwork patterns and Bible drill suggestions. Samples of the program material, handwork and interest centers are displayed for each program for the benefit of the workers. This is a splendid method, and God has certainly used it to bless the hearts of our boys and girls.

5. Junior Work. Our junior groups also have a director who meets with the leaders and directors of each junior group once each month to plan their programs and work. The junior director also has mimeographed planning sheets for the workers, along with mimeographed Bible drill suggestions and patterns and attendance reminders. At these meetings the workers in each group may exchange ideas on how to present their programs to make them more helpful and interesting.

1.11. Vacation Bible School at Miller Road

11. Vacation Bible School at Miller Road By JO STRICKLAND, Pastor's Secretary

During the past two or three years we have had many requests for information regarding our vacation Bible schools. We have tried to help some pastors and churches by conducting short Bible school clinics. After our clinic last year we were requested by a number of pastors and workers to put our ideas and suggestions in print. We have prepared this chapter in the hope that it will be of some help to you in planning your vacation Bible school.

I believe that the key to a successful Bible school, to having one that both the pupils and workers will enjoy and be blessed from, is advance planning. Advance planning makes a great deal of difference in what actually goes on during the week or two weeks that your school is conducted.

1. Set Your Date Early. Early in the year, as the pastor plans his annual program or schedule, the vacation Bible school should be considered and a definite date set for it. Most churches find that June is the most acceptable month for it-but there are some churches which wait until August, just before school starts again. We think that June is a good time; however, we do not prefer the first week after school is out for the summer. True, many children go on vacations as soon as school is out; but usually the children respond much better if the school is not conducted until they have been out of public school for at least a couple of weeks.

Many churches have a two-week school, others prefer ten days, and still others have found it advisable to have school only one week. We have found that the latter works best for us. It seems that with so much time and work involved, the workers give their best for a one week school; but many of them cannot give themselves completely to a two-week schedule. If preparation day and enrollment is held in advance, perhaps on Friday or Saturday before the school is to begin on Monday, then much can be accomplished in a five-day school.

2. Publicize Your Bible School. For several weeks prior to the date that your Bible school is to begin, publicize the school. This may be done in the church bulletin or newspaper, through the Sunday school classes and departments, through the mail, and from the pulpit. Your pastor can do more for you in publicizing your school than anyone else. The response of the children who attend, and the workers who help with the school, largely depends on how interested the pastor becomes in it, and how excited he gets about it himself as he announces it from the pulpit.

3. Enlistment of Workers. As soon as possible after the date has been set for the school, enlist your superintendent of the school. Many times the pastor serves as superintendent of the school, or perhaps the associate pastor or educational director fills this position. If someone other than the pastor is superintendent, then he, of course, will work closely with the pastor in planning the school. The school superintendent may wish to enlist all of the workers, or he may prefer only to enlist the various departmental superintendents, and then assist them in enlisting the workers for their own departments. It is good to use as many workers as possible with the same age groups that they teach in Sunday school or youth groups. This way they are already acquainted with most

of the pupils who will attend, with their problems and abilities. This makes it better not only for the workers, but for the pupils as well. In addition to the teachers and work- in the Sunday school and youth groups, others should also be used. This is a wonderful time to train new workers for the Sunday school and youth groups. Many of the Sunday workers have secular jobs and are unable to help in Bible school while, at the same time, there are many mothers and housewives who are willing to work in Bible school who feel they cannot teach on Sundays. Therefore, Bible school time is a good time for training new workers.

4. Departmental Divisions. The more departments you have, the greater Bible school attendance you will have. If at all possible, have at least one department for each age group-that is, one for those under four years of age, one for those four and five, one for those six, seven and eight, one for the juniors-nine through twelve, and one for those thirteen and up. If your school is a large one, it is our suggestion that you have a department for each year-one for the six-year-olds, one for the seven-year-olds, etc. At any rate, try to keep the preschool age children from those who go to school, because of the difference in their attention span and abilities. You will find it helpful if you can have a department for about every twenty-five or thirty pupils, and a worker for every five pupils.

5. Planning Meetings. Textbooks that are to be used in the school should be given to the superintendents of departments as early as possible, so that they may study them and decide upon the lessons or programs which they are to use. Then, as soon as the superintendents have had the opportunity to study the textbooks, each departmental superintendent should get together with the workers of the department, for a planning meeting.

We have found it helpful to have a general meeting with the school superintendent, pastor, and all workers twice before the school begins-the first time in the beginning of the planning of the Bible school, then again the week before the school is to start. This way general plans may be discussed and questions answered at the first meeting. At the second meeting, a check may be made to see if everything is ready and in order for the beginning of the school. Between these two general meetings, the department heads will probably need to have at least two meetings with their workers to make individual departmental plans.

Textbooks should be given out and planning started five to six weeks before time for the Bible school to begin.

If the work for each day is carefully planned, all mimeographing done, supplies bought, and the work for the entire week presented to the workers in advance, the Bible school will run smoothly, the workers will enjoy it and be blessed by it and the pupils will greatly benefit from the school.

More about individual lesson planning will be said later in this chapter.

6. Preparation Day and Parade. On Friday or Saturday morning before the school is to begin on Monday, it is helpful to have Preparation day, and if possible, a parade. The children may come at the time that Bible school will begin each day-line up and march into the auditorium, where they will be given brief instructions about the procedure for the school, to be followed each day the following week. They may be told where each department will meet, and leave the auditorium by department. Each group may go to its department for pre-enrollment. As much of the enrolling as possible should be done on preparation day. This will save much valuable time, and cause less

confusion on the first day of the school.

We have found it helpful to do some pre-enrollment through the Sunday school departments prior to the first day of Bible school. This is especially helpful and saves much time in the preschool age departments where the children cannot write and many do not know their birthdays or addresses.

After pre-enrollment is completed in the departments -then it is time for the parade! This is always exciting and fun for the children, and the publicity helps the Bible school attendance. Each car in the parade may be decorated with posters or banners, giving the time and place of the Bible school. You may also wish to have circulars printed to be thrown from the cars as they travel. Some kind of public address or loudspeaker system is helpful for announcements about the Bible school as the parade progresses. Plans for this should be taken into consideration well in advance.

7. Daily Time Schedule for the School. A daily time schedule is important if the school is to operate smoothly. Each departmental superintendent should have a tentative time schedule worked out in advance, with a copy for each worker in the department. Some schools meet for three hours each day; some for two and one-half hours each day. For a one-week school, I think it is good if the school lasts for three hours each day; for a ten-day or two-week school, I believe that two and one-half hours daily is ample time.

Following is a suggested time schedule designed for one of our beginner groups, which might be helpful in working out one of your own. Of course, each age group would vary, since the older groups would have longer Bible study, mission activity, and more extensive notebook work.

SUGGESTED TIME SCHEDULE FOR BEGINNERS Monday through Friday:9:00 – 11:30 a. m.

(Preparation day-pre-enrollment and parade on Friday, June 8th) Approximate Time:

9:00 a. m.-Line up by departments and march into auditorium 9:00-9:20 a. m.-General assembly in auditorium In YOUR Department:

First 5 Minutes-(If you have a piano in your department, have pianist there playing as the children come to the department. This will aid in getting the children settled.)

Explain about the mission offering that will be taken each day and tell where it will go. Then take the offering first so children will not lose their money.

10 Minutes-Go to tables (assign children to same teacher and same table for each day of the school). Workers at tables assist department secretary in checking records, filling out enrollment cards on new members each day.

Mark attendance charts. Stick on stars, seals (if you use individual attendance charts, be sure each child has one with his name on it).

15 Minutes-Come back to large group (all departments together). Have songs selected and planned in advance to go with lesson.

Fingerplays or relaxation exercises.

Bible story for the day. Prayer. (Use flannelgraph, or other interest center with Bible story.)

20 Minutes-After the Bible story, go back to tables. Memory verse for the day to be used or taught by teachers (may have poster for this). Then, begin notebook work (one page each day) until time for refreshments.

10 Minutes-Refreshments. Have thanks in your department before going outside. Instruct children to return to department promptly after refreshments.

10 Minutes-If notebook work was not completed before refreshments, come back to tables and finish work. Be sure each child’s name is on his notebook cover, and on each page, if a page is added each day of the school.

10 Minutes-The whole department meets together for a child life or conduct story. If you do not have a conduct story for each day, you may use action songs here, not above with your Bible story time. Also fingerplays relaxation exercises may be used here.

20 Minutes-Return to auditorium for fun time with "Silly Billy," "Ole Timer" and "Phooidini." (If necessary, one or two workers may remain in the department to straighten up and get ready for the next work.)

20 Minutes-Handwork. Let the children make something each day. Plan handwork that has teaching value, to help accomplish purpose for the day.

Let the children do as much of the work as possible. Don’t do it for them. Plan your handwork to be simple enough that they may enjoy doing it. Don’t plan so much that they will have to be rushed to finish what they are supposed to do for the day.

5 Minutes-Clean up time and announcements. Try to finish your work in time for the children to help clean tables. Superintendent should give the teachers about five minutes "warning" before clean-up time so that they may complete their work for the day. Avoid rush and confusion these last few minutes. Keep the children orderly.

Workers should be sure to keep younger children inside the rooms until they are called for. Be careful that none of the pupils get lost or upset.

Each day right after refreshments, you may let the children get drinks and go to the restroom. This will avoid children running in and out during the sessions each day.

After school each day teachers should remain for five minutes to review the schedule for the following day with the superintendent, to check to see that each worker has enough supplies, etc. Be sure that each worker understands what the plans are for each day. At least one worker from each department should be assigned to come early each day (a different one each day) to help the children who come first know where to line up. This will avoid confusion among the younger children before school ever begins, and is helpful through-out the day. This schedule is merely a guide to help you in adjusting to your own schedule. Do not try to pack too much into one day. If you find that you have too much work planned for any one day, leave some of it off. If on other days you find that you have some extra time, you should have some games, puzzles, modeling clay and other activities planned in advance for "fill-in" activity.

After your time schedule is worked out, it is easier to plan your program for each day, since you will then know approximately how much time you may use for each activity. Each worker in your department should be given a copy of this schedule.

Now, it is time for the department superintendent, along with the "right-hand man" or associate superintendent, to get together with all of the workers to plan the lesson and activities for each day. The following planning sheet might be helpful to you in working out your Bible school programs:

DAILY LESSON PLANS FOR BEGINNERS Unit for the Week: "Learning about Homes"

(You may also wish to insert your aim or purpose for the week, or you may wish to include a purpose or aim for each day).

Monday Lesson Title: "What Makes a Happy Home?"

Aim: Lead the children to work out the answer to the above question-through their work, through their play, conversation, the Bible story, the handwork, etc.

Bible Story: Exodus 1:7; Exodus 2:10 -"How Miriam Helped to Make Her Home Happy" (Use Baby Moses Flannel-graph) Conduct or Child Life Story: Page 26 of textbook-"Mary Finds out What Makes a Happy Home"

Bible Verse for Today: "Let us love one another." (1 John 4:7. (To be on feather of colored construction paper-pasted on "chief" on memory verse poster-one poster for each table.)

Notebook: Start notebook today. The back is mimeo-graphed on green construction paper, in shape of a home. Put the child's name on page 1 in place indicated. Use page 2 to stick on flag seals, pledges, Bible, etc. (This may be done on Tuesday, or when-ever you have time.)

Page for notebook for today is picture of a home (this may be child's own home, or picture of a home from magazine-teachers will have these.) Handwork: House-mimeographed on white construction paper. Teachers will have them cut out in advance.

Children may put them together, so that they stand up. (They may take these home.) Other Suggestions for Monday:

Supplies That I Will Need for Monday:

_____ (Name of worker) is to come early on Monday to greet children who come early, and assist them in lining up.

Tuesday Lesson Title: "I Can Talk to God in My Home"

Aim: To let the children know that they can talk to God any time, anywhere, as they would talk to a friend. Try to make prayer a happy experience for them.

Bible Story Conduct or Child Life Story: "How Bobby Learned to Talk to God in His Own Home" (Page 31 of textbook)

Bible Verse for Today: "God will hear me." Micah 7:7. (Mimeographed on colored paper-cut out and paste on poster.)

Notebook: Put in page with picture of family praying children may color picture. The Family Fingers' Good Morning finger play may be pasted on back of page 1. Also, paste the pledges, flags and Bible seals on today if this was not done yesterday.

Handwork: Plaque of boy and girl praying, on black construction paper, spatter painted, with gummed hanger on back. (You will need cigar box, screen wire, white shoe polish, old toothbrushs for spatter painting.) Other Suggestions and Materials for Tuesday:

_____ (Name of worker) is to come early on Tuesday to greet children who come early, and assist them in lining up.

Wednesday Lesson Title: "God Teaches Birds and Animals to Make Homes"

Bible Story: Part of the creation story-Genesis 1:1-31. (Use flannelgraph.) Other Scripture references: Matthew 6:26; Matthew 8:20; Luke 12:6; Deuteronomy 32:11; Job 37:8; Psalms 84:3; Psalms 104:10-12, Psalms 104:16-18. Conduct or Child Life Story: "How the Birds Made a Home"

Bible Verse for Today: "Your heavenly Father feedeth them." Matthew 6:26.

"The birds . . . have nests." Matthew 8:20.

Notebook: Teachers should have the bird's nests (on brown construction paper) cut out. Also, have the eggs cut out of white or light blue. Let the children paste the bird nests on their notebook pages, then paste eggs in nests and stick on bird seals.

Handwork: Teachers should have fish cut out of white construction paper. Let children cover with glitter or Christmas snow. Tie string through mouth. Wheel of "Animal Friends." Let children stick animal seals on lower circle. Have hole cut in top circle, brad in center. As they turn top circle, animals will show through hole.

Other Suggestions for Wednesday: For special interest centers, have one teacher bring bowl of goldfish, someone else a real bird's nest, a real bird or other animal.

_____ (Name of worker) is to come early on Wednesday to greet children who come early, and assist them in lining up.

Thursday

Lesson Title: "We Think and Talk about Church Homes" Aim: Teach the children the name of their church and of their pastor. Lead them to feel that it is "their" church home; also, let them know that it is God's house.

Bible Story: Use flannelgraph of Samuel.

Conduct or Child Life Story: "How Some Children Helped in God's House"

Bible Verse for Today: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Psalms 122:1.

Notebook: Let the children paste a picture of a church (or of their own church) on the notebook page for today. Perhaps they will want to stick on seals of boys and girls going to church.

Handwork: Teachers will have church cut out of white construction paper, with windows cut out. Let children paste colored cellophane paper across the back to look like light shining through the windows. They may also paste artificial "grass" around the church, and stick flower seals on.

Other Suggestions for Today: Plan some kind of note or reminder to send home to parents, inviting them to visit the school on Friday, if that is the last day of the school. Also, tell them about the picnic plans, if there is to be one .

_____ (Name of worker) is to come early on Friday to greet children who come early, and assist them in lining up.

Friday Lesson Title: "We Talk about Jesus and the Heavenly Home"

Bible Story: The Heavenly Home Bible Verse for Today: "I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2 b.

Notebook: Finish notebook today so that children may take it home. The page for today is: Church window that opens; let children paste Sallman's head of Christ seal inside window. Look through the notebook with the children, reviewing each lesson briefly, and the Bible verses that have been used.

Let the children take home any work that they have not taken during the week; also, let them take their at-tendance charts. (This plan is based on a five day school.) Suggestion for attendance: You may have crowns with five points cut out of blue (or any color) construction paper. Let child paste a gold or silver star on one point each day he is present. Have child's name printed on crown in white or gold ink. Punch hole in each side and run rubber band through it. The children may wear these crowns at commencement, if you have one. If not, let them wear them home on the last day of the school.

If there is to be a commencement program, keep a sample of the notebook and of each piece of work that you have made during Bible school for display. The ideas for handwork, mission projects and interest centers for the various age groups are unlimited. We try to plan handwork with teaching value, or try to make something which may be useful either at home or around the church-for example, some of the older students make pulpit stands for the classrooms, coat racks, hat trees, planters for the windows or tables, curtains, aprons for the nursery and beginner children to wear while pasting, etc. With some study and planning, some interesting note-books, maps and other items may be made in mission study with the older pupils.

We trust that the foregoing sample daily lesson plans will help you in making your plans for your own group.

SOME GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE SCHOOL The Pastor's Part in Bible School. Vacation Bible school time is a wonderful time for the children to get to know the pastor, and for the pastor, in turn, to become acquainted with the children. Many of the children who come to Sunday school, whose parents do not attend the church, never get to stay for the preaching services, and do not even know the pastor. Our pastor takes an active part in our Bible schools. He and the children look forward to this time each year, when the pastor will spend some time with the children. He usually dresses informally during the days of Bible school and drops by several departments each day, just to "stick his head in" for a moment to visit. Then, as the department

comes out for refreshments, he goes out and visits with them during refreshment time. Later in this chapter we will mention the pastor’s part in the general assembly of the Bible school in the auditorium.

We have special Bible school "characters" each year, which we shall discuss later in this chapter. The pastor publicizes these characters from the pulpit each service for several weeks before the school begins. It seems that the pastor’s interest and excitement about the school, and the way he creates enthusiasm about it from the pulpit, do more than anything else in helping us have the large numbers that we do have in our school each year. For the past few years we have had an enrollment of near 1, 000 with an average attendance of nearly 700!

Special Events in Our Bible School. Many schools only have one general assembly of the school in the auditorium, which is the first fifteen or twenty minutes each morning. However, we have two sessions in the auditorium for the entire school-the first one as soon as the children arrive in the morning, as they line up and march into the auditorium, and then again later in the morning, usually about forty-five minutes before the close of school each day. At this first session in the auditorium we have the usual procedure, with pledges to the flags and the Bible; then, we use the second assembly for our special events. This is the highlight of our school, and we perhaps reach more boys and girls for our Bible school through promotion of these characters and events than by any other method.

Each year we have "Silly Billy," the ugliest boy in the world; "Phooidini," the gospel magician; and "The Ole Timer," who is Silly Billy’s grandfather. The pastor presents each of these characters when we are in the auditorium the second time. "Silly Billy" and "Ole Timer" is an ad-lib affair with the pastor. It is difficult to put into words just how effective this skit is each day. Then Phooidini, the magician, presents a gospel "trick," which the children all look forward to each day. Each of these "characters" wears some kind of costume, which may be rented for a nominal price at any costume shop, or you may make one of your own which will be just as effective. The "magician" may get various games or tricks, from a hobby or novelty shop.

Crowning the "King and Queen." Another thing that all of the children, as well as the workers, look forward to each day, is the crowning of the king and queen. It is announced in advance, and each morning of the school, that each girl who brings the most visitors to Bible school who do not attend our Sunday school, will be crowned "queen for the day." The boy who brings the most visitors that do not attend our Sunday school will be crowned "king for the day." The king and queen for the day are determined as we come into the auditorium the second time, after the records have been completed, and they are crowned at the beginning of this second assembly, and sit on the platform with their crowns on during this second session. Each day the king and queen get to keep their crown to take home with them. (These crowns are made by some of the workers from white poster paper and silver glitter.) At the close of the school we find out which boy and girl have brought the most visitors for the entire school, and they are crowned king and queen of the Bible school. Their pictures are taken, and usually used in our church newspaper. The Mission Offering. Before the Bible school begins, we decide where our mission offering will go. The children get more joy from bringing their money each day if they know exactly where it is going. It also helps the departmental superintendents in planning their mission activities and interest centers. We send our mission offering each year to some of our own missionaries who have gone out from our church, and

whom the children and the workers know. This mission offering is taken in the departments each morning. A report of approximately how much money is received in each department is turned in with the records each day. Then, when we are in the auditorium the second time, the pastor gives a report of the offering. We have a large balloon, usually in the shape of some animal. The pastor has to put a big "puff" into the balloon for each dollar received in the mission offering. As the offering increases each day, the balloon gets larger and larger. There is much fun and excitement as the children wait for the balloon to burst in the pastor's face.

Many times the offering increases so rapidly that two or three balloons are burst before the end of Bible school.

Commencement. We have found it advisable in recent years not to have a commencement program at the close of Bible school because of the size of our school. By the time each department had just a few minutes on the pro-gram, it would run in to quite a lengthy program, and the children, as well as the parents, become restless. Also, when there is such a large number of pupils, it is difficult to have "open house" in the departments follow-ing the commencement because of limited space.

However, if your school is small, it is good to have commencement. Members of each department may be given a few moments to present some of their work and the things they have learned, at a general assembly in the auditorium. Diplomas may be presented by the pastor or the school superintendent as each department finishes its part in the program.

One year we had our commencement on Sunday morning following the close of Bible school on Friday. This was publicized as Bible School Sunday. At the beginning of the Sunday school hour, everyone assembled in the auditorium. The children went through the regular Bible school procedure, repeating the pledges, etc. Then the various "characters" are presented and the king and queen crowned. The Bible school workers are introduced, and each department has a display on the platform, or some place in the auditorium, showing some of the work done during the week.

We have also found it advisable to invite the parents to visit the various departments sometime during the school, perhaps on the last day of the school.

Vacation Bible school can mean much to your Sunday school and to your church, and can be a time of enjoyment rather than a drudgery if it is well planned. Although we do not have a decision service each day in which the children are pressed to make a decision for Christ we do have a time during our school when the pastor speaks to the juniors in a special service, presents the plan of salvation and gives them an opportunity to be saved. Each child who comes forward to accept Christ is dealt with separately by the pastor and associate pastor, and the Lord has blessed us each year with a number of genuine conversion experiences in our Bible schools. As a result of these experiences, many of the parents have been reached for Christ.

We believe it well worth your efforts to have a vacation Bible school in your church each summer, and we trust that some of the foregoing outlines and suggestions will be of help to you in planning your school.

Chapter 76

2.00. Teaching on Preaching

Teaching on Preaching by Dr. Jack Hyles First Printing 1986 by Hyles-Anderson Publishers First Electronic Printing March 1998 by FFEP Text available at : http://www.jackhyles.com/teachpr.htm Table of Contents

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DEDICATION To my Saviour, Whose message I preach.

2.000. Introduction

Introduction In Anchorage, Alaska; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Atlanta, Georgia; Atlanta, Texas; Abilene, Texas; Akron, Ohio; Altoona, Pennsylvania; Allentown, Pennsylvania; Amarillo, Texas; Ashe- ville, North Carolina; Atlantic City, New Jersey; Augusta, Maine; and Austin, Texas. In Baltimore, Maryland; Bangor, Maine; Barbados, West Indies; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Beaumont, Texas; Bemidji, Minnesota; Benton Harbor, Michigan; Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; Billings, Montana; Binghamton, New York; Birmingham, Alabama; Bloomington, Illinois; Bloomington, Indiana; Boise, Idaho; Boston, Massachusetts; Bradenton, Florida; Bridgeport, Connecti- cut; Brownsville, Texas; Buffalo, New York; Burlington, North Carolina . In Casper; Wyoming; Carbondale, Illinois; Canton, Ohio; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Champaign, Illinois; Charleston, South Carolina; Charleston, West Virginia; Charlotte, North Carolina; Chattanoo- ga, Tennessee; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Chicago, Illinois; Cincinnati, Ohio; Cedar Lake, Indiana; Cleveland, Ohio; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Columbia, South Carolina; Columbus, Georgia; Co- lumbus, Ohio; and Corpus Christi, Texas. In Dallas, Texas; Danville, Virginia; Danville, Illinois; Dayton, Ohio; Daytona Beach, Florida; Decatur; Illinois; Decatur; Georgia; Denver; Colorado; Des Moines, Iowa; Detroit, Michigan; Dothan, Alabama; Dubuque, Iowa; Durham, North Carolina; and Durango, Colorado. In Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; Elkhart, Indiana; Elmira, New York; El Paso, Texas; Erie, Pennsylvania; Eugene, Oregon; Evans- ville, Indiana; and Evanston, Illinois. In Fairbanks, Alaska; Fayetteville, Arkansas; Fayetteville, North Carolina; Flagstaff, Arizona; Flint, Michigan; Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Ft. Worth, Texas; Ft. Smith, Arkansas; Ft. Sill, Oklahoma; Ft. Wayne, Indiana; Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada; and Fresno, California. In Gainesville, Florida; Gainesville, Texas; Goose Creek, Texas; Grand Bahamas; Grand Junction, Colorado; Grand Rapids, Michi- gan; Greensboro, North Carolina; Greenville, Texas; Greenville, Mississippi; Greenville, South Carolina; and Gulfport, Mississip- pi. In Hammond, Indiana; Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; Ham- ilton, Ontario, Canada; Harlingen, Texas; Harrisburg, Pennsyl- vania; Hartford, Connecticut; Honolulu, Hawaii; Hollywood, Florida; Houston, Texas; Huntsville, Texas; Huntsville, Alabama; and Huntington, West Virginia. In Indianapolis, Indiana; Islamorada, Florida; Iowa City, Iowa; Irving, Texas; Ingram, Texas; Italy, Texas; and Itasca, Texas. In Jackson, Mississippi; Jackson, Tennessee; Jacksonville, Flor- ida; Jacksonville, Texas; Johnson City; Tennessee; Johnstown, Pennsylvania; Joplin, Missouri; Jacksonville, North Carolina; Jas- per; Alabama; Jacksboro, Texas; Jacinto City, Texas; Jasper; Texas; Jefferson, Texas; Jasper; Indiana; and Jeffersonville, Indiana. In Kahului, Hawaii, Kalamazoo, Michigan; Kansas City, Missouri; Kansas City, Kansas; Kinston, North Carolina; Knox- ville, Tennessee; Kokomo, Indiana; Karnack, Texas; Kaufman, Texas; Knox, Indiana; Kilgore, Texas; Kernersville, North Car- olina; and Kankakee, Illinois. In La Crosse, Wisconsin; Lake Charles, Louisiana; Lansing, Michigan; Lancaster; Pennsylvania; Laramie, Wyoming; Laredo, Texas; Las Vegas, Nevada; Lincoln, Nebraska; Little Rock, Arkan- sas; London, Ontario, Canada; Long Beach, California; Long Island, New York; Longview, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Louisville, Kentucky; Lewisville, Texas; Lubbock, Texas; and Lynchburg, Virginia. In Macon, Georgia; Marion, Ohio; McAllen, Texas; Medford, Oregon; Melbourne, Florida; Memphis, Tennessee; Monterrey, Mexico; Miami, Florida; Midland, Texas; Milwaukee, Wisconsin;

Minneapolis, Minnesota; Moline, Illinois; Montego Bay, Jamaica; Monterey, California; Montgomery, Alabama; Montreal, Quebec, Canada; Morgantown, West Virginia; Muscle Shoals, Alabama; Marietta, Ohio; and Muskegon, Michigan. In Nashville, Tennessee; Naples, Florida; Nassau, Bahamas; Newark, New Jersey; New London, Texas; New Orleans, Louis- iana; New York, New York; Norfolk, Virginia; Newport News, Virginia; North Chicago, Illinois; North Aurora, Illinois; New Boston, Texas; Nederland, Texas; Niagara Falls, New York. In Oakland, California; Odessa, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Omaha, Nebraska; Ontario, California; Ontario, Canada; Orange County, California; Orlando, Florida; Oak Forest, Illi- nois; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Ottawa, Kansas; Oshkosh, Wiscon- sin; Oxnard, California; Ottawa, Canada; Olney, Illinois; Olney, Texas; Orange, Texas; Oak Park, Illinois; Oak Lawn, Illinois; and Ottawa, Illinois. In Paducah, Kentucky; Palm Beach, Florida; Panama City, Flor- ida; Pensacola, Florida; Parkersburg, West Virginia; Pasco, Wash- ington; Pascagoula, Mississippi; Peoria, Illinois; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Philipsburg, Pennsylvania; Phoenix, Arizona; Pitts- burg, Texas; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Port Arthur; Texas; Port- land, Maine; Portland, Oregon; Poughkeepsie, New York; Powell, Tennessee; Pueblo, Colorado; and Port Huron, Michigan. In Raleigh, North Carolina; Rapid City, South Dakota; Redding, California; Reno, Nevada; Richmond, Indiana; Richmond, Texas; Roanoke, Virginia; Rochester; New York; Rockford, Illinois; Rock Island, Illinois; Rock Springs, Wyoming; and Rowlett, Texas; Rockwall, Texas; Rockaway Beach, Missoun. In Sacramento, California; Saginaw, Michigan; St. John, New Brunswick, Canada; St. Joseph, Michigan; St. Louis, Missouri; St. Paul, Minnesota; St. Petersburg, Florida; Salisbury, Maryland; Salt Lake City, Utah; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego, California; San Francisco, California; San Jose, California; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Sarasota, Florida; Sarnia, Ontario, Canada; Savannah, Georgia; Seattle, Washington; Sheridan, Wyoming; Shreveport, Louisiana; Sioux City, Iowa; South Bend, Indiana; Springfield, Illinois; Springfield, Missouri; Springfield, Massachusetts; State College, Pennsylvania; Stockton, California; and Syracuse, New York. In Tacoma, Washington; Tallahassee, Florida; Tampa, Florida; Temple, Texas; Terre Haute, Indiana; Texarkana, Texas; Texarkana, Arkansas; Texas City, Texas; Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Tucson, Arizona; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Tyler; Texas. In Urbana, Illinois; Utica, New York; University Park, Texas; and Uvalde, Texas. In Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; Vale, Colorado; Vicksburg, Mississippi; Victoria, Texas; Visalia, California; Valley Forge, Pennsylvania; and Vincennes, Indiana. In Washington, D.C.; Waco, Texas; Watertown, Wisconsin; Wa- terloo, Iowa; West Palm Beach, Florida; White Plains, New York; Wichita, Kansas; Wichita Falls, Texas; Williamsport, Pennsylvania; Wilmington, North Carolina; Windsor; Ontario, Canada; Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Winona Lake, Indiana; and West Hollywood, Florida. In Youngstown, Ohio; York, Pennsylvania; and Yuma, Arizona, and in many other cities, villages, towns, hamlets, neighborhoods and countrysides across the United States I have preached the blessed truths of God's Word. In addition, I have opened His Word and preached from it in many foreign countries. In December of 1985 I preached my 43,000th sermon. It seems that with the passing of each year I feel I know less about preaching. This is because perhaps I have learned more. With the opening of every door; there are many more doors to open; with the exploring of every cave, there are many more caves to explore; with the climbing of each height, there are many more heights to climb; and with the plunging into each depth, there are many more depths in which to plunge. The first little church that I pastored had 19 members. The church which I now pastor has tens of thousands of members. The smallest crowd to which I have ever preached was

seven. Now each Sunday I have the responsibility of preaching to thousands at the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana. During these 43,000 times I have represented my Saviour before His people and before those who know Him not. I have observed some things. Some of these I have remembered. Some of the remembered ones I share with the reader in this sincere effort to be a help to God’s servants and those who speak for Him.

I make no attempt at being original. I have often said that the definition of leadership is, "One who goes from follower to fol- lower collecting ideas, compiles them, puts them in a book and sells a copy to each follower." It has been my privilege for many years to travel the length and breadth of my country. I have met many men of God who have influenced me in my preaching. I have collected from them ideas and methods, and now I have compiled them. I share them with you, my readers.

Someone has said that preaching is pouring back in a flood what you receive from the audience in a vapor. Thank you for the vapor. I trust that you are refreshed, and blessed and helped by the flood.

2.01. Chapter 1 One Great Truth a Sermon

Chapter 1 One Great Truth a Sermon A preacher lives with his sermons all the time. After the Sunday evening service ends, I spend 15-30 minutes in my office alone reflecting on the day I relive the services and try to figure the needs of my people for the next week. Usually before I leave the study on Sunday night I know the general direction of my sermons for the next Sunday From that moment forward, I am planning next Sunday's messages. They are constantly on my mind as I prepare my mind and heart to meet the needs of my people on the next Lord's Day

I must remember; however; that my people do not live with the sermon. They spend only 30 minutes to an hour a week on each message; whereas it is in my mind constantly Because of this, I will remember the sermon for many days to come. A preacher has no choice during the delivery of the message but to think about it; the people do not have to listen. The preacher's mind is totally occupied with what he is saying; whereas the minds of those who hear him range from being totally aware of what he is saying to being totally unaware of what is being said. During the course of a sermon most of the people will no doubt at least partially listen, but their occupation with the sermon can in no way compare to that of the preacher.

These things mean that the preacher may never forget the sermon whereas most of the people will soon forget it. Therefore, I believe that the fondest hope that a preacher can have concerning retention of his sermons is to attempt to leave one great truth a sermon in the minds of his people. The average person will not remember much of what the preacher has said. Most people will not remember his outline. The preacher has done well who leaves one great truth in the minds of his people as they leave the service for their dwelling places. This is my goal when I preach.

How may this be done? This chapter is totally devoted to meth- ods and means that will cause the people, the congregation, to carry with them from each message one great truth which they will never forget.

1. Picture the invitation and the one thing you want to happen. Decide on the one thing that you want the members of the congre- gation to do or to begin to do because of the message. In other words, plan first the destination. Then plan the best way to arrive at that destination. It may be a message on stewardship, the purpose of which is to inspire the people to be good stewards of their lives, their time, their talent and their money Maybe it will be a message on faithfulness, the goal of which is to inspire the members to attend faithfully the services of the church. It may be a message on prayer during which the pastor wants to impress his people to make definite decisions concerning their prayer lives. The wise pastor will decide early the one thing he wants his people to do, the one decision he wants them to make, and the one destination to which he hopes to take them. This, I think, is necessary to the delivery of a good sermon. The purpose of preaching is not that of delivering a good sermon. The purpose of preaching is that of delivering a great truth that will inspire the parishioners to perform a great service.

2. Decide what truth will make it happen. You have already decided the destination. Now choose the vehicle and the route that will properly take you to that destination. This is the truth that must be emphasized over and over again during the message so as to imprint indelibly in the minds of the hearers the one great truth that will convey them to the destination you have chosen for them.

3. Write it down and look at it. Confirm to yourself that the decision that you want the hearers to make can be inspired by the truth that you plan to deliver. Be convinced that the truth will be the proper vehicle to deliver the congregation to the desired destina- tion.

4. Decide what you think that truth will make happen. First you have chosen the desired goal and from that choice you have chosen the truth that will lead the congregation to the desired goal. Now forget the goal-- look only at the truth. Decide to what destination that truth will lead. If this destination coincides with your original destination, you have no doubt chosen the proper truth. This is like checking mathematics. When a person multiplies 3 times 9, he gets 27. When he divides 3 into 27 and gets 9, this proves that his multiplication was proper. When the pastor starts with the destination and determines what truth will lead him to that destination, then takes the truth and determines to what destination it will lead, and finds that they coincide, he no doubt has found the one great truth that he should emphasize throughout his sermon.

5. When convinced both ways, decide on the truth to be deliv- ered.

6. Use the time between this decision and the time of the preaching of the sermon to convince yourself of the importance of the truth that you have chosen. By the time the sermon is delivered the pastor must be totally sold on the fact that he has the answer. He must be totally convinced that the truth he is going to deliver is desperately needed by his people and that their lives will not be complete without the absorption of this great truth. This is perhaps the key to the delivering of a message. The pastor must be con- sumed with the idea that this is the answer and without it his people will flounder in at least one area of their Christian lives. It must be life or death to him! He must feel that the delivering of this truth is the most important thing going on in the world at the time of its deliverance. He must magnify this truth in his own mind all week so that when he stands to speak he will be consumed with its importance. The person who sees a burning house has no problem or thought of his delivery when he warns the inhabitants of the danger they are facing. No preacher has preached well until his message becomes in his own mind life-changing and life-transforming to his people. Hence, he must utilize wisely the time between the choosing of the truth that he will soon deliver and the delivering of that truth. He must be totally consumed with the importance of the message.

7. Write the truth and place it at several well-traveled places. If, for example, the truth is "Total surrender to God brings happiness to the individual," he should write those words, make copies of them and have them at well-traveled places. Put a copy on the door of the refrigerator; at the telephone, on the mirror in the bathroom, on the windshield of the car; near the dial of your watch and other places that are a part of your daily schedule.

8. Set times to do nothing but think of the importance of the truth to be delivered on the Lord’s Day Perhaps at least 15 minutes several times a day should be given to such meditation. At this time sell yourself on the importance of the truth you have chosen to deliver; dwell on it, convince yourself that it is vital to the spiritual well-being of your people.

9. Place the truth at the top of your prayer list. Every time you go to the throne of grace you will be reminded of your sermon for Sunday and you will pray fervently for God to help you to convey properly to your people the truth that He has led you to choose in order for them to arrive at the destination which He has chosen for them.

10. As you pray, picture in your own mind the invitation on Sunday Picture one person kneeling at the altar to make the decision that you feel he needs to make. Fervently ask God to lead you to present the truth in such a way that this picture in your mind of the invitation can become a reality.

All of the things that are being listed now are parts of a recipe that is to convince the preacher of the importance of the sermon he is going to deliver. He must be consumed with the desire to help his people. He must be carried away with the awareness that the truth that he has chosen is the vehicle that God can use to give this help. He must be lifted out of himself and above himself and be swept up by this great truth caused by a burning desire to see his people make the decision in their hearts that he feels is so necessary to their lives and spiritual growth.

11. Choose a song that conveys the chosen truth, and sing it often throughout the week. It could be a familiar song. For exam- ple, if the destination chosen is that of leading your people "to decide to be unselfish" and the truth chosen to lead them to that destination is "living for others," the pastor could have as his theme song for the week that beautiful little song, "Others." He could sing throughout the week those beautiful words, "Lord, help me live from day to day in such a self-forgetful way, that even when I kneel to pray, my prayer shall be for others. Others, Lord, yes others. Let this my motto be: Lord, help me live for others that I may live like Thee." This song can be used of God to help His man to lose himself in the message he is to deliver to His people the next Lord’s Day

It has been my policy for many years now to choose a song for the day Early in the morning I choose a song that I plan to sing all day I hum it, whistle it and sing it throughout the day until it becomes sometimes even a subconscious activity. Usually this song will be one that deals with the truth of my message for the next Sunday For example, if my message for the next Sunday is on total commitment, I may sing all day one day, "Jesus I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee." The next day I may sing, "All to Jesus I surrender." These songs lead me to dwell on the truth that I have chosen as the vehicle to lead my people to the destination that I feel is best for them.

Sometimes I will make up a little song that will help me to think about the truth I am to deliver. Recently I was going to preach on Proverbs 3:6, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." I wrote a little chorus using the words of this great verse. Once I was going to preach on coming boldly to the throne of grace. I wrote a little song entitled, "Come Boldly" This helped to keep my mind on the truth that I want to transfer into the minds of my people on the Lord’s Day

12. Read all you can about this truth. Acquaint yourself with every tool possible that will enable you to convey better this chosen truth to your people in order that they may arrive at the chosen destination.

13. Think of its greatness. Many years ago I had an assistant pastor who came to me and said, "Preacher; you play up your sermons too much. You make them appear to be more important than

they are." Months later he returned to me and said, "Preacher; I was wrong. You don't play up your sermons too much. You simply don't play them down." The Bible has the answer! The truths of the Bible are ingredients of that answer. They are life and death. The preacher does not have to build them up; he has to dwell on them in such a manner so he can build himself up to realize the magnitude of his preaching and the importance of Bible truths being conveyed to his people. There are no live preachers and dead preachers; there are preachers who convince themselves of the urgency and greatness of their calling and there are preachers who do not!

14. Repeat the truth over and over again. You have meditated upon it, you have placed it at well-traveled places, you have sung about it, you have prayed about it, and you have read about it; now repeat it over and over and over and over. Let it have the front seat in your mind so that by the time you walk into the pulpit to deliver it, it will be the most important event going on in the world at that time.

15. Think of the ways it can help your people. Picture the ways it will transform their lives. Think of what they can be and do if they absorb this great truth. This will enable you to realize more and more the importance of the sermon and its delivery. It will put an excitement in the voice, an urgency in the message, an electricity in the delivery and an attractiveness to the audience!

16. Remember that you have only one chance. This will be perhaps the only time you will preach this sermon to this congrega- tion. They must get it now or perhaps they will never get it. Many of them will be hearing this truth for the one and only time in their lives. This realization should lead you to do your best and give your best as you preach it.

17. Avoid complicated outlines. For example, avoid outlines that would have Roman numeral one, four subheads; then Roman numeral two, and under that, four subheads; and Roman numeral three and four subheads. Such outlining may help to deliver a good sermon but it gives the people too many truths to retain, and there is too little emphasis on any one truth in order to force its retention. If, however; such an outline is chosen, each point should be connected to the main truth being conveyed. If you have several points, repeat the great truth as you give them. For example, suppose the sermon for the day is taken from Psalms 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The truth could be "how to prosper always." Now there are five things listed in these verses that are necessary for our prosperity: (I) not walking in the counsel of the ungodly, (2) not standing in the way of sinners, (3) not sitting in the seat of the scornful, (4) delighting oneself in the law of the Lord (the Bible), and (5) meditating in the Bible day and night. As each of these points is delivered, the congregation should be reminded of the truth that we are trying to present; that is, how to prosper. The preacher could say something like this, "I am preaching this morning on the subject, 'How to Prosper.' There are five things listed in these verses that are essential for prosperity. (1) Not walking in the counsel of the ungodly If you want to be prosperous, you cannot walk in the counsel of the ungodly If you walk in the counsel of the ungodly, you will not be prosperous." Notice the constant mention of the word "prosperous" or some form of it. Always in every point come back to the truth that has been chosen as the vehicle to take us to the destination.

18. Have the truth that is being emphasized written boldly somewhere in the outline. Have it underlined or encircled so that one glance at the outline will allow you to see the truth upon the slightest glance at the outline. This will keep the main truth before you while delivering the message.

19. If for any reason, there is no central truth given in the sermon, have something very memorable to present. If there is no reemphasis of the same truth over and over and over again, driving that truth like a hammer on the head of a nail in the minds of the people, there should be something in the sermon that the people will never forget. This could be a startling illustration. I have accepted the fact that the people will not carry much home with them. One central truth would be a worthy goal. If there is no such truth emphasized in the message, there should be something some- where in the delivery of the sermon that is startling enough to remain in the minds of the hearers as they leave. It could be one statement of truth. It could be one illustration that is very memora- ble. In my sermon, "The Dignity of Man," I build the message around a man dressed in rags who came to my office the first day that I was Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hammond. I tell in that message the thoughts that went through my mind and the lessons that God taught me through the old man. As I begin each point, I describe again the old man. He was a man who had long, shaggy hair that was dirty and matted. His face was dirty and ill- shaven. His neck was caked with filth. His shirt that once had been white had become yellow. His trousers were too big and were held up by a rope inserted through the belt loops. The trousers had patches at the knees. His shoes were worn and old, and there was a slit across each toe to widen them. His odor was obnoxious! In this sermon on "The Dignity of Man" from the eighth Psalm, I list probably a half dozen things that God taught me through that man. Before each of those points, I describe the old man again as mentioned before. People who heard that sermon 25 years ago still remember the old man. It was not a sermon that left one truth, but they never forgot it because of this one illustration repeated throughout the sermon.

20. If you have a sermon with points, repeat all when the new one is given. In my sermon, "God’s Calls to Soul Winning," the outline is as follows:

1. The call from within.

2. A call from without.

3. A call from above.

4. A call from beneath. As I give each point, I remind the listener that each is a call to us beckoning us to soul winning. When I mention point 1, I simply say, "There is a call from within." When I mention point 2, I say, "There is a call from within and a call from without." When I mention point 3, I say, "There is a call from within, a call from without and a call from above." When I mention point 4, I say, "There is a call from within, a call from without, a call from above and a call from beneath." People who heard that sermon a quarter of a century ago always remember the outline. In my sermon entitled, "Others," the outline is:

1. Jesus died loving others.

2. Jesus died caring for others.

3. Jesus died saving others. When this outline is used, not only do I repeat the previous point or points when I introduce another one, but I also use the song, "Others," as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Repetition is one of the most important things in preaching, or for that matter; in any public speaking. A famous preacher from Scotland said that the curse of the Scottish ministry is its unwillingness to be repetitious. Brother Bill Harvey, who was my music director for two years, in describing my preaching once said, "Jack Hyles is willing to be repetitious of the obvious." This is why I think that one-point sermons are so effective. The same point is hit over and over and over again. Each time it is hit, it drives itself deeper into the heart and mind of the hearer.

21. It is often advisable to have the people repeat the points aloud. This will help them remember the outline if there is more than one point in a sermon. For example, I have a motivational message I preach called, "Seven Steps to Success." The outline is as follows:

1. A dream.

2. A desire.

3. A decision.

4. A dare.

5. A direction.

6. A dedication.

7. A devotion. When I bring this message I ask the people to repeat the outline with me as it unfolds. For example, if I am on point 5, "a direction," I will have them repeat the first four points along with the fifth point. Not only do they remember the points, but they remember their order.

22. Do not change your direction while preaching a sermon if you are feeling like it is a failure. You may be equating failure with cloudiness of mind. Sometimes you're not following yourself well, but the people are following you well. A few months ago I was preaching in a southern state. For the first 15 or 20 minutes of my message I felt that I was not succeeding. My mind was not clear. I was tempted to change directions but did not. Soon something happened that got my attention and something I said excited me and pulled me into the sermon. After the service the pastor of the church, who is a dear friend, said to me, "Dr. Hyles, I have heard you preach hundreds of times, but that is the greatest message you have ever preached in my presence!" Little did he realize that I almost ditched the sermon in order to flee to another.

One Sunday morning several years ago I was preaching in my own pulpit. About ten minutes into the sermon I went totally blank. I simply could not think! For some reason or other I was just unaware of what I was saying. I became frantic but kept right on plodding through the outline. To be quite frank, I was afraid I was having a mental problem. When the invitation came, I was barely aware of where I was. After the service I fled to my study, threw myself on the floor and begged God to give me a clear mind. By the time the evening service rolled around I had returned to normalcy. Several months passed. I was preaching in Atlanta, Georgia. Our oldest daughter; Becky, and her family were living there at the time. They asked me to go out to eat with them after

the service. While we were fellowshipping, Becky said, "Dad, I recently heard a sermon of yours on tape that was the best sermon I ever heard you preach on tape."

I said, "Well, thank you, Puddin'."

She said, "Dad, it was not only the best sermon I ever heard you preach on tape; it was the best sermon I ever heard anybody preach on tape."

Well, I increased my expression of gratitude to her.

Again she said, "Dad, it was not only the best sermon I ever heard anybody preach on tape, but it was the best sermon I have ever heard anybody preach on tape or in person."

"Well," I said, "Puddin', I guess I better know what sermon that is so I can preach it again." She gave me the title. Was I ever stunned! It was the sermon I preached a few months before when I lost my coherence. I could not believe it. I returned to my room that night and praised God well into the night that He can use simple things to confound the wise and that it is still true that when we are weak, then we are strong. Of course, every preacher has his own style of outlining and his own style of preaching. To be sure, each of us will, on occasion, preach sermons of different types, but it is the opinion of this preacher that the most effective preaching is that of determining before you choose a topic or a truth where you want to go. Picture the invitation. Decide what you want the people to do. Then find the truth that can be used as a vehicle to take the hearers to the desired goal. Then over and over again in the sermon emphasize the same truth, driving it deeper and deeper and deeper into the hearts and minds of the hearer until it is so indelibly and firmly positioned in his mind that he not only will respond as you had planned, but he will never forget the truth and the sermon.

2.02. Chapter 2 The Outline

Chapter 2 The Outline

There are two things that the preacher sees as he delivers his message. He sees first his people and second, his outline. Only one of these can he control-the outline. Sometimes the people Will inspire him as he speaks; sometimes they will not. So the only predictable thing that catches his eye as he speaks is his Outline. Hence, it is vital that the outline do the purpose that it is intended to do. Different preachers use different types of outlines.

One day I was sitting talking to Mrs. Billy Sunday, whom we affectionately called 'Ma" Sunday. She was telling me about Billy Sunday. I asked her what kind of outlines he had. She told me that each letter in his outline was an inch tall. I asked her why, thinking perhaps that he had poor vision. She told me that his letters were so big because: (1) He seldom came near the pulpit, and as he would run by he glanced at his outline. The letters had to be big in order for him to read them while running by (2) The big letters made him speak louder. In other words, the fact that the letters were written an inch high put him in the shouting mood, and he liked to preach With enthusiasm and a loud voice. For 22 years I traveled extensively with Dr. John R. Rice and shared pulpits across America with him. Over 2200 times he and I have sat on the same platform together and preached on the same program. Dr. Rice did not use old outlines. He would use sermons that were old, but right before each sermon he would outline his message again! It would be the same outline that he had used many times and the same sermon that he often preached, but he always outlined it again just before preaching it. We were in Ohio together. I was noticing just before the service that he was outlining his sermon. I asked him why he did that. He replied that it helped him to keep his mind on the sermon and to remember the outline if he wrote it down right before preaching it. It made it fresher in his mind.

Some great preachers use simple outlines of less than one page. Some use many pages of outline. I am thinking of one of America's greatest preachers whose sermons sometimes have thirty pages of outline. My sermons are usually from two to four pages of outlines. They are not usually typewritten but rather are written in longhand. This is the most important paragraph in this chapter. It deals with the purpose of an outline. AN OUTLINE IS PRIMARILY TO PUT THE SPEAKER IN THE SAME FRAME OF MIND WHILE PREACHING AS HE WAS WHILE PREPARING AND STUDY- ING. A preacher goes to his study. He prepares his message. The Bible begins to burn in his heart. His message baptizes him with its truth. He is lifted to the heavenly places. He cannot wait until the time comes for its delivery so he can share with the congregation the great truths and great experiences he enjoyed while walking with God in his study Then the sermon time comes. He stands to speak. The truth does not seem nearly as sweet; the Scripture no longer burns in his soul; he is disappointed and that sermon that he had so anticipated preaching becomes drudgery instead of delight. What has happened? He has failed to transfer the spirit of his study to the pulpit. He has failed to realize that the only tool he has while he is in the pulpit to remind him of the ecstasy of the study is his outline. Because of this, the

outline and its purpose is not only to capture the truths that the preacher learned in study but the spirit and joy with which he learned them. The outline is to remind him not only of what he learned but how he learned it. It is to carry him back to the same joy and thrill of preparation and transfer it to the delivery. His failure was caused by his unawareness of the purpose of his outline. He thought that the outline was simply to remind him of what he learned. This it did. He did not realize that the outline was supposed to remind him of the spirit he felt while he was learning it. So the outline fulfilled the purpose that the preacher had for it, but its purpose was not large enough. When the preacher looks at his outline from behind the pulpit, it should remind him of the great truths he has learned, but it also should remind him of the heavenly places in which he walked while he learned those truths so that he may not only transfer the truths he learned alone to the people but he may transfer the heavenly places in which he walked while he learned those truths. With that in mind we will examine the outline.

1. The first thing at the top of the outline should "grab" the preacher. It must get his attention. The first part of the sermon is not primarily for the preacher to get the people's attention but for the preacher to get his own attention. If the pastor can get his own attention, the people will listen. People love to listen to someone who is listening to himself, someone who is caught up in his message and is totally involved in the truth he is presenting. If he can get his own attention, the attention of the people will come. This is the reason I rarely use humor in the introduction of a sermon. Now I may use it in the introductory remarks before I begin the sermon, but once the sermon is begun I rarely use humor in the introduction. I want to use something that will lift me out of myself and totally involve me in the sermon. It is important that my mind not be on two things. It should not be on the sermon and also wondering how I am doing. It should not be on the sermon and wondering if the lady in the middle section is going to carry her baby out or sit there with him during the entire service. I must be totally lost and involved in the message. If I get involved and the people know it, they will get involved. In my sermon "Is There Not a Cause?" I begin as follows: "Several years ago I was on an airplane flying to the south. It was a flight with a stopover in Lexington, Kentucky On the one-hour flight between Chicago and Lexington, I looked across the aisle and saw a familiar face. I turned and spoke to him and asked, 'Sir, aren't you Adolph Rupp?' He replied in a beautiful southern drawl, 'Yes, suh, I am Mr. Rupp.' (Adolph Rupp was for many years the coach of the University of Kentucky basketball team. During his career his teams won more basketball games than those of any other college coach in history.) I said, 'Mr. Rupp, I have been for a long time a fan of yours. My name is Jack Hyles.' He replied, "Yes, suh. I have read of you. You pastor that large Baptist church near Chicago.' For almost an hour we talked together in a delightful and stimulating exchange of ideas. We landed in Lexington and said goodbye. I got off the plane to take a walk and go to the washroom. I was washing my hands at the lavatory when I looked over and saw that Mr. Rupp was washing his hands at the lavatory next to mine. I said, 'Mr. Rupp, could I ask you a question? I understand that you will soon retire because of the mandatory retirement at the age of 70.' A tear invaded his eye as he said, 'Yes, sub. Soon I will have to retire.' I asked, 'Mr. Rupp, what do you plan to do when you retire?' A tear escaped his eye as he replied, 'Sub, I guess I'll just die.' Several months later Mr. Rupp retired. Not long after his retirement I picked up the sports page of the Chicago Tribune to see the big headlines which read, 'ADOLPH RUPP IS DEAD!' Why did he die? He died because he had lost his cause-that thing for which he got up in the morning, that thing that lifted him above himself that made him forget himself, that pulled him out of himself in which he lost himself-it had been removed. He had lost his cause!"

That is the introduction to my sermon, "Is There Not a Cause?" Now it may or may not be a good introduction as the reader sees it, but it is the kind of introduction that gets my attention. By the time I finish that introduction, I am ready to preach on the subject, "Is There Not a Cause?" In my sermon, "Others," I get my attention as follows: "Many years ago in the city of London, England, the Salvation Army was conducting its annual convention. The giant auditorium was filled with delegates, but for the first time in the history of the Army its founder and leader, General Booth, was unable to attend. He was old, nearly blind and in poor health. Gloom spread across the floor of the convention as the delegates realized that for the first time they would conduct their annual convention without the presence of their leader and founder. Someone suggested that General Booth send a message to be read at the opening session. This he agreed to do. When the moderator engaged his gavel to the podium he said, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, as I call to order the annual convention of the Salvation Army, I regret to inform you that our leader and founder, General Booth, is for the first time unable to attend. He has, however, agreed to send a message to be read at this time, as follows: Dear Delegates of the Salvation Army Convention: Others. Signed, General Booth."

Now, this may not get the attention of my congregation, but this illustration always gets my attention. When I use it, I am ready to preach. It puts me in the right frame of mind, captures me and loses me in my sermon. In my sermon, "The Lust of the Holy Spirit," I begin as follows: "Months ago in the city of Seattle, Washington, I was enjoying a time of Fellowship at a luncheon of Christian workers. After the luncheon there was a question-answer session where the pastors and full-time workers were allowed to interrogate me. One pastor asked this question, 'Dr. Hyles, what in your opinion are the four spiritual highlights of your life?' Now normally I would not answer a question that involved such a lengthy answer, but for some reason that day I did answer that question. I said, 'The first spiritual highlight in my life took place in August of 1937 when I, as a little lad nearly 11 years of age with bare feet and ragged clothes, received Christ as my Saviour. The second great highlight of my life took place on New Year's Eve just before the dawn of 1944 when as a timid, introverted teenager I felt the call of God to preach the Gospel, and now for these many years I have been proclaiming the message around the nation and around the world and, yes, around the block. The third great highlight of my life took place on the grave of my father after he had died a drunkard's death. I returned to the grave and threw myself face down upon the dirt that covered it and stayed there until God did a work in me. I believed then and believe now that that was the first time in my life I was filled with the Holy Spirit. The fourth great event of my life took place when I was a young preacher. I was pastoring a little country church in east Texas. It was 6:05 in the morning. I was standing in an empty auditorium preaching from behind the pulpit on my morning broadcast called, 'The Old-Time Religion Broadcast.' I was speaking that morning on the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Up until that moment, however, I had never spoken to the Holy Spirit. I had never told Him I loved Him; I had never asked Him to guide me. I knew He lived in me. I knew Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, etc., so theoretically I knew the truth, but practically I had never experienced fellowship with the Holy Spirit. That morning, suddenly for the first time in my life, the Holy Spirit became more than an influence; He became a Person to me! I began to tremble while I was speaking. When I finished the broadcast I knelt behind the microphone and apologized to the Holy Spirit for neglecting Him through the years and told Him that I would never do so again. I got on my knees beside my little car that morning and told the Holy Spirit to guide me what route to take home for breakfast. After breakfast I begged Him to lead

me to know what route to take back to the office and from that happy day until this, I have never neglected the Holy Spirit in my life, even for one entire day I always talk to Him, tell Him I love Him and seek His guidance."

Now this introduction may or may not capture the attention of the audience, but it captures my attention, and once my attention is captured, the audience will listen.

2. Do not worry about how many points there are in the outline. I am basically a one-point outliner, but I know some great preachers who are not. Dr. John Rice had many points. An example of this is his famous sermon, "The Sevenfold Sin of Not Winning Souls." My good friend Dr. Bob Gray uses points and sub-points. That wonderful soul winner, Dr. Jim Vineyard, often has as many as 25 points. The important thing is that you fit it to yourself with whatever you are comfortable.

3. Use different type outlines as far as writing is concerned. For example, if I preach on Heaven, I make the Outline orderly and beautiful. I may type it or print it very carefully or write it with the best of script. This is because Heaven is orderly and beautiful. If I preach on Hell, I will scribble the outline and make it messy If I preach a hard sermon, I will often use a bold magic marker to remind me that I am to be bold.

If I preach a soft sermon, I will use a fine-line pen.

If I preach a commencement address, I will make an immaculate outline.

If I preach a sermon in which I want to become excited, and in order to remind myself that I was excited in my study, I will underline the main points or capitalize them. Bear in mind, the purpose of this outline is to carry the spirit that I had in the study to the pulpit. If I was excited in the study, something in the outline should remind me of that excitement. If I was tender in the study, something of the outline should remind me of the tenderness. If I wept in the study, something in the outline Should remind me of how I felt at the time I prepared my message and my heart. When I have an illustration in my outline, I write the abbrevia- tion, "Ill." to remind me that this is an illustration.

If I have an especially good idea that I want to set apart in my outline, I will put a circle around it.

I always put a bold line between points. This line is very bold to let me know that one part of the sermon is ending and another part is beginning. When listing things, I always number them. This makes it easier for me to keep my place in the list. When I want to whisper in my message, I use tiny writing. When I want to shout, I use bold print. Bear in mind that the purpose for the outline is to transfer the spirit of the study to the pulpit. It is so much easier to get excited when alone with God and His Word than it is when standing in front of hundreds or maybe thousands of people. This is not being hypocritical or mechanical; it is being honest. You prepared the contents of your message in the study; your outline is to remind you of what you learned. You prepared your heart in the study; the outline should remind you of what you felt, and it should help you to feel that same sweet fervency that you felt when you were alone with God in the study When using familiar illustrations, I just put a word or two that remind me of them and circle them in my outline. For example, I have mentioned so many times in my sermons the death of my drunken father, I will just write the words, "Dad’s death," and put a circle around them in the outline. I often use the illustration of the Sunday school departmental superintendent who told me when I was five years

of age that Jesus loved me. Her name was Mrs. Bethel. When I put that in my outline, I simply write the words, "Mrs. Bethel," and encircle them.

I also write out my text at the top of my outline and encircle it. This is not just the reference but the very words of the text so I can refer to them easily and remember them readily

If I am using a one-point sermon, I will write down that point several times throughout the outline so as to remind me to keep emphasizing and repeating that single point that I am trying to stress.

4. I use an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper for my outline. I fold it and place it in my Bible. This covers two pages. In other words, when the Bible is open, the page to the left and to the right are covered with outline. Then I draw a bold magic marker line down the center to be sure that the pages are divided in my mind.

5. Let your outline tell you how you felt as you prepared it. If while I was studying, I wept over a certain truth, I may preface that truth in my outline with a statement like this, "Nothing moves me to tears faster."

If I was unusually excited about a truth in my study, I may put in my outline a preface to that truth like this-"Thank God I can still get excited about If something irritated me in my study, such as some sin that is so prevalent, I may preface that statement with, "Nothing upsets me more than.

If I get happy in my study and want to laugh because of the goodness of God, I may remind myself in the outline that I laughed at that particular point.

If at a certain time in my study I was overcome with thanksgiv- ing, I may put in the outline something like this: "Thank God...."

I simply want to deliver to my people from the pulpit what God delivered to me in the study I want them to feel what I felt. I want them to be thrilled as I was thrilled, to be moved as I was moved, to weep as I wept, to rejoice as I rejoiced, and to share with me the ecstasy of the experience that I had of walking with God as He gave me His message for my people.

6. Wait until you are moved and have entered into the heavenly places before you make your outline. No outline should be made coldly, but only after God has moved the heart of the preacher. If you make your outline on the mountaintop, you will identify it from the pulpit with the mountaintop.

Hypocrisy is twofold: If you express something you do not feel, that is hypocrisy Likewise, if you feel something you do not express, that is hypocrisy Not only should the sermon transfer the facts learned in the study but the emotions enjoyed in the study The outline can remind you of both; it should call to your mind what you learned and to your heart how you felt so that you may accurately transfer the feeling of your heart when you became acquainted with the truth to the people so that they may have the same feeling when they become acquainted with the same truth.

7. Outline your sermon no earlier than 48 hours before it is preached. If you do this, it will be fresher and it will be easier for the outline to fulfill its purpose.

8. If using an old outline, read and reread it right before preaching. As mentioned elsewhere in this manuscript, Dr. John Rice always re-outlined his messages right before preaching. This is a good

idea. However, if this is not done, it certainly is wise for the preacher to read and reread his outline so that it may be fresh in his mind when he walks in the pulpit.

9. Use ditto marks in a list. Suppose, for example, that in the outline you are listing some things for which you are thanking God. Do not write for each thing the words, "I thank God." Write the words, "I thank God," for the first one and put ditto marks under those three words down through the outline. This will make the outline a little bit less messy and less confusing while you are preaching.

10. Write yourself instructions on your outline. Suppose you have a certain Scripture in your outline that you feel the people should read with you. Then beside the Scripture write some words, like, "Read in unison," or "Entire congregation to read."

Suppose that there is a Scripture that you want the congregation to quote with you. You may forget that while you are preaching. Write it down in the outline.

There may be a Scripture that you want to look up and read to the people. Make yourself a note like this: "Look it up." In other words, if there are certain things that in the study you feel the Lord is leading you to do while you preach, make a note of them. To be sure, while a person is preaching the Lord may lead him to do certain things, but it is my feeling that the Lord can lead better while you are on your face before God in the study than while you are on your feet before your people in the pulpit. This is not to say that God does not lead in the pulpit. It is simply to say that God also leads in the study

11. It is often good to use verses that outline themselves. There are some verses that just form an outline, such as these: 1 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heav- en, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." John 14:12, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father." John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, bath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 3:16, "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." Psalms 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

Each of these verses outlines itself. For example, look at the outline in 2 Chronicles 7:14.

I. The people’s part.

1. Humble themselves.

2. Pray 3. Seek God’s face.

4. Turn from their wicked ways.

II. God’s promises.

1. He will forgive their sins.

2. He will heal their land. The same is true with Psalms 1:1-3. Notice the natural outline.

I. Man’s part.

1. Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly 2. Do not stand in the way of sinners.

3. Do not sit in the seat of the scornful.

4. Delight in the law of the Lord.

5. Meditate in the Bible day and night.

II. God’s promises to that man.

I. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters.

2. His leaf also shall not wither.

3. Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Now go through John 5:24; John 3:16; and Romans 8:28 and let them outline themselves. Before doing so please note that the purpose of these Scriptures is to try to get God to act. That means the outline should emphasize what man can do in order to propel God’s action.

Years ago a very old man was a member of our church, and he passed away I was called to his bedside. The last words the old man said before his spirit was taken to the presence of his Saviour were these: "Thank you, Preacher, for walking with God all these years and telling me on Sunday what God said." This cannot be done unless the walking with God while we are alone is transferred to the pulpit while we stand in front of the people. The only things we have that will transfer the spirit of the study to the pulpit are the memory and the outline. The memory is often clouded by circum- stances in the service, but the outline can be and should be a reminder of the heavenly walk that we enjoyed with God during our hours of preparation and research. for the outline to remind us of that walk is not critical; but to deliver with a cold heart and dry eyes the message that was received through tears and a burning may be!

2.03. Chapter 3 Preparing to Preach

Chapter 3 Preparing to Preach

It is time to preach. In a few minutes I will be representing God as His man before His people. I am to deliver His message. I am about to walk to the platform. I must remember to walk correctly I must remember to stand correctly I must remember to sit properly I am now walking through the door. I am praying a simple prayer. "Lord, help me to preach today as if it were the last sermon I would ever preach."

I must take time to remember how much I wanted this in days gone by I must remember that I am where I wanted to be. I must remember how I felt when I was sitting in the pew. I must remember that I am God's man. I must realize that I may not have many more times to do this. I must give my best. I must give my all. lam about to do something that angels covet. I am appearing in Christ's stead. I am His representative. I am His ambassador. I must not forget it.

I am now standing on the platform. The scene has begun. In just a few minutes I will be doing~ the most important thing that a human being can do on earth, ~so I must spend the time between now and then to prepare.

1. I must examine the pulpit. I must see and decide where I can place my hands or if I can place my hands on the pulpit. I must decide what to do with my hands before I preach. If the pulpit is too high for me, I would be wise just to stand behind it with my hands beside me or clasp behind me; or' I could use my hands for gestures, but it would not be a help to me to place my hands on the pulpit if it is a tall pulpit and obviously built for a taller preacher than I.

I am about to represent God. I must do it properly I must not be intimidated by a pulpit.

2.1 must observe the platform. I hope it is about six inches high for every ten feet of depth in the auditorium. If it is a low platform, I must speak a bit louder, be a bit more dynamic and more assertive because I will be in a position not conducive to leadership. If the platform is too high, I must say something early in my message that will identify me with the congregation so that I will not feel too far removed from them. I am God's man. I must give my best. I must be my best. I must do my best. I am representing God. I am His ambassador. I must be prepared. In a few minutes I will be standing between the living and the dead. "Oh, God, help me to prepare myself."

3. I must check how far I am from the people. I wish that the front row were within seven feet of me as I speak, for it is harder to interact with the people if they are far from me. It is more difficult for the pulpit and pew to communicate if the people are at a great distance from me. If there are more than seven feet between me and the audience, I must realize that I will not be as aware of their response. I must not plan on a response, for distance has divided the speaker from the people. I must remember that I may not be able to hear their "Amens." I may not be able to hear their laughter as easily as I could if they were closer to me. If they are ten feet or more away from me, it might be more difficult for me to preach. Maybe I should consider preaching a familiar sermon, one

in which I can totally lose myself and be more oblivious to the audience response and participation. I am God’s man. I must leave no stone unturned. The time is getting closer when I am to preach. The choir is singing. Soon will come the offering; then the special number; then I will enter into the holy place and represent my God. "Oh, God, may I give my best, be my best and do my best."

4. I must check the lighting. I wish it were a bright, cheerful auditorium so I could easily see the people and feel apart of them, for when I feel identified with the people, I can best represent my Saviour, for He certainly identified Himself with the common man. I must remember that if the lighting is subdued, I will not be able to see the people as well. I will not know as quickly of their laughter. I will not see them nodding their heads in agreement. I must remem- ber that most of my inspiration must come from within because the dim light has separated me from the congregation. "Oh, God, help me to be Your man today This is the only Sunday morning sermon that these people are going to hear today I am their only chance to receive God’s message. Please help me. I yield myself to Your Holy Spirit and present my body a living sacrifice. Please use me."

5.1 must check the temperature. If it is too warm, I must realize that the people could become a bit drowsy and they may fall asleep more easily while I preach. They will not be as alert as they would be if the building were not uncomfortably warm. No doubt it will be a little more difficult for me to keep their attention. Perhaps I should use a touch of appropriate humor. I must be a little more dynamic in my presentation and delivery, and maybe I should consider keeping my message a little more brief. "Oh, God, do not let the warm building hinder me from delivering Your message, and do not let the warm building hinder the people from receiving Your message. You have given me a truth to give them that is vital. It could revolutionize their lives. Give me wisdom as I seek to blend and adjust to the various circumstances of the service."

6. I must check the shape of the auditorium. I must decide with which people to make eye contact. I realize that if the auditorium is big, there is no way that I can have eye contact with everybody If the building is very long and narrow, I would be wise to preach mainly to the front half of the congregation. This will keep my eyes pointing toward the entire congregation, but I must be aware mainly of the front half. However, I must be sure to project my voice so that the last row can hear me.

If the building is fan-shaped, my body must not oscillate offen- sively I must decide to keep eye contact basically with the two center sections, with an occasional glance to the sides. I realize that it would be unwise for me to constantly be oscillating from side to side, but I must make everyone feel a part of the service. However, for the sake of the message, my main contact will be with the two center sections. If there is a center section and no center aisle, I must then give most of my attention to the three center sections.

"Dear God, if I am placing too much emphasis on mechanics, it is a sincere mistake. I want to be today what You want me to be, and I want the people to hear and understand Your message. I have spent hours preparing my message. I have spent hours preparing my heart. Now I must not allow circumstances to prevent the message from being transferred from my heart to the hearts of the people."

7. I must check the crowd. I must watch during the announce- ments to see if they are responsive. If they are, perhaps we can have some interaction while I preach. I can ask them questions and expect some "Amens" and laughter. I am trying to decide now whether it is best for me to use them to help me in the presentation of the sermon. It may be best for me to realize that they are not responsive and not depend on them at all for help during the message. At any rate, I pray, "Dear Lord, I want my inspiration mainly to come from You. May Your Holy Spirit fill me. May Your love engulf me. May Your grace sustain me, and may Your people hear me!"

If the crowd is small, I must not be discouraged, for it is an honor beyond measure for me to deliver a message even to one person. I must be aware that all of Heaven is watching, that that cloud of Heavenly witnesses is observing!

I must remind myself of what God has done in the past in a small gathering. I must remember that little crowd that gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, many years ago, but one person in that small crowd was named Curtis Hutson, who has become one of Amer- ica's greatest preachers.

I must remember that small gathering in Kankakee, Illinois, where it would have been easy to be discouraged, but I must remember that one of the few people there that night was a young man named Wally Beebe, who has become one of America's great preachers and has influenced millions to attend church and hun- dreds of thousands to come to Christ.

I must remember that the great message in John 3:1-36 on the new birth was preached to one man. I must remember that the great message of John 4:1-54 on the living water was preached to one woman. I must remember the small beginning of the Fulton Street prayer meetings and of Moody's revival in England. I must remember that only 120 prayed before Pentecost. I must remember that the entire destiny of mankind was changed by a little group of disciples who followed Jesus and heard Him speak.

I must not depend on the crowd for my inspiration. If they do inspire me, I must let that be bonus, but I must be inspired by the fact that I hold in my hand the eternal Word of God. There lives in my body the eternal Spirit of God, and I have in my mind and in my heart and in my soul a message from the eternal God, even the true and the living God. I am about to stand between the living and the dead. That is enough to inspire me. If the people choose to add to that inspiration, well and good, but the inspiration of the God Whom I represent, the message which I preach, and the fact that I am standing between the living and the dead is all the inspiration I really need. I must remember not to let the crowd lead me; I must lead them. I must not let them discourage me. I must not let them divide my mind and get it off of my message. "Oh, God, the offering is being taken. The time is getting closer. It is becoming difficult to wait. I long to present Your message. May I do it in Your power, and, dear God, if I am being too finicky, forgive me, but I just want to be sure that nothing distracts or hinders me from conveying the truth that You have for these people to them through Your servant."

8. I must fall in love with these people. I am looking around now. I see down in the front some older ladies. "God, bless them." I wonder what they have done this week. I imagine that this trip to church is the highlight of their week. "May I be what they need." Back in the back I see some teenagers. "Dear God, it will be difficult for them to listen. Please help me to use every tool at my disposal to keep their attention. Some of them may wreck their lives this week if they do not hear

Your message. Help me as I present it.

"Dear God, I see numbers of men in this room who are viously laboring men. They have worked hard this week. This is their only day off They have chosen to use it to hear me preach. I notice that some of them have greasy hands. They have toiled hard all week. They need to hear from Heaven. May I be the vessel this morning that will allow them to do so.

"Dear God, I see a little crowd of people back in the back who are singing with their hands. They are deaf Tell them that I love them. Near them I see some people who have canes, and they don't seem to be facing me exactly They must be blind. Convey to them my love. Dear God, there are some little children. A 45-minute sermon seems like hours to them. Help me to so represent You that it will be easy for them to listen. Let me be simple enough so that the smallest child can understand me, and yet may my message be profound enough so that it will challenge the most mature Chris- tian. lor the next few minutes, God, I will be looking over the audience and loving them. Oh, by the way, I thank You for them. Please help me to be what they need today"

9. I must not be distracted from my message. I must keep on course. I must use that part of the service that will help my message and be oblivious to that part of the service that will not help. I must not allow anything to offend me or upset me. I must not develop a spirit of criticism about any part of the service.

10. I must be careful about my stance. Dear God, sometimes it is easy for me to slouch a bit and oftentimes I shift my weight from one foot to another. I must be careful to stand like Heaven's representative should stand. I must not carelessly lean too much on the pulpit. I am sure that I can better represent You if I stand up straight and equally distribute my weight on both feet.

11. l must be careful with my eyes. I remember how Mother used to tell me to be careful about people who had shifty eyes. I believe that sincerity will care for this, but I must not look to the ceiling while I preach or spend too much time looking to my outline. I must have a straightforward look as I preach.

12. I must be careful about the use of my hands. I must not fiddle with something on the pulpit. I must use my hands for gesturing or keep them comfortably on a part of the pulpit, hold them to my side, or clasp them behind my back. "Dear God, I hope You're not thinking now that I am emphasizing little things too much. I remember reading one time that someone said to Michelangelo, 'You spend too much time on trifles.' Michelangelo replied, 'Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle!"'

13. I hope lam dressed properly "Of course, God, it is too late now, for I cannot change clothes this late, but I hope that I am dressed appropriately I am aware that young men who are God's representatives must be a bit more conservative than the average young man. Help me always to be appropriate in my dress. I have not worn anything new today because I do not want to have my mind on my clothing, nor do I want my apparel to detract from the message that You have given me for my people today"

I must consider my voice, my speech and my pronounciation. I must remember that the larger the crowd the slower the speech should be. I notice that the song leader makes larger gestures as he leads the singing when the crowd is larger.

14.1 must be conscious of my facial expressions. I must remem- ber that the smaller the crowd, the easier it is for me to use facial expressions; but in a large crowd, facial expressions are less effec- tive. I also must take into consideration the lighting and the distance of the people from the pulpit. I also must take into consideration the width of the center aisle. If it is too wide, my eye contact will not be as good. I must be aware of this so as not to be disappointed if the response is not what I want it to be.

"Dear God, it is almost time. The people are waiting. I have prepared my heart and my message through the week. I am trying now to prepare myself so that I may be the best representative for You that I can possibly be."

15. 1 call on someone to pray, I must remember the size of the audience. Can he be heard if he prays from the altar? Can he be heard from the place where he is sitting? If not, I must remember to call him to the platform and have him lead us in prayer behind the microphone. The same is true with testimonies.

16. I must be proper in my pulpit behavior. I must remember to participate in the singing. I must be careful not to talk to those on the platform. It might show an indifference to the service and lack of respect for others who are on the program and a part of the service. I must stand when the congregation stands or I might cause a distance to develop between us.

"Dear Lord, I understand that You can overcome any circum- stance, interruption or inconvenience. I just want to be sure that I do not cause a hindrance in the service."

I remember when I used to preach on the streets. We had no pews; we had no piano; we had no organ; we had no public address system; we had no pulpit, and I remember how You blessed. I remember how I used to stand in the back of a little pickup truck and preach to crowds. Ah, what sweet memories!

I remember that time when in an evening service all the lights went out; I preached in total darkness, and over 20 people got saved in a small church in south Texas!

I remember the brush arbors with the mosquitoes and the ex- treme heat with people sitting in their cars around the edge of the arbor listening to the sermon.

I remember the time when the PA. broke when I was preaching to 5,000 people, yet what a good service God gave us.

I remember preaching at the Bill Rice Ranch years ago, back in the days when their tabernacle was open on the sides. As I stood to preach, a torrential rainstorm came. I remember how nobody could hear, but dear Dr. John Rice simply walked outside and lifted his hands up and the rain stopped. I remember how sweet the service was, and then I remember when Dr. Rice came back in, he looked at me and said, "I took care of it while you were preaching, now you go outside and care for it while I'm preaching!" He had that impish, little-boy type grin on his face. God bless him. I loved him so much, and I have so many sweet memories that are built around him.

I remember that tabernacle in Ft. Worth, Texas, that was built just for revival meetings. Dr. Harvey Springer preached one week, and I preached the other. I remember that night when a cold front came through. My, was it ever cold! The tabernacle had no heat, but somebody borrowed a gas

heater and placed it in the back in the middle of the tabernacle. Only ten people showed up that night in that 1000-seat tabernacle, and all ten of them were gathered around the heater, holding their hands over the top in an effort to get some warmth! Nothing went right! There was no piano; there was no pianist; there was no organ; there was no organist! Only the pastor, congregational song leader and I were on the platform, and I remember that I was preaching that night on Hell. I thought perhaps that would warm the service up somewhat. Nobody looked at me! It appeared that no one was listening, but I went ahead and preached the entire message as if the tabernacle were filled, while the little crowd of 10 people gathered around the heater in the back. I remember leaving the service thinking I had been a total failure and that I had wasted my time.

Years passed. I was preaching in Birmingham, Michigan, in an afternoon service. A tall, good-looking young man stood to intro- duce me. He said, "Ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege to introduce you to Dr. Jack Hyles. He doesn't know it, but it was through his preaching that I was saved. Years ago he preached a week of meetings in a big tabernacle in Ft. Worth, Texas. One night a cold front came through. Only ten people showed up, and they gathered around a little heater in the back. I was one of the ten. Dr. Hyles did not think that any of us were listening, because we were all looking at the heater and trying to keep warm, but I'll never forget his sermon! He preached on the subject, 'To Hell and Back.' I got saved that night. I didn't go forward in the service to profess publicly my faith, but I was saved that night. I would like for Dr. Hyles to know that I love him and I would like to thank him for being faithful in preaching in a 1000-seat tabernacle when only 10 were present, and they were gathered around a little heater in the back."

I remember that time in Garland, Texas, when we had a big tent service on a Sunday morning; 3,163 people were there and right in the middle of the sermon the back row of the choir fell off. There had been faulty construction of the risers for the choir!

Then I remember that time when I was preaching to several thousand people at the First Baptist Church of Hammond. It was Sunday night; the building was packed, and suddenly about a third into the message a well-dressed man stood up in the back, ran about halfway down the aisle and made the time-out signal. He called time out! One of the security guards came and took him to the back and asked him what he was doing. He said, "That fellow has preached long enough." In spite of it, God blessed in that service.

Then I remember that tuberculosis sanatorium in Tyler, Texas, where as a young preacher I used to go every Thursday night and preach to the dying. I remember how some Thursday nights we would have conversions and then find them missing the next Thursday night when we returned. They had passed away during the week.

"What I am saying, Lord, is that I know that You can overcome circumstances and difficulties, but in spite of this, I don't want to be a difficulty. I want to be my best. Lord, I have the idea that the only difficulties You overcome are those that are beyond our control. I have an idea that when we cause them You are not as ready to overcome them."

17. I must be very wise concerning any child that might mis- behave or baby that might cry. Of course, the best thing to do is to have adequate nursery facilities and ask the people to please leave the babies in the nursery, to have trained ladies in a clean, sanitary place. I must remember

not to let a baby destroy the service. I only hope the pastor has trained the people to remove the child imme- diately when he misbehaves.

I hope that the children have been trained not to walk in and out of the service while the sermon is being delivered.

I trust that the ushers have been properly trained to sit down during the sermon, for they, like all of us, need preaching too. I hope that they will not disturb by moving around during the sermon. I hope they will not be doing such unwise things as counting the attendance while I'm speaking. I trust the pastor has not been so unwise as to have someone out of the services counting money "Oh, God, I want everybody to hear my message, or should I say, Your message."

I hope there is not a telephone nearby that when it rings can be heard in the auditorium.

I hope that the people are trained not to interrupt the service by calling folks out of the auditorium. I hope that they realize the most important thing in the world is the preaching of God's message and that nothing should interfere with that preaching.

"Dear God, I hope that no one is carelessly using a tape recorder that might interfere with the service. Now, Lord, if any of these things do happen, I'm going to deliver Your message anyway, and I believe that You can and will overcome obstacles unless we are the obstacles. Don't let me be a hindrance in any way in the delivering of Your message today, and dear Lord, please help the fellow who has that video camera not to be interrupting during the sermon. Help him to sit down and listen like everybody else. There are so many folks behind him that will be distracted if he moves around during the sermon.

18. I must be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. "Help me to use humor in good taste. Remind me to be proper in every way and not to be presumptuous in my opinions of people in the audience."

I remember that time in Mesquite, Texas, while I was preaching, a lady was grimacing on the second or third row from the front. All during the sermon she made faces and grimaced. I thought she was angry. I told the pastor alter the service to watch her. I thought she was a troublemaker. The pastor smiled understandingly and said, "Brother Hyles, that woman is not a troublemaker. She has a husband who beats her every time she comes to church. Tonight he beat her across the back. While you were preaching, her back was bleeding and her blouse was sticking to her back. The reason she was grimacing was that she was in pain." To think I judged her as being a troublemaker when she was simply suffering for her Saviour!

"Now, Lord, if hindrances come, I will accept them. I will not be offended. If I can correct them, I will. If I cannot, I will do my best through them, but I just do not want slothfulness to cause hin- drances. This is Your hour. These are Your people. This is Your Word. I am Your man. This is Your message. I believe I have done my best. The special music is now over. I am approaching the pulpit. I am now standing behind the pulpit. I am now preaching. What joy! What total joy! What ecstasy! What total ecstasy! "Oh, God, use me just now!"

2.04. Chapter 4 Keeping a Warm Heart as You Preach

Chapter 4 Keeping a Warm Heart as You Preach A preacher must realize that crisis preaching will last only so long. Issue-oriented preaching will take the church just so far. Sooner or later, warmhearted preaching must take over. A preacher must have his heart warm at all times especially those times when he stands before his people to proclaim to them the truth that God has given him for them. Perhaps we can discuss some things that will enable the preacher to keep a warm heart. First we will explore ways to keep a warm heart while preaching.

1. Use words that warm your heart. Each of us has a little special vocabulary of words that are very dear to him and that move him to certain emotions. For example, I like the word "Mama." When I speak of my mother, it warms me if I call her Mama. When I speak of the Bible, it warms my heart if I say, "the Book." While I am preaching, the little statement, "Thank God!" moves me to emotion. I can simply say, "Thank God for all He has done to me. Thank God for all He has done through me. Thank God for all He has done for me." Just the repetition of the little phrase, "Thank God!" warms my heart. I also love the words, "our Lord." There is something about the possessive pronoun before the name of Jesus or before the words, "God, Lord," etc. that moves me. I especially love to say "our Lord." I also love the word "wonderful." It has a ring to it that warms my heart when I use it. When I speak of my people I like to use the words, "precious people." When I pray for a group of people I often say, "God bless these precious people." Another statement that stirs me, especially to excitement, is the phrase, "the army of people," or "an army of people." The wise preacher will learn the words that are very sweet and dear to him. He will use them often. They will help to warm his heart.

2. Use superlatives that warm your heart. When used honestly, superlatives are a great aid to a speaker. Such statements as "the most amazing thing I ever saw," "the greatest day of my life," and "the most wonderful thing in the world," if spoken in truth and not through exaggeration, can be used to warm the heart of the speaker.

3. Use experiences that warm your heart. Each of us has stored away in his mind some wonderful memories concerning events that have transpired in our lives. Just the thought of some of them can move us to excitement or move us to tears. There are about a dozen things that have happened to me, the thought of which always warms my heart and makes me a better preacher. I have a list of those. When I find myself preaching with a heart less than warm, I revert to one of them. Sometimes when I am preaching I feel so ashamed, I often think while preaching, "How can my heart be less than warm when I am preaching about such a marvelous truth? How can I preach on Hell without tears? How can I preach on Heaven without shouting? How can I preach on salvation without weeping for joy Yet, there are times when I do. At such times I pull out of my bank of memories an event that will warm my heart, and I speak of it. For example, it doesn’t matter where I am or what I am doing, if I think about how good God has been to me through the years, my heart warms and my eyes moisten. When I think of my childhood when poverty was mingled with the love of my mother, and add to that what God has done for me, through me and

with me through the years, I am always moved. When I remind myself that I owned my first pair of new shoes bought for me at the age of 14, I ate my first hamburger at the age of 14, I ate my first egg when I was 14 years of age and remember how God has cared for me through the years, I find it easy to weep and to shout at the same time. If I am preaching a sermon and find my heart a little cold, I simply begin to speak about one of these subjects. It always gets me in the mood to preach, and then I can revert back to my sermon and go at full speed.

4. While preaching, mention names that warm your heart. I often mention the name, "Proctor Boyd," my Sunday school teach- er while I was a teenager. He was the best Sunday school teacher I ever had! Just the words, "Proctor Boyd," give me a warm heart. I often mention the name, "Dr. Rutherford." He was my Sunday school teacher when I was a junior high lad. I can see him now standing in front of the class with tears streaming down his cheeks saying, "Boys, I'm not going to let the Devil have a one of you" Just the thought of that dear man standing before my class warms my heart. I often mention the name, "Jesse Cobb," the Chairman of the Board of Deacons at the Hillcrest Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, and the man who introduced me for the first time to soul winning. Just the mention of his name warms my heart. I use their names often. It gives me the kind of heart that my people deserve for their pastor to have-the kind of heart that will help me to preach with fervor and compassion.

5. While preaching, look at places that warm your heart. Glance at the altar and think of all the marvelous things that God has done there. Look down to the place where you are standing and realize that that is the place where God has put you to proclaim His truths. Let your mind think of the privilege of standing there to preach. Every Sunday I look to the fourth row from the front near the center aisle where my mother used to sit. My heart is warmed to think of her and her faithfulness to church as she came when she felt good and when she felt bad and sat there listening to and praying for her boy. Let places become important to you Have many little sacred shrines where you can go to remember. While you are preaching you cannot go physically to those places, but in your mind you can go anywhere you want to go that will warm your heart.

6. Remember those who once were with you. The pastor who wants to have a warm heart must remember those people with whom he once served who are now in Heaven. A part of the pastor's schedule should be a time to remember. As I preach, I often look back to the spot where Bill Sallade used to sit, and I love him for awhile. I then glance to the place where Henry Rose once sat, and I love him for awhile. During the Lord's Supper, I always remember George Huisenga, who was the deacon in charge of serving the Lord's Supper. During the Lord's Supper, I always look at the place where Blanford Duff used to sit; he was a loyal, faithful deacon. Every month I take time to love him for a few minutes. When I walk through the choir ready room behind the choir loft, I think of Mr. Brueck, one of our men who had cancer. He became so weak that he could not walk, stand or even sit. He would crawl on his hands and knees into the choir ready room and lie there so he could hear me preach just on the PA system. When I think of those with whom I have served who are now in Heaven, it warms my heart and helps me preach better.

7. Watch your people as you preach. Look at the widows who need your encouragement, the elderly facing the sunset years of life who need courage, the young people who need strength to resist temptation, the bus kids who need love and others who need you As you watch them, realize their need of you It will warm your heart, give you a purpose in preaching and throw you at

the mercy of the Holy Spirit that He may help you to be what your people need you to be.

8. Develop rituals that warm your heart. Every Saturday night before I go to bed, I take a picture of my father, who died without Christ in 1950, put the picture on the floor; make an altar of it and kneel before it, asking God to help me to preach with the same fervor that I wanted my pastor to have the first and last time that my dad ever sat with me in church.

It was a Sunday afternoon. My father announced to me that he was going to church with Mother, my sister, Earlyne, and me that night. My little seven-year-old heart leaped with joy, and I made a mad rush down to the only house in the neighborhood that had a telephone. I asked the Wyatt family if I could borrow their tele- phone. I called my pastor and excitedly told him that my daddy was coming to church that night, and I asked him please to do his best to get daddy saved. That night Daddy, Mother; Earlyne and I walked for the only time in our lives into a church building. We walked two miles down Fernwood Street to the Fernwood Baptist Church. We sat on the second row from the back on the left side facing the pulpit. My big 235-pound giant of a dad stood beside me as we sang and sat beside me as we listened. I prayed that God would do something to my dad to transform his life and save his soul. Following the offering, the pastor stood and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, there will be no preaching tonight. This is the night of our annual cantata. The choir will present it to us at this time." My heart broke! I sat during the entire cantata and wept as my daddy slept. I could not believe that my daddy didn't mean more to my preacher than that! That was the only time he ever sat in church with me. I think of this every Saturday night and ask God to help me not to disappoint the little seven-year-old boys whose daddies are in the service.

There are other rituals that I have that warm my heart. As I walk into the auditorium I always pray the same prayer.

Every Monday morning I leave the office to go to the airport to fly somewhere across America to preach Monday night and Tues- day night. Before I leave the office I go into the waiting room and look at a big picture of Dr. John R. Rice on which he wrote, "To my buddy, Jack Hyles. Signed, John R. Rice. Psalms 126:5-6." I look at the picture and relive the 22 years that we traveled together and shared pulpits across America. I tell him that I miss him. My heart is always warmed as I think of this great giant with whom I traveled and whom I loved.

Weekly I go to the mausoleum at Memory Lane Cemetery, which is owned by First Baptist Church of Hammond. Just inside the door on the left there is my mother's burial place. When I go there, I have a ritual. I read her favorite chapter in the Bible, Psalms 103:1 take out her picture and tell her that I love her and then I sing the song that she sang as she rocked me to sleep when I was a boy, "Brighten the Corner Where You Are." Then I sing the last song that we sang together before she went to Heaven, "The Unclouded Day" The preacher who has little rituals that help him to remember to love, to appreciate and to think will have a warmer heart.

9. Think of the effort spent by the people who come to hear you. Often on Sunday morning, about 8:00, I stop to realize all the time and effort expended by the people of my congregation, the hun- dreds of thousands of hours spent in preparation. This warms my heart as I prepare to preach.

10. Think of the labor that went into the offering that is dropped in the collection plate on the Lord's Day Think of the greasy mechanic, the tired and weary steel worker; the lady that cleans houses, and of all the others who earned their money by hard laborious toil, and your heart will be warmed.

11. Think Whom you represent. 2 Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did be- seech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Pause to realize that you are there in the place of Jesus, representing Him. 1 John 4:17, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world."

12. Be publicly expressive of your love and appreciation. Say, "I love you," to your people. Be grateful to them. Express that gratitude openly It will warm your heart and bring tears to your eyes as you publicly express your love to the people whom God has given to you and to whom you are a gift from God.

13. Think where you are. You are where you dreamed someday you would be. You are where you will wish someday that you could be again. This is it! This is the culmination of all your study and preparation. This is the fulfillment of all your dreams and plans. You are now there-- God's man, God's representative. Always think of it! It will warm your heart!

14. Think of what "the Book" is. Realize as you preach that you are preaching the very Word of God, the Word that is eternal, which always was and always will be. It is the Book written by your Creator; given by divine revelation, word-by-word. It is God's eternal, never-dying Word, revealing Himself and His plan to man. Think of it! Think of it! Think of it!

15. Think of those watching from Heaven. This will warm your heart as you preach. I never preach on a Sunday morning or Sunday night in my own church or somewhere else around the country on a weeknight without realizing that my mother's eyes are fixed on me. The eyes of my two little sisters join my mother's, there are many other precious saints of God who are in Heaven who watch me in that great cloud of witnesses. There is my pastor; I C. Sizemore. There is my friend, fellow-worker and buddy, Dr. John R. Rice. There are my deacons who preceded me to Heaven and others of my people. They watch me. I must never forget it! It will warm my heart as I preach.

16. Think of those pleading in Hell. In Luke 16:1-31 we have the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man is in Hell, first crying for water; then crying for someone to go and tell his brothers not to come to that place of torment. A few years after my father died without Christ, my sister knocked on my study door one Sunday after midnight and asked me if I would lead her to Christ. This I did. After I led her to Christ, I asked her why she came that night. She said to me that shortly after Daddy died she had a dream. She dreamed that she was taken to the second floor of a big building. She dreamed that she saw that entire building lined with caskets. In every casket there was a body She was taken by this creature to every casket, and she looked in the face of every corpse. On every face there was a smile of peace until she came to the last one. The creature tried to keep her from the last corpse. She could only see two hands rising above the casket. She said, "Jack, I could tell in my dream that those were Daddy's hands. I rushed to look into his face, and there was no look of peace. There was no smile, but a look of anguish and pain. His hands were raised toward me, and he was crying, 'Sister, sister,' and then he would make some kind of noises that I could not understand. I tried to understand him and begged him to speak more plainly. He just kept crying, 'Sister, sister,' and making those strange noises. Finally, the creature took me away from the casket." My sister told me that night after I won her to Christ that she had wondered for all those years what Daddy was trying to say to her. Then she told me that that night I had preached on the rich man in Hell and told how he asked Abraham to send the Gospel to his

brothers on earth. Earlyne told me then that she realized that Daddy was trying to tell her not to come where he was. The dream of several years before had been explained in my sermon that Sunday night. Following the sermon she came to my study and was saved. For many years now she has been in full-time service for the Lord.

I have been aware for all these many years that my father died without Christ, and I must tell people that story so that they will avoid and evade the torments of Hell. The preacher with a warm heart must make himself aware that he stands between Heaven and Hell; yes, even between the living and the dead!

17. in order to have a warm heart, the preacher must remember that someday it will end. Someday he will walk in his pulpit for the last time. Someday he will stand before his people for the last time. Someday he will present the truth of God for the last time. It will end someday It may be tomorrow; it may be today May my heart be warm while I have this opportunity, for it too will pass away

18. Think of the investment that others have made in you. Many a dear Sunday school teacher's rewards will be increased according to your fruitfulness. Others have invested in you; you must use their investment wisely. Think of it while you preach. It will warm your heart.

19. Think of the judgment seat and the fact that someday you will face Jesus. Think of the day when you will face Him con- cerning the sermon you are preaching. It will warm your heart and stir your soul.

20. Realize all of the work that has gone into the service by those who labor with you. Think of the nursery workers caring for the babies. Think of all the time spent by the choir, the choir director and the accompanists in preparing for the services. Think of the PA men, the ushers, those who work in the baptismal dressing rooms, the Sunday school teachers and the countless others that have spent many, many hours preparing for the service that you are now enjoying which culminates in the sermon which you are now preaching. You will find your heart strangely warmed. In spite of all the advice given above concerning the obtaining and sustaining of a warm heart in the pulpit, the pastor will not all of a sudden get a warm heart when he enters the pulpit. He will eventually become in the pulpit what he is all the rest of the time, so he must constantly be striving to keep a warm heart 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Whatever spiritual temperature the preacher possesses during six days, he will possess the seventh day There is also the fact that it will be somewhat hypocritical to obtain a warm heart for the preaching of a sermon and then lose it the rest of one's week. There are some things the busy pastor can do that will help him obtain and retain a warm heart all the time.

1. Schedule time to praise. Have a set time in the schedule for the praising of God. This time should be started by the making of a list. Think of the good things that God has done for you. Make a list of them. Then go back through them one at a time. Think on them and realize the goodness of God. If your mind is fixed upon His goodness and His blessings to you, sincere praise will come. Praise should not necessarily be the result of a spontaneous stimulus; it should be the result of a heart that is aware of God's goodness. This awareness should be scheduled. I have a set time in my schedule when I do nothing but praise God. I make my list of all the things that God has done for me recently; then I go through the list to thank Him and praise Him for His goodness. It isn't long until I'm having a "real spell." This sincere praise to God is caused by a planned awareness of

God’s goodness and blessings on my life.

2. Schedule a time to worship. Praise is thanking God for what He has done. Worship is thanking God for what He is. There should be a scheduled time in the life of every child of God when he comes before his God to be still and know that He is God, to hear the still small voice and to look up to our great Creator and exalt Him and love Him for who He is and what He is. I am not talking here about a formal worship service with chanting and liturgy I am talking about a Christian being alone with his God to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

3. Schedule a time to meditate. It is interesting in the Bible to find how many times meditation is a prerequisite to God’s bless- ings. Psalms 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Notice that one of the five prerequisites to prosperity is to meditate in the law of the Lord day and night. When God came to Joshua when he succeeded Moses as the leader of God’s people, God listed meditation as one of His prerequisites for success. In order to keep a warm heart, the Christian, especially the pastor, should have a scheduled time of meditation.

4. Schedule a time to confess your sins. Several years ago I was sharing the platform with Dr. John Rice. We were in Atlanta, Georgia, for a Sword of the Lord Conference. It was time for our driver to pick us up for the evening service. I went down to Dr. Rice’s room to wait with him for our driver. The door to his room was open and the door to his bathroom was open, and Dr. Rice was on his knees at the commode. I asked him what he was doing. He said, "I’m confessing my sins." Then he tore some paper up in little bitty pieces and flushed it down the commode. I asked him what that paper was. He said it was the list of his sins. I said, "What do you mean, Dr. Rice?"

He said, "Well, I have a set time every day to confess my sins. What I do is write my sins on a piece of paper. Then I go through them one at a time asking God to forgive me for them. Then I tear the paper on which it was written into many pieces and flush it down the commode." I asked him why he did this. He grinned and said, "Do you think I want folks to find out what my sins are?"

I learned something that day I learned that one of the great secrets to the great John R. Rice was the fact that he confessed his sins daily, by schedule, and he listed them before confessing them. The preacher who comes to God asking forgiveness for his sins will obtain that forgiveness, and this is one of the great ways to keep a warm heart.

5. Sing and whistle throughout the week. Every morning I choose a song for the day I sing it and whistle it throughout the day My song for today is, "Jesus, Saviour; pilot me over life’s tem- pestuous sea." I hum it. I whistle it. I sing it. I choose songs that warm my heart. One day I will choose for my song of the day, "God Will Take Care of You." Another day it will be, "Blessed As- surance." Another day it will be "Standing Somewhere in the Shadows You’ll Find Jesus." When I sing and whistle some great song of the faith, it helps to keep my heart warm.

6. Do not be around negative people. Make it a habit to avoid fellowship with those who are critical and negative. There is no way my heart can stay warm if I am around those who talk about negatives, who criticize people, who spread bad things even if those things are true. No preacher

will walk with critics during the week and preach with a warm heart on the Lord’s Day

7. Dwell on the effort spent on nice things done for you. When somebody brings me a batch of cookies, I pause to think for awhile as to all the work that entered into their preparation. If someone prepares a meal for me, I try for a time to think of the effort expended in its preparation as well as in its planning. The pastor has many nice things done for him. It is so easy for him to lapse into a professionalism concerning his gratitude. The warmhearted pastor will pause to think of the effort expended by people who love him and are thoughtful of him.

8. Think for a little while before eating every meal. I never sit down to a meal without pausing to think of those little Egyptian children who begged me for a penny while I was touring Egypt. I see their little swollen stomachs. I see the expression on their faces as they beg for something to eat or a bit of money with which to buy food. I think of the starving people in Ethiopia, and yes, I also think of the poverty that I once knew as a child. No one should ever eat a meal without his heart being filled with praise and warmed before his God because of the goodness of God as manifested in His provisions for us.

9. Think of the blessing of being able to get up in the morning. When the alarm sounds and you rise for a new day of activity, pause for just a moment to think of those who will never get up again. Think of those in rest homes, in hospitals and in bedrooms in America and around the world who would give all that they own just to get out of bed one more time. When you arise in the morning, lift your heart in holy hosanna and praise to God and say, "Hallelujah, I’m able to get up!"

10. Praise God as you walk out the door every morning. Think of those whose world is four walls, whose sun is a 60-watt light- bulb, whose sky is a ceiling and whose horizon is a window. Think of those who will never walk neath the stars again. Think of those who will never see another sunrise or sunset. Think of those who will never hear another bird sing or watch the blooming of a rose. Think of those who will never again breathe the freshness of outdoor air. Then lift your heart in holy praises to God with the warmth of gratitude bubbling in your soul.

11. Praise God as you begin the day’s work. Think of the millions of unemployed who would love to have your job. Think of those whose poor health will never give them the privilege of another day’s work. Think of those who would give all that they possess for the privilege of being strong enough to work just one day Thank God for work to do, and thank God for strength with which to do it.

12. Think as your leaders stand before you. When those to whom God has given spiritual leadership stand before you, think of the load they carry, of the responsibilities they have and of the price they have paid. Love them. Spend a few moments thanking God for them and whisper a prayer for God to bless them and to encourage their hearts. This will aid in the developing of a warm heart.

13. Think of those who follow you. Think of what they mean to you. Think of how hard they worked. Think of times that they pray for you, encourage you and lift up your hands in the battle. Realize that as a pastor you are God’s gift to them, and they are God’s gift to you. Realize the sweetness and closeness of the tie that binds you as spiritual leader and spiritual followers. Let this awareness of what they mean to you create a stronger tie which will in turn aid you in having a warm heart.

14. Every day spend some time thinking of the fact that soon you will see Jesus face to face. There was a day when Dr. John Rice and I traveled together. Now I continue to travel. He is beholding the face of the Jesus Whom he preached. There was a day when my mother and I sat together in the same room and shared a mutual love. I continue to do the work that God has called me to do while Mother is beholding the face of the Christ she loved. There was a day when Brother Lester Roloff and I fellowshipped together and preached together and prayed together. I continue to preach and fellowship and praise and pray He now beholds the face of his blessed Saviour. There was a day when my heart would thrill as I prayed with Dr. Ford Porter. How sweet was his fervency! How close to Christ was his fellowship! How wonderful was his compan- ionship! Now I continue to pray and to serve. Dr. Porter beholds the face of the One with Whom he loved to talk and fellowship. Those who once walked with me now walk with God. Those who once beheld me now behold Him. Those who once fellowshipped with me on earth now fellowship with Him in Heaven. Soon I shall join their number. It is just a matter of a few days. That blessed thought warms my heart and propels me to preach through tears of joy and ecstasy, for soon I shall see Him face to face. I shall see Him as He is and behold Him Who made all good things possible.

15. Visit cemeteries and the gravesides of those whom you loved. I regularly go to a cemetery where many of our people are buried. I go from grave to grave and remember sweet experiences that we shared together. Soon the tears come-tears of joy because of victories we have known, tears of loneliness because I miss them, tears of praise because "there is a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we can see it afar; for the Father waits over the way to prepare us a dwelling place there." The pastor who wants a heart that is warm should often visit the graves of those whom he loved and with whom he served.

16. Savor the "now." How often do I hear people say, "I didn’t appreciate her until I lost her!" or "I didn’t appreciate him until he was gone!" I vowed years ago I would never have to say that. I did not wait until my mother was gone to appreciate her properly I did not wait until the years during which I traveled with Dr. John R. Rice were gone before I appreciated him. Through these years I have savored the present and realized what I have, not just what I used to have! Be aware. Stop while you are having fun and realize how much fun you are having. Stop while history is being made and realize that history is being made. Stop while God is blessing in mighty power and realize that God is blessing in mighty power. Do not wait until the history of this generation is written to know what happened! Know it now. It will warm your heart.

17. Read the Psalms. There are three books from which I read every day I read some of the Psalms every day, some of the Proverbs every day, and some of the book of Acts every day The Psalms give me love; the Proverbs give me wisdom; the Acts give me power. These three things top my prayer list-love, wisdom and power. If your heart is a bit cold, hear the Psalmist say, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." If the tears do not come easily, read, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." Live in the Psalms, and they will help you to have a warm heart when you come before your people to deliver the truth which God has given you for them.

18. Pray for your enemies. There is a unique warmth that comes only to the child of God who loves those that hate him, blesses those that curse him and prays for those who despitefully use him. There is a certain taste about forbearance, patience and love for enemies that nothing else can

give!

19. Think of good things to do for your enemies. Realize that people may not be all bad because they dislike you-- ~ Look upon them as being broken rather than being bad. I have a watch on my wrist. Sometimes the battery gets weak and it begins to lose time, or perhaps it will stop running altogether. I do not get mad at the watch; I realize that it is broken. I do what I can to fix it. When somebody does not like me, it may be that the battery is weak. I should not give him my hatred, vengeance, revenge or vindication. I should rather look upon him as being broken and not bad so that I may love and not hate him, do good to him and not ill! There is nothing that quite warms the heart like this, and once you have tasted the heavenly manna of forgiveness, you'll never again enjoy the bitter taste of revenge.

20. Look for people to help. "Look all around you, find some- one in need. Help somebody today Though it be little, a neighborly deed. Help somebody today Help somebody today Somebody along life's way Let sorrows be ended, the friendless befriended. Oh, help somebody today!"

Seven times a day I bow to my knees and lift my heart to God asking Him to let me cross the path of those who need my help and the path of those whom Jesus would help if He walked in my shoes. It is an amazing thing how the Holy Spirit can cause those to cross your path if you make yourself available to live for others. When I get in my car in the morning, I always pray and ask God to help me to know what route to take to church. I rarely ever take the same route. It is amazing how He directs me to those who have need of help. Recently I prayed that prayer before I left in the morning, asking the Holy Spirit to direct me as I chose the route to church. I took a new route. A few blocks down the road there was a lady trying to fix her car. She was alone and frightened. It was my privilege to push her car several miles to the place where she had purchased it. On another occasion, on a morning when it was -12°, I found a lady whose car was stalledd. We found the problem, and a few minutes got her on her way There are many people in need, and God wants to help them if He could only find somebody to be His hands, to be His feet, to be His tongue and to do the work that He would do if He were here on earth.

Every person who sits in a pew on the Lord's Day has a God- given right to have a man of God appear before him with God's message and with a heart that is warm and spiritual. If the pastor enters the pulpit with a warm heart and retains that warm heart while he preaches, it will be on purpose. It will not be spontaneous. He will not stumble into a warm heart. He will so live, so think and so love all week so that when he enters the pulpit, his heart is overflowing with the goodness of God and with a desire to speak of that goodness to his people and to impart that goodness to their lives!

2.05. Chapter 5 Choosing a Sermon

Chapter 5 Choosing a Sermon This may be the most difficult part of the preparation of a sermon. Especially is this true for the busy pastor who preaches to the same people week after week, month after month and year after year. It is no doubt much like the dilemma that faces the busy housewife who must prepare meals for the same people year after year. However, the preacher faces an even more difficult decision than does the housewife, for the housewife may prepare the same meal over and over again through the years, but the pastor must continually bring something fresh and new to his people, and yet at the same time he must use the new as a cloak and camouflage to cover the same old truths. This chapter is to deal with that all- important subject of how to choose a sermon.

1. Choose according to the needs of the people. The wise pastor will constantly be watching his people and examining them so he can intelligently give them the fulfillment of their needs. This also means that the wise pastor will stay in tune with God and walk with Him so that God can reveal to him the needs of his people in order for him to meet those needs from the pulpit.

2. A sermon is a tool. It is not an end in itself. It is a tool with which to fix something. For a number of years Evangelist Jim Lyons worked with me as an associate. When he left me to enter the field of evangelism, people asked him to appraise my preaching. He very kindly said that the key to Jack Hyles' preaching was that a sermon was not a sermon to Brother Hyles but rather it was a greasy wrench with which to fix something. I have never heard a better explanation of what preaching ought to be. A sermon is not a painting in an art gallery to be admired and complimented; nor is it a relic in a museum to be examined. It is, as Brother Lyons observed, like a greasy wrench! It is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end. The end is to fix something. This means that a good sermon should never be the goal of preaching; it should simply be a "greasy old wrench."

3. A sermon is a prescription. The good physician examines his patient, finds the problem and writes a prescription for its allevia- tion. This is why I think that Biblical, topical sermons grow healthier Christians than expository sermons unless the expository sermons come from different parts of the Bible as the filling of a prescription to correct the problems found in our people. When I go to the doctor, he doesn't examine me and then take me to the drug store, find the last medicine I took and give me the bottle right next to it and inform me that he is going bottle by bottle through the drug store! No physician will have healthy patients using this practice. No pastor will meet all the needs of his people by going verse- by-verse through the Biblical apothecary. It just may be that while the pastor is preaching through Leviticus, his people need some- thing from Nehemiah; or while he is in Daniel, his people need something from the Sermon on the Mount. Some of the driest preaching done in America is done by Bible expositors who mimic the theologian and his method used in the classroom in Bible colleges and seminaries. This is not to minimize the importance of the preacher sitting at the feet of a good theologian. A young preacher would do well to learn the truth about the Bible from a good Bible expositor in school, and he no doubt should

take the truths that he learns and preach them to his people, but he should not take the methods used by the expositor in the classroom with which to deliver these truths from behind the pulpit. The pastor is not teaching young theologians; he is trying to change the lives of carpenters, plumbers, electricians, professional men, factory workers, secretaries, etc. The theologian can teach him the medi- cine available in the apothecary; but what medicine he administers to his people and the way he administers it should not be copied from the theologian in Bible class.

One of the sad things about training for the Gospel ministry is that the ministry is perhaps the only profession that does not reproduce itself. One is taught to be a plumber by plumbers. One is taught to be an electrician by electricians. One is taught to be a carpenter by carpenters. One is taught to be a doctor by doctors. One is taught to be a beautician by beauticians, and yet one is taught to be a preacher by teachers. Preachers should train preachers in the methods of preaching! I have no scruples with teachers teaching truths to young preachers. I do take issue with those who would make light of old-fashioned preaching while admonishing the young ministerial student to use the methods of the theologian when he goes to his pulpit. The young preacher should admire the Bible teacher, but he should emulate successful preachers and pastors. If he wants to build a church, he should emulate successful church-builders. If he wants to preach great revival campaigns, he should emulate great evangelists.

4. The pastor must know the apothecary; that is, the drug store. If he searches for the needs of his people and doesn't know the Bible well enough to meet those needs, he will not know the joy of pastoring mature Christians. The most important thing about a preacher knowing the Bible is that he knows where to find the particular prescription that will meet the needs of his congregation. Whatever need he sees in the hearts and lives of his people should cause him to rush to the Word of God to find exactly the medicine for the spiritual healing of those whom he leads.

5. The pastor must study his people in order to find their needs. This means that the wise pastor must know the Book and know the people. Not to know the people will prevent him from knowing what to preach. Not knowing the Book will prevent him from being able to find the spiritual medicine with which to satisfy the needs that he has found in the lives of his people. Now in the finding of the people's needs the pastor could do the following: a. The pastor should diagnose the people's needs on Sunday night. After the Sunday evening service and after I have coun- seled with those who have needed to see me following the service, I retreat to my study and relive the day I feel that I can know the needs of my people right after having been with them better than I can a few days later. Usually before I leave the study on Sunday night I know the general directions that I will take in my preaching the following Sunday, so the preaching on Sunday is not only a time of administering the proper medicine but it is also a time of diagnosing so that the wise pastor can write the proper prescription for the following Sunday and, for that matter, the following Wednesday night. b. The pastor should counsel his people. There are three words in the Bible used for what we call the office of pastor: (1)pastor, (2) bishop, and (3) elder. As the pastor, or shepherd, the preacher is supposed to protect, nourish and care for the sheep. As the bishop he is the overseer of all of the work. He is not the dictator, but he is the overseer. Then as elder, he is the experi- enced one who can counsel his people properly concerning the needs and decisions of their lives. These counseling sessions can be wonderful opportunities for the pastor to diagnose the needs of his congregation. This wise pastor should watch for trends or even epidemics of some spiritual disease or deficiency. I average about 145 people a week who come to my study for

counseling of some kind. Some of these come for just a few minutes and some come for lengthy periods. If, over the period of a week's time, several people come with the same problem or need, I feel that this could represent some kind of trend in the congregation. It may be that I would preach along that line. If 15 out of 150 people were to have the same problem, I would feel that proba- bly hundreds of my people have that problem who did not seek counseling, so I would go to the pulpit for the filling of a prescription from Bible truth.

It is amazing how accurate polls can be. They say that 1500 people chosen carefully from across America can rather accu- rately reveal public opinion about a matter. This is no doubt true in a church.

It is a wonderful and an amazing thing how God leads His man when counseling. Quite often I give advice and I know that it is God Who is leading me. To be frank, I am startled as Re reveals some great truth to me for the strengthening of someone over whom God has made me spiritual overseer. When such truth is revealed, I immediately make a note of it. When the person with whom I am counseling has left, I rush to my desk and outline the advice that God has just given me for them. I then prepare a sermon with that material, for the time will come no doubt when all of my people will need what I just gave to one of my people.

Preacher, don't trust your memory! As soon as the wisdom is given to you from God, write it down, even while the counsel- ing session is in progress, and by all means rush to your desk as soon as the session has ended and capture the wisdom and truths that God has given you in order that you may share it with your people when the need arises. c. The pastor should check his own feelings. He may have a deficiency himself. If the pastor has a deficiency, no doubt many of the people would have the same one. For example, suppose that a recession comes. Numbers of the people lose their jobs. This means that the church offerings are down. The pastor becomes concerned about these offerings. If he is concerned about his needs during the recession, how much more will the people who are now unemployed be concerned about their needs! Perhaps the pastor should take his own feelings as repre- sentative ones and preach to the people Php 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," and Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The pastor is human too. He has his fears and doubts. I often say that preaching is one doubter preaching to another group of doubters trying to convince both preacher and hearer to believe. This, of course, is an oversimplification, but the fact remains that the pastor is human and he has his doubts, weaknesses, trials, testings, problems, burdens and heartaches. When they come, it is probable that his people have had them for some time already The pastor then may administer to himself and his congregation the medicine needed from the Word of God that will heal his doubts and fears and the doubts and fears of those who look to him for spiritual leadership. d. The pastor should watch his people as he preaches. The way they respond to certain truths give him an idea of their needs. Then he can flee to the apothecary of the Word of God to find the right medicine that will heal them. e. In a smaller church, the pastor should visit his people regularly This visit is not primarily a goodwill ambassage or a pastoral responsibility; but it is a splendid way to find the needs of the people. When I was a young pastor pastoring smaller churches one of the first things I did upon assuming a pastorate was to visit in the home of each family in order to get to know them better. This is just another way to diagnose the patient in order that you may flee to the Bible apothecary for the proper medicine for his cure. f. The pastor should

make a list of all the potential needs of the people. Years ago I sat down and listed all the subjects that I felt my people needed. All of these fell under twenty general topics. Every sermon that I preach is just one of these topics cloaked in a different Scripture with different illustrations and different manners of presentation in order that I may keep my people healthy while at the same time being fresh to them. g. The pastor should schedule times to think about his people and their needs. While thinking about his people, the pastor should ask God to reveal to him how to meet these needs. The pastor who thinks about his people and prays for his people will learn to love his people. The pastor who loves his people will beyond a doubt find the fulfillment of their needs in the Word of God. So far we have stressed the importance of knowing two things: the patient and the medicine. If we know the patient as we should know him, we will properly diagnose his case. If we know the medicine, that is the Word of God, as we should know it, then we will know where to find the answer for the needs found in the diagnosis.

6. Never preach to individuals. In 1960 on a Sunday night I preached to an individual. The next Wednesday night I asked my people to forgive me, and from that day until this I have never used my pulpit as a whipping post or a place to single out individuals or a place of revenge or vengeance. If I am preaching on a certain subject and an individual comes to my mind, I immediately jump over that thought to the next one because I do not want to be guilty of using the pulpit with which to carry on a private feud or as a place to retaliate. The wise preacher will never attack someone’s sin; he will attack sin but will never attack the individual. The pulpit should be a place of action, not a place of reaction! It should be a place of defense of the truth, but not a place of defense of self.

7. The sermon should not be for the specific purpose of enter- taming. That is, unless the pastor feels that the patient needs some entertainment for his spiritual health. I often say when I stand to preach in different pulpits across the country, "I have not come to entertain, though I do think we will laugh some. I have not come primarily to instruct, though I think we will learn something. I have not come to inspire, though I think we will be inspired some. I have come in order that God may change our lives!" It is certainly not a sin to laugh in church, and laughter is certainly an important part of the Christian’s needs, but entertainment should not be the main purpose of preaching.

8. The pastor should keep a list of sermons, ideas and outlines with which to stock the apothecary. I have, at the present time, over 100 sermons already outlined any of which I could preach next Sunday Most of these will not be preached for months or years to come, and many of them will never be preached. They just line the shelves of my spiritual apothecary to remain available in case they are needed. There are numbers of ways that such sermons, topics, outlines and ideas can be found. a. Read the Bible looking for sermon ideas. This reading is not in preparation for next Sunday’s sermon; it is the finding of ideas that can be placed on the shelf of the apothecary awaiting the time when a prescription is written for its administering. Look for verses that outline themselves such as 2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalms 1:1-3; and John 5:24; John 15:7; John 14:12; John 3:18; John 1:14, etc. Then read the Bible looking for statements and verses that lead to good sermon ideas. Some of my most usable and useful sermons have been found in this manner. Such sermons as, "There is No Discharge from This War," "At Even my Wife Died, and in the Morning I Did as I was Commanded," and "I Sat Where They Sat," have originated from this source of Bible reading. Keep these passages on the shelf of your drug store right beside those that outline themselves and have them ready in case one of them can fill a need of the

congregation. b. Read CRUDEN’S CONCORDANCE for Scriptural phrases that can be added to those aforementioned. c. Listen to sermons. One of the best sources for getting sermon ideas is that of listening to other men of God preach. When I hear a good sermon, I usually find three or four sermons within that sermon. When a man of God is listening in the Spirit to a man of God who is preaching in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit Who knows the dilemma of the busy pastor can reveal to him many ideas that can be placed on the shelf of the apothecary and can be used when the need arises. As the pastor searches for those ideas which can in the present and the future add to the spiritual health of his people by means of reading the Bible for verses that outline themselves, reading the Bible for phrases that are "preachy," listening to sermons of Spirit-filled men, reading sermons of Spirit-filled men, search- ing for the sermon titles in books of sermons in libraries and bookstores, reading CRUDEN’S CONCORDANCE, and most of all, walking with God, he is lining the shelves of his medicine room with prescriptions that may or may not be needed, but there is certainly a peace that comes to both pastor and people by knowing that they are there!

9. The pastor should beg God to give him spiritual guidance as he chooses the spiritual medicine from the Word of God for his people’s needs. This is the most important of all methods of choosing sermons. Once the shelf is lined with great truths, Bible lessons, etc., the pastor must plead with God to let him know which is needed by his people at a given time. It is far better for a pastor to plead with God to lead him to know which of the truths he already knows that he should use than it is for him to plead with God for Him to give him a truth when it is 11:00 on Saturday night and the service is only twelve hours away!

10. The pastor should never use or consider such phrases as, "That will preach!" but rather, "That will help!"

11. When the pastor sees the need, he may rest assured that the filling of that need is the will of God. When a child is lost, it is the will of God to try to find him. When I saw a lady fall at the airport one day, I knew it was the will of God for me to help her up. When I saw a wreck take place in front of my eyes one day, I knew it was my job to rush to the rescue of those who were injured. When a Spirit- filled pastor has lived in the Word of God in order to acquaint himself with its every cure and has prayerfully examined his people in order to diagnose them for their needs, and when he has bathed both of these in prayer, he is then able to go to the pulpit knowing that he is going to meet the particular needs of his people through his message and in so doing he can feel that he has chosen the right sermon.

2.06. Chapter 6 The Pastor Holding His Own Attention

Chapter 6 The Pastor Holding His Own Attention

1. The pastor must completely lose himself in the truth he is preaching. One of the most important things for any Christian is to lose himself. The best sermons that are preached are those in which the preacher loses himself in the truth that he is delivering. Hence, it becomes vital for the pastor to capture his own attention. As is. mentioned elsewhere in this manuscript, the pastor must capture himself; the truth must hold him hostage. He should not be aware of how well he is preaching, how he looks, the opinions that others hold of him, etc. There are times that he should not even know where he is or be conscious that he exists. He is totally lost, not in the delivering of a sermon, but in the delivering of his soul!

2. He must keep his mind on one thing and one thing only He has people who need him, and he has a truth that will alleviate their needs. He has people who are weak, and he has a truth that is strengthening. He has people who have fallen, and he has a truth that will lift them. He has people that are sad, and he has a truth that will cheer them. He has people who are bereaved, and he has a truth that will comfort them. His total mental occupation should be on the one thing of administering to his people the thing that will satisfy their needs and their hungers.

3. He must not let anything or anybody steal the control of his mind or make him to follow their thinking. It is important that the pastor who has found the message for the hour not allow his mind to be controlled by anything else until that message is preached! He must not allow external stimuli to capture his thinking and take it off of the delivery of his soul through the truth that God has given him with which to meet the needs of his people.

4. The pastor should do his heavy praying earlier and not right before the service. Even such a thing as feeling his need of power can get his mind off of the truth he is about to deliver. Please do not misunderstand me. I believe that every man of God should spend seasons with God. He should walk with God. He should often pray throughout the night, and the rising of the sun should find his cheeks stained with tears. I do, however, believe that the best time for such praying is before and during the preparation of a message. When one has found the message and is waiting to deliver it, he should not be thinking about power for himself but rather meeting the needs of others. Before the message his mind should be totally on his people and their needs.

5. The pastor should go to church early and relaxed. His sole desire should be to feed his people what they need for their spiritual gn:’th and health. He may go to his study early and think of his people as they are now preparing to come to church- they are bathing, dressing, getting in their cars and driving. They are coming to hear God’s man give them what they need. In a relaxed atmosphere he must think of them and love them with his mind always fixed on the truth that God has given him for his people for that day

6. He should not allow any friction to exist at home. It is now Sunday morning. Nothing must take his mind off of the surgery he is about to perform. If someone at home starts dealing with

something negative, he should deftly avoid it. If there is ever a time when a preacher should agree with his adversary, it is on Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon before he ministers to his people and their needs.

7. The pastor should not be with anyone over five minutes at a time on Sunday morning. A lengthy conversation can be used to capture the mind of God's man and to get it off of the truth that God has given him to deliver. This does not mean that the pastor should be aloof or sharp; it simply means that he should guard himself to see that he controls his mind before preaching. There is nothing the Devil would rather do than get the pastor's mind off the truth. The Devil does not want God's people to be healthy; he wants to dilute the medicine, to pervert the diagnosis and to prevent the cure. He often uses good things as substitutes for the best in achieving his goal.

8. The wise pastor will not mingle with the crowd for any length of time before preaching. Negatives may be mentioned that could discourage him. Heavy thoughts could be used as a cloud to cover the truth that he must deliver to those whom God has made him the under-shepherd.

9. He should not think or talk business matters within two hours of preaching. The pastor is unwise who has committee meetings or deacons' meetings before services. Dealing with business matters could be used of the Devil to divide the mind of the pastor.

10. He should not counsel before the service. I counsel after every service, but never before a service. This could divert my attention from what God wants me to say and give to my people. This is another way that my mind can be captured and directed away from the truth of the hour.

11. He should not read notes or mail before the service. The worst of these could destroy his spirit, and the best of these could capture his mind. Every Sunday I get dozens of notes and letters, but I never read one before the service. I do not want a burden, a problem, a dissension or a complaint to capture my mind and take it away from the message that I am to deliver from God to my people.

12. He should not read notes placed on the platform or pulpit. At First Baptist Church of Hammond the announcements are placed on the pulpit. When I walk in the first thing I do is pick up the announcements, but if there is a letter or note included, I never read it. Such a note could be of a critical nature and it could capture the mind of the preacher, causing his people to go unfed.

13. The pastor should not check the Sunday school attendance before the service unless he knows for a fact that it is a good one. If the attendance is noticeably down, it could bring the pastor noticeably down and could divide his mind as he takes God's message from God's Word to God's people.

14. The pastor should not listen to anything negative on Sunday morning or within two hours of the Sunday evening service. Sunday is no time for the solving of petty problems or for listening to petty complaints. It is a time for God's man to be absorbed in his people and their needs and in the filling of their needs as God has directed him. No surgeon should go to the operating room with more dedication. No Supreme Court justice should go to his bench with more dedication. This is the highest hour in the life of a human being, when the living God has given to mortal man a message for His people. No responsibility is its equal. No burden carries its weight. No duty deserves more diligence and no heart deserves more devotion than that day chosen by God when that man chosen by God brings that message chosen by God to God's people in order to meet

their needs.

15. The pastor should not have a schedule that includes late preparation of his sermons. The pressure could be used by Satan. He should not feel that he has a deadline to meet.

16. The pastor should not wear clothing that would divert his attention. For example, I never wear a new suit on a Sunday morning or a Sunday night. If I have a new suit, I always wear it the first time to a preaching engagement out of town or where the people will not know it is new and where I will not be self- conscious. I do not wear a new pair of shoes to my own pulpit first. I wear them likewise while speaking out of town so that the people will not know they are new and so that I will not be self-conscious. I must not have my mind on how I look or upon a garment that I am wearing. I must be totally lost in delivering the message from God to His people.

17. The pastor should not develop any ritual on Sunday that depends on others. His Sunday praying should be alone. I know a pastor whose entire day was ruined because he had a Sunday morning prayer meeting with his laymen and very few showed up. He was so discouraged that he did not deliver the message that God had given him, but rather chose the 11:00 hour as a time to use the pulpit for a whipping post, and the hungry sheep went unfed!

18. The pastor should not eat before preaching. On occasion I have eaten, and on such occasions, I have been aware that I was too full and my mind was taken from my message somewhat because of my discomfort.

19. Have self-control rituals before preaching. For example, I look at my father's picture and ask God to help me to preach with the same fervor that I wanted my pastor to have the one time that my father ever sat by my side in church. Before I preach I think of my mother and realize that she is watching and listening as I deliver God's message. I think of my two little sisters in Heaven who died before I was born and make myself aware that they are cheering me as I preach, but these are rituals that are self-controlled and that do not depend upon others who could disappoint me by their ineffec- tiveness or laxity and thereby capture my mind from God's mes- sage.

20. I choose a last thought before walking in the pulpit. As I walk in the door of the auditorium at every service I think of one thought-that this could be my last sermon. I always ask God to help me preach as I would preach if I knew it were!

21. I choose a thought that occupies my mind briefly right before I stand to preach. Just before I walk to the pulpit to begin my message there is a thought that always I place before my mind. I will not share that thought-it is too sacred and too personal, but it propels me to do my best as I preach.

22. The preacher should remember before preaching how badly he wanted to preach before he ever got the opportunity. He should remind himself that this is that to which he looked, for which he longed and of which he dreamed. Now he is God's man, preaching to God's people God's message from God's Word in God's power.

23. The preacher should remember that someday it will end. At this writing I have preached over 42,500 sermons. One day I will preach my last. I am approaching my 59th birthday By the time this manuscript is published I will be less than a year from my sixties. I do not know how many more times this body will carry me to the pulpit. I must realize every time that it does, it could be my last

time and that someday, probably soon, it will end.

24. The pastor should not judge the song service while it is in progress. This too can capture his mind and divert it from the message he is about to deliver. He should not allow himself to critique the song leader or the singing. He should not get up and try to improve the song service. Receive its blessings. Do not indulge in criticism on an ineffective song leader, or an ineffective song service could be used to capture the mind of the preacher. In principle he would be right, but he would not be prepared to stand in the place of Christ Himself and deliver the message that Christ would preach were He present.

25. The wise pastor will not choose a song leader who preaches sermons or gives devotionals between stanzas of the songs. Such palaver could steal a pastor's mind from God's message for the hour and capture his thoughts. If such a song leader is already employed, the pastor should not allow himself to think negative thoughts about him while he is rambling. Pastor, keep your mind on your sermon. Think of the needs of your people. Do not let your mind be captured.

26. The pastor should not appraise himself while he is preach- ing. It matters not how good the sermon is. It matters not how well the pastor is doing. All that matters is that there are needy people. The pastor knows their need and has the medicine that can heal them. If the doctor makes a grammatical mistake while he is administering the medicine, it will not harm the patient. It would be better if the grammatical mistake were not made, but the important thing is the patient and the cure.

27. The pastor should make his own announcements in the service. Once again he is controlling his own mind and his own thoughts. If someone else makes several lengthy announcements, the pastor's mind could follow him and detour from the mental path that God has chosen for him to travel that day.

28. The pastor should not give public responsibility in the service to others who would capture his mind from the truth he is about to deliver and from the people to whom he is about to deliver it. A godly associate may read the Scripture, another godly co- laborer can lead the prayer; but this should not be a time for fellow- workers to rise and shine to tell their favorite little joke or preach their favorite little sermonette.

29. The pastor should not try to create a spirit in the service. His mind should not be on the spirit of the service. His mind should be on his people and the spiritual medicine he is about to admin- ister to them. That will take care of the spirit of the service. Sometimes God's men are so busy in the early part of the services trying to create a spirit that they completely lose concentration. Let God create the spirit. The preacher should carry the burden and deliver the message given by God Almighty to His people through His messenger.

30. The preacher should not try to salvage a service. For that matter, he should not even be aware that it needs salvaging. He can destroy the purpose for the entire service by analyzing it, salvaging it, measuring it and weighing it. The important thing about the service is the sermon. If the preacher is alive, the service will come alive. If the preacher is spiritual, the service will become spiritual. If the preacher is totally lost in his ministry of representing his Saviour, the people will soon become lost in the spirit.

I think it is unwise to have testimonies before a sermon. I love testimonies, but the best time to have them is after the sermon. Even a testimony can capture the people's minds and capture the preacher's mind so that he will not control his own destiny and that of the service. This is not to minimize testimonies; they are very important and vital, but at preaching time they can become a competition with the message of the hour and with the respon- sibility of the messenger.

31. The preacher should have mental pictures of Bible events and Bible stories. This is one of the best ways to become lost in a sermon. For example, I have in my own mind a file of images of every story I know in the Bible. I can tell you what the prodigal son's house looked like. I can tell you how big his father was and what his brother looked like. I can tell you what Jacob looked like. I can describe Esau to you. I can tell you what Bethel was like. I can describe Mt. Moriah to you, and I can tell you the features of Elijah. I have in my mind a mental picture of Mary and Joseph and of every other Bible character and of every Bible location. Such a mental file will help the pastor lose himself in his message, for he becomes actually a participant in the Bible story and a witness of all that is happening. He is then not just relating a story he has heard, but he is telling a story that he has seen.

32. The pastor should have a list of things that can get his own attention back. Sometimes in a service things happen that compete for the pastor's attention. Perhaps someone is moving, a baby is crying, or some other circumstance has entered the service. The pastor should know and have a list of those things that affect him enough to recapture him for his sermon. I have at least a dozen things that always warm my heart. It matters not where I am or who is present or what the circumstances are. To think of them is to inspire me. When I feel in a sermon that something has stolen me from my message, I use one of these things with which to recapture myself so that it can deliver me again to my mission of the hour.

33. The pastor should turn away from interruptions if they are being solved. For example, if a crying baby is being taken from the service, a pastor should look to the other side of the auditorium and preach. The interruption will soon be over. He should not allow himself to witness it while it is in progress.

34. He should correct those interruptions that appear to be there to stay. For example, if there is a crying baby in the service whose mother is making no effort to remove him, it may hurt the service more to allow the child to stay in the auditorium than courteously to ask the mother to take the baby to the nursery or to the hallway It is obvious that this problem is not temporary but that it is going to continue to disturb the service. The best thing for the pastor to do is face the problem, correct it and then use one of the aforementioned suggestions of things that always capture his atten- tion to get his mind back on God's message for the hour.

35. The pastor should fall in love with his people. There are many ways this can be done, but one of them is to watch them during the service on the Lord's day Look at the young people and realize the temptations that they face. Look at the older people and realize the anxieties that confront them daily Look at the middle- aged people and realize the burdens and problems of life that are theirs. Spend some time on the platform loving your people. This will make you even more desirous to be to them what they need you to be and to give them what God has chosen for them to receive through His servant.

36. The pastor should decide whether or not the song being sung or the special being delivered will help him or hinder him in the delivering of his message and his soul. For example, there may be a song that is sung that is a bit peppier than the pastor needs to feel. Maybe a song has a beat to it that would not enhance the pastor's spirit that he needs to have as he preaches God's message. (I am not saying that the song would be one that is wrong to use, for this should never be done!) It may be a good song that is not exactly appropriate for the mental condition that the pastor needs to pursue.

37. The pastor should never preach to individuals. The very thought of an individual to whom he is preaching and/or scolding could steal his mind and capture it from the truth his people need to hear from him.

38. The pastor should never try to impress when he preaches. The purpose is not to impress; the purpose is to heal and to administer the cure.

Many years ago as a young man in my twenties I was asked to share the platform with Dr. John Rice, Dr. Bill Rice, Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. and Dt R. G. Lee in a Sword Conference in Lake Louise, Georgia, near Toccoa. It was the first time that I had ever been asked to appear on a program with such men. To be quite frank, I felt totally unqualified and incapable. The first time that I spoke at a Sword of the Lord Conference was following Dr. R. G. Lee's famous sermon, "Payday Someday" I went out beside the lake and wept uncontrollably feeling that I was incapable of filling such a place and pursuing such a mission. Suddenly it dawned on me that if God had me there, He had something for me to say, and if God had me there in addition to R. G. Lee, there was at least something that I could give the people that R. G. Lee did not have for them. He can give them many things; I perhaps could only give one, but I could make my one contribution. This I did, and through these years I have realized that God has a purpose for each of us. It is not ourjob to impress, and oftentimes our spirit of inferiority is caused by the fact that we feel helpless to impress.

39. The pastor should realize it is life or death! He is standing between the living and the dead as did Aaron of old. He is standing between Heaven and Hell. He is standing at the gates of eternity. Nothing is as important as that!

40. The pastor should preach for a certain result. That result was decided in the early part of this manuscript when he searched to find the needs of his people, and then he searched the apothecary of the Word of God to find the prescription that would heal them.

If the pastor is to be successful in his mission, he must hold his own attention, and his entire focus on the day of his mission should be on that thing that God has called him to do. He is God's man with God's message from God's Word preaching to God's people in the power of God's Spirit, delivering to the people the very message that he feels that Jesus Himself would deliver were He standing before that very congregation!

2.07. Chapter 7 The Introduction

Chapter 7 The Introduction The purpose of the introduction is, of course, to introduce. It is to introduce two things to the congregation: (1) Yourself, and (2) Your message. The introduction is not just the first part of the sermon. It is not simply to get the attention of the audience. It is to say to the audience, "Ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce my message to you, and may I introduce myself to you.

Because of this, it should be honest and accurate. It should be in keeping with the sermon content, and it should be in keeping with what the speaker is. It should not be beyond the speaker's ability to perpetuate. It should be simply a sampling of the speaker and of the message. It should project the real you and the real sermon to the people. It should be a specimen taken from the sermon to say to the people, "This is what it is going to be like," and it should be a sampling taken from the speaker saying to the people, "This is what the speaker is going to be like."

First, let us project the specimen of the sermon as we say to the people, "May I introduce you to the sermon.

1. The introduction should be an accurate signpost pointing to the sermon.

2. The introduction should not be a sermon or an outline.

3. The introduction should create a hunger for the rest of the message. For example, I preached a sermon on ingratitude. The introduction was as follows: "A few years ago a poll was taken in America to see which sin does the most harm. To the surprise of many, the sin chosen was the sin of ingratitude."

Today I was in a health food store. As I walked in I saw a little bowl of soy beans. Beside the bowl was a little sign which said, "Take a free sample." I did so, and in less than 60 seconds, I bought a package of soy beans. This is exactly what a sermon introduction should do. It should say, "Here, take a sample of the message and let it whet your appetite for more."

4. The introduction could be a question that needs an answer.

5. The introduction could be a statement that needs a comple- tion. For example, in my sermon on Proverbs 3:6, I begin with the following, "I, like every other sincere pastor, have sought the answers to the oppressions and frustrations of our fundamental people. I, like every other sincere pastor, have sought the answers to the heartbreaks, breakdowns and unhappiness of our fundamen- tal people. I, like every other sincere pastor; have sought the answer to the disappointments with life and the disillusionments of our fundamental people. I have searched and searched for these an- swers. I think I have found some. One is found in our text." In this case the introduction leaves a question unanswered.

6. The introduction could create curiosity as to where the speaker is going. In my sermon, "The Flesh That No One Knows About," I start by saying, "The Devil is after you He wants to ruin your

life with unrighteousness, so he attacks your flesh in an attempt to get you to do bad, but you are a good Christian. The flesh is repulsive to you, and the Devil fails, but he isn't finished in his effort to get you in the flesh. He knows that there is other flesh. So, having failed to get you to do unrighteousness in the flesh, he gets you to do righteousness in the flesh. Having failed in his attempt to get you to do bad in the flesh, he leads you to do good in the flesh." This is used to create curiosity as to where the sermon is going.

7. in the introduction, there should be a creation of intrigue. For example, I have a sermon that was Dr. Rice's favorite of all the ones that I preached. When I preach it, I always mention the fact that this was Dr. Rice's favorite. I often introduce the sermon by saying, "The pastor requested this one." Still another statement used is, "The sermon that I am preaching tonight is not often used," or I might say, "I am preaching tonight the first sermon I ever preached," or "I am preaching tonight the first sermon that I ever preached here." Such statements generate intrigue.

8. The introduction should lead the people to feel that the sermon has the answer to an individual need. Crisis-oriented preaching can only take a church so far. Preaching will soon become unfruitful if it is not geared to meet the needs of the people. We should preach prophecy, but preaching all prophetic sermons will dry up the church. The preacher who preaches on social issues will someday run out of social issues and will dry up the church. Preaching must be geared to the needs of the people, and the introduction should lead the people to feel that the sermon has an answer to an individual need.

9. The title of the sermon should not be more spectacular than the sermon. Spectacular titles may get a person to come once or twice or maybe a few times, but crowds grown by the advertising of spectacular titles will scatter when all the spectacular titles have been used. The pastor does not realize it, but he is training his people to come only when there is something spectacular in his title. It also requires him to make the content of the sermon just as spectacular as the title in order to be honest.

10. The introduction should not be more spectacular than the sermon. This will cause the sermon to climax too soon. To be quite frank, it borders on dishonesty if he introduces a sermon to be something that it will not be.

11. The introduction should get the people desirous for the preacher to continue. In my sermon, "So Great Salvation," I begin as follows: " 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' Now the usual interpretation of this passage is that if one neglects being saved, he will not escape the wrath and judgment of God. I do not believe that this does an injustice to the Scripture, but it is not the primary teaching of Hebrews 2:3." I hope that this introduction creates a desire in the minds of the audience for me to continue.

12. The introduction should be the most articulate part of the sermon. It should not be joke-telling time unless the sermon is very funny If the sermon is funny, then the introduction which is to be a specimen taken from the sermon, should also be funny. In my sermon, "A Wounded Spirit," I have as my goal the lifting of the spirits of those in the congregation, so I feel it is only proper for the introduction to be a spirit-lifting one.

13. The introduction should not start on a mountaintop unless the sermon is a mountaintop sermon. For example, in my sermon "A Name that is Above Every Name" I preach an entire

message just about the person of Jesus. It is in every way a sermon meant to be a mountaintop experience. So, to be honest, the introduction or specimen must be mountaintop.

14. The introduction should get the attention of the preacher. Every sermon introduction should be examined carefully to be sure that the preacher will get his own attention in his introduction.

15. The introduction should make it obvious that the preacher is preaching to himself also. Often in an introduction I will say, "I am not here tonight primarily to entertain you. I am not here tonight primarily to instruct you, nor am I here tonight primarily to inspire you Let me make it plain before I start. I am here that by the grace of God, God may use this message to change your life and mine." Notice, I am identifying myself with the audience. I am not preaching down to them, but I am preaching out to them and to myself.

16. The introduction should not include jokes that make others an object. If a joke is used in which someone becomes its object, it should be the speaker himself who is the object of his joke.

Sometimes a joke on yourself is a wholesome thing if it is done in good taste. For example, I often tell the following on myself: "I got up as usual one morning, got in the car, drove to work. On the way to work I made my usual stop at the White Hen Pantry; a little drive-in grocery store, to get my morning paper. It was a cold winter morning; in fact, it was below zero outside. When I got back into the car after getting my paper, I could not get it started. I tried and tried, but the starter would not even turn over or make a sound. I got out of the car and did the thing that all of us do in an effort to repair the problem-I opened the hood and looked at the engine. In fact, I even looked at it twice, but it still would not run. After several minutes of futility, I called the service station where I trade and asked them to come and get my car started. They told me it would be within an hour. I insisted that I could not wait that long and reminded them of my long years of being a customer. Finally, I persuaded them to come immediately Within ten minutes he was there, got in the car and within just a few seconds he had it started. In fact, he didn't even open the hood. I was amazed at his brilliance. As he got out of the car said, 'My, you are a wonderful mechanic. What was wrong?' With not a smile on his face, with his eyes pointed away from me he said, 'I put the stick in park.' Oh, brother, was I ever embarrassed!"

I often tell in my introductory remarks about the night when Dr. John R. Rice and I were in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. The church met in a school building. The entrance to the building was on the side, so when you entered, half the congregation could see you and the other half was in front of you to your right. This Monday night found me a little late. My plane had had some problems and I got to the church just as the song service had ended and Dr. Rice was beginning to speak. It was a cool night, around 400, and it was drizzling rain. I had no coat or hat, and as I approached the door the usher said, "I'm sorry, mister, but you can't come in!" I asked, "Why?" He replied, "Because the preaching has already started and nobody goes in once the preaching has started." I said, "Look, mister, it's drizzling rain out here, and it is cold!" He said, "That doesn't matter! You can't come in!" I said, "What do you mean, I can't come in?" He said, "I'll tell you again, sir. Nobody enters once the sermon has started!" I said, "Let me tell you who I am." He said, "I don't care who you are. You're not coming in! The rule is that no one enters after the speaker has started speaking, and I'm going to enforce the rule." I looked at him and said rather tersely, "That's a dumb rule." He said, "Sir; I agree with you. I don't like the rule either. We haven't had it very long. Our pastor got it in Hammond, Indiana, where he attended a Pastors' School."

Oh, brother, was I ever embarrassed! For 45 minutes I stood out in drizzling rain on a cool night without a coat and hat. When Dr. Rice heard about it, he laughed and said, "If I had known that, I would have preached for three hours!" I replied, "I thought you did!"

17. The introduction should convince the people that you are on the same level with them. If the speaker feels a little beneath the audience, he could perhaps quote a poem or briefly give a little philosophical thought. If the speaker gets the idea that the people feel he is a little above them, he could say something that would be perhaps a little revelation of his humanity and of the fact that he too is flesh and a common person. I often use the following, especially if people think lam somebody special just because I pastor a larger church: "Perhaps some of you tonight have heard about the First Baptist Church of Hammond and Hyles-Anderson College. You wanted to see what this fellow Hyles looks like. You got here early and focused your eyes on the door to watch him as he walked in. In Hyles walked. You looked to your wife and said, 'There is the custodian-now when does this fellow Hyles come in?'

I was down in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, several years ago. A little lady about 35 years of age came to me and asked, "Are you the real Jack Hyles?" I said, "I'm the only one I know." She said, "I've heard about you all my life, but you just don't look like what I thought you would look like." I smiled and said, "You're not very pretty either."

Above all, be honest. The introduction is to introduce first, the sermon, and second, yourself. The introduction should say, "Good evening, folks. Let me introduce you to my sermon and let me introduce you to myself. Here is a specimen or a sampling of what I am going to be like and what my message is going to say I hope it will make you want to listen."

Now that we have introduced the sermon, let us spend a few moments discussing the speaker introducing himself. Bear in mind that this is a specimen of what he is like and of what he is. It should be an honest presentation so the people will be able to see and hear a sample of what is to come. Do not forget-this should be the real you, just like the introduction introduced them to the real sermon.

1. Dress like the real you. Dress properly to suit the occasion. Let your dress reflect yourself, a person of propriety

2. Walk like the real you. A preacher should walk like himself. He should walk on the platform like he walks anywhere else. It should not be some kind of a pious prance, but a simple, earnest walk. Every week I go to the auditorium when it is empty and practice my walk from the door to my seat and from my seat to the pulpit. I do not practice some strange new walk but just my usual walk so that when the people see me walking in they will see the real Jack Hyles walking.

3. Sit like the real you. Sit like a man with dignity and propriety, not with legs straight and together like a woman in a dress, not slouched with a pronounced crossing of the legs, but sit like a man. Sit up straight with both feet on the floor and some space between the knees, or with one leg slightly crossed over the other.

4. Be courteous like you. Before the sermon do not talk to others on the platform. Participate enthusiastically in the singing. Look at others and listen to them when they speak. Be ethical with other speakers concerning time, etc.

5. Speak like you. The introduction, as well as the rest of the sermon, should not be another speaking voice that you borrowed for the occasion. It should be your voice-the same voice and same type of speaking that someone would hear if they were with you for some time. When you get loud, get loud like you would if you were excited somewhere else. Be yourself Speak sincerely and speak earnestly

6. The introduction should not be a time of sarcasm. Of course, there might be an occasional exception to this rule. For example, sarcasm would not be in bad taste if it were done lovingly by a guest speaker who had often spoken at the church and was a very warm and close friend of the pastor; and mild sarcasm would not be in bad taste if used by a pastor who had served in the church for many years and had established his love for his people. Even then, care must be taken as to the objects of the sarcasm. There are some people who simply cannot absorb someone being sarcastic to them.

7. If a preacher is a visiting speaker, he should take time in his introductory remarks to compliment the church, the pastor, the city, the buildings, the area, the music, etc. This should not be done with humor, but with a sincere heart and a sincere spirit. Before the sermon, the speaker should spend some time in medita- tion thinking of his love for the pastor and his admiration for the church so that his comments will be sincere ones. The common man has a way of denoting sincerity, and it is very difficult to fool him.

8. Do not try to impress or startle. The introduction is not a time to win friends and influence people; it is a time to get the people to know the real you. It is a "get acquainted" time when you meet them and they meet you. If the introduction does not give to the people a true idea of what is to come, it has failed. It is a brief time when a sincere preacher reveals a brief example of his sincerity, when a loving preacher presents a sample of his love, when an earnest preacher reveals a sample of his earnestness and when the speaker says to the people, "Let me introduce myself to you. This is what I'm like. Let me introduce my sermon to you. This is what it's like. I hope you will want to continue listening as I preach it."

2.08. Chapter 8 Subjects on Which to Preach

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2 Timothy 4:2, 2 Timothy 4:5, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

Years ago I sat down and listed twenty themes that I thought were necessary for the spiritual growth and maturity of my people. All of my sermons deal with at least one of these twenty themes. Though I have never shared them, I have on occasion explained the process by which I arrived at them. That process will be the content of this chapter. I chose the twenty themes from 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." In this passage God tells the preacher what he is supposed to do when he stands before his people. I listed these things and from these things arrived at the themes I thought necessary for my people's spiritual growth and benefit.

I. PREACH. The word "preach" here means "proclaim the victory." From this I get encouragement. My people need to be encouraged by the Word of God. I am to "proclaim the victory of the Word." The doors open on Sunday morning. The crowd flows in. All week they have been facing a Christless and Godless world. They have heard His name profaned. They have faced criticism, mocking and even hatred. Now it is Sunday These wounded warriors come from far and near to sit in the pews in order to hear God's man. He must take God's Book, open it and proclaim the victory of the Word of God. He must encourage their hearts. Though this is not one of the themes that I have listed, it nev- ertheless is the source of one of my themes. God's people need to be encouraged.

2. WORD. This is Jesus. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." So the second theme that I find here is the theme of Jesus! Preach the person of Christ. Preach Him, exalt Him, magnify Him, teach Him, honor Him, praise Him, worship Him, adore Him. Preach Jesus. Years ago when our oldest daughter; Becky, was just a tot, I was preaching one Sunday morning and, would you believe it, I forgot my sermon! I was at 1 John 5:12, "He that hath the Son hath life," and to save me I could not think where I was supposed to go from there. So I stepped back and I hollered, "He that HATH the Son hath life!" I still drew a blank. I stepped back and shouted, "He that hath THE Son hath life!" Still! could not think of my sermon. I stepped back again and said, "He that hath the Son HATH life!" Still I forgot what I was to say I stepped back again and shouted, "He that hath the Son hath LIFE!" Finally I came out of my tailspin before I crashed. When I got home that morning, Becky grinned and said, "Daddy, the record got stuck this morning, didn't it?"

I hugged her; and through tears I said, "Yes, Puddin', but what a wonderful place for the record to stick!" It was stuck on Jesus! Jesus should be the center of our preaching, and the person of Christ should always be a part of the message that we deliver to our people from our God on His day

3. BE INSTANT The word "instant" is translated at other places "set upon," "be present," "be at hand." It implies faithfulness. Be predictable, be faithful. Here we have another theme that should be emphasized. As the Apostle writes young Timothy, he reminds him that Jesus should be a theme for his message, that encouragement should be a theme of his message and that faithfulness should be a theme of his message. Also from this statement could come the theme of total commitment.

4. IN SEASON, OUT OF SEASON. This leads us to another theme-perseverance. This also is to be a part of the preaching of God's man, as Paul commanded Timothy. Our message to the people should be, "Don't quit! Persevere! Hang in there! Don't turn back! Finish what you start!"

5. REPROVE. This word is also translated at other places, "refute." This means that the preacher is to expose false teaching. Here is another theme that should be included in the preaching of a pastor.

6. REBUKE. This word implies to "honor, then rebuke." It could be translated "to scold in love." On occasion the man of God will have to scold his people. This scolding should not be in hatred or with malice. It should be done with a heart filled with love for the very ones whom he is scolding.

7. EXHORT The word comes from the same word that is used in 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The word "advocate" means "to run to one's side and pick him up." It deals with the theme of salvaging. One of the preacher's ministries and one of the themes of his preaching should be to salvage what he can from all of his people. There are those in the congregation who have been wounded by the Evil One! They are vessels that have been marred in the hands of the Potter; and they wonder if they can ever be used again. Paul tells Timothy that salvaging them should be a part of his message. Here is another theme that the preacher may include in his repertoire of sermon themes.

8. LONGSUFFERING. This word is also translated "even tem- perature." It has to do with having a Christian spirit. From it comes the word "temperance," which means "proper restraint." Here is another theme that the Apostle admonished Timothy to use.

9. DOCTRINE. The word means "teaching." The preacher should include Bible teachings and truths in his preaching. Add this to your list of themes.

10. WATCH. Most people feel that this means "moral watch- ing." In other words, the preacher should fight sin. Sin-fighting should definitely be a major part of the pastor's ministry. He should warn his people of the evils and temptations that lurk in the shadows that will destroy their lives and their testimonies.

11. ENDURE AFFLICTION. This word means "suffer with." This implies sympathy and understanding. The wise preacher must include in his ministry and in his preaching sympathetic under- standing. He must remember that his people are flesh, and as does God, he must remember that his people are dust. They must feel the sympathy. The preacher is not a righteous

judge to stand on Sunday to condemn his people. He is a righteous physician to stand up to encourage, strengthen, rebuild and love his people. Now in this loving, rebuilding and strengthening, there must of necessity be some hard preaching, some scolding, rebuking, etc., but it must be done in the spirit of love, of sympathy and understanding. He must suffer with them, hurt with them and feel their burdens, their weaknesses, their heartaches and, yes, even their failures.

12. THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST This means soul win- ning. It means getting people saved. One of the pastor's themes should be salvation, preaching with evangelistic fervor.

13. FULL PROOF OF THY MINISTRY This means the total preacher who has it all! Paul is telling Timothy that he does not want him riding a hobbyhorse or spending all of his time on one theme. He wants him to make full proof of his ministry. He wants him to proclaim the victory, to preach Jesus, to preach total com- mitment, to preach faithfulness, to preach perseverance, to expose false teaching, to scold in love, to salvage those who have fallen, to teach Christians to have the proper spirit, to heal and mend, to preach doctrine, to fight sin, to sympathize and suffer with his people, to be a soul winner and train soul winners, to be an evangelist, and in summary, to wrap it all up and to be in one package all of these things The things that I have listed are not the exact words that I use on my list of twenty themes, but it was from this passage that I made my list in order that I might give to my people all that they need, and be to my people all that they need me to be. From the twenty themes that I have listed in a private place come all the sermons that I preach. I feel that these twenty themes cover all the needs that my people could have. These are the different prescriptions for the various illnesses and deficiencies that my folks may have.

2.09. Chapter 9 Preaching to Everybody

Chapter 9 Preaching to Everybody

1 Corinthians 9:22, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

There is no public speaking as difficult, as challenging and, when done properly, as artistic as that of preaching. Most public speakers speak to a certain group who share similar interests. Sometimes, for example, I will preach to a group of young people. On other occasions, I speak to ladies. There are times when I speak just to men. I often speak at conventions for Christian educators, and nearly every week I speak at some special meeting for preachers. All of these are challenging, but none is as challenging as the time when I walk in the pulpit on Sunday morning to speak to little children, to senior citizens, to the rich, to the poor; to the educated, to the uneducated, to the young and to the old, and I try to adapt the same sermon so it will fit and feed every person in the congregation! This is the hardest of all public speaking, and yet, it is the most blessed, the most challenging and the most wonderful because it is a miracle! The Holy Spirit takes ~e same truth and applies it through His servant to various age groups, to various social standings and to those hundreds and sometimes thousands of people whose life styles, backgrounds and interests are of the greatest variety possible.

1. The preacher should learn to speak to each group. He should be able to hold the attention of a group of children, keep the interest of teenagers at a rally just for them, and be able to hold the attention of each group when speaking to them separately. The best worker with beginner-age children in the church should be the preacher! The best youth worker in the church should be the preacher. The best Bible teacher in the church should be the preacher. It is wrong for the preacher to excuse his deficiencies by saying he does not have the gift to speak to children or the gift to speak to young people or the gift to speak to any other special group. Sometimes there are ways to get abilities without getting them as a gift. They can also be earned and can be obtained by toil and diligence.

2. The pastor should be around children and should force himself to speak to them and learn to do it effectively. For 37 years I have conducted the Vacation Bible Schools in all of my churches. I conduct a 30-minute opening assembly where I lead the children in singing and join in their enthusiasm and laughter. Then, in a 45- minute assembly later in the day I lead in teaching them. I crown the king and queen for the day, and I introduce the special pro- grams. I have had to learn to hold their attention and to work diligently to learn to be a children’s worker. The wise pastor will be around children, learn how to reach them and to lead them.

3. Be around teenagers. Get to know them. Find out how to be a successful youth worker. For several years I have conducted a nationwide Youth Con- ference. Thousands of teenagers come from all across America. I speak to them, instruct them, joke with them and relate to them. Recently after one of the sessions in our Youth Conference, a pastor came to me and said, "I wish

I had your gift." I replied, "Brother, it’s not a gift! It is something that I worked hard to get, and it is just as available for you as it is for me.

4. Be around senior citizens. Get to know them. Feel their burdens and their problems. Learn their frustrations, and train yourself to be able to work with them.

5. Identify with the poor, the rich, the educated and the unedu- cated. Learn to feel at home with each group and to know how to make them feel at home with you

6. Watch carefully those who are successful children’s workers or youth workers or adult workers. Learn what makes them suc- cessful. Incorporate it in your own life. Be a student of every age group and of every facet of your church’s society

7. Be a childish, juvenile adult. By this I mean when a person comes to adolescence, he should not exchange his childhood for adolescence, but he should add adolescence to his childhood. When a person becomes an adult, he should not trade in his childhood and adolescence on his adulthood. He should add adulthood to childhood and adolescence. We should retain our childhood enjoyments that are right and proper. Likewise we should retain the enjoyments of adolescence that are right and proper and add them to the behavior of adulthood. If you will listen carefully to every great preacher, you will see his childhood shine through and his adolescence flicker, and you will notice that added to these will be the maturity of adulthood. Every man of God should be a childish, juvenile adult.

8. Read a variety of things. Read books that children like to read. Read books that teenagers like to read. Fill that computer called the human mind with every bit of proper and decent material possible. One day it will become usable to you and for you. Then read all you can about reaching each and working with each. Learn the physical and emotional makeup of each age group.

9. When speaking to teenagers and children who are seated by age, have the teenagers in front of you so that your eye contact can be with them. Let the children be on the sides. Often I preach on a Tuesday morning to preachers, to laymen, teenagers and children in the same building. I always ask the pastor which group he wants me to reach. Then I ask him to put that group in front of me so that my eye contact will be with them.

10. When speaking to a strictly children’s group, the pastor should move a lot. He should ask questions that require brief and concise answers, and he should use the microphone heavily.

11. When speaking to a group which includes a group of chil- dren sitting together, it is often wise to begin by bragging on the children. Following is a good way to do it:

"Adults, have you noticed these children over here? Have you noticed how they sit still and listen? It’s an amazing thing! Sometimes during the sermon, glance over to them. I guaran- tee they will be still and quiet. You’ll be amazed to see what good children these are." This gives the children a reputation that they want to uphold. Then, on occasion throughout the message, stop and ask the adults if they have noticed how good the children are. This lets the children know that you haven’t forgotten them, and it keeps in their minds the goal of pleasing you and upholding the reputation that you have set for them.

12. When teenagers and adults are present in the same audience and are sitting in groups, preach to the teens. Start off by being honest and telling of your predicament. Then tell the teenagers how you felt when you were their age. I may start off with something like this:

"Kids, what do you say that we make peace with each other and that we decide to endure each other during this message! I know we are both stuck here! You had to come because it was a school requirement, and I need the money, so all of us are stuck. Why don't you just look at me and say, 'Well, he doesn't look like much, but I'm going to hear what the guy has to say I may as well listen to him. I've got to be here.' Then, kids, I'll look at you and say, 'Well, they don't look like much but they are part of the crowd this morning, so I'm going to see if I can get something through to them.' Probably you've already looked at me and asked, 'Can any good thing come out of that?' and I've looked at you and said, 'Can any good thing go into that?' but I'll make you a deal, kids. Give me a good hearing, and I won't preach long at you or hard at you" When preaching to teenagers, it is always good to make them feel adultish. After all, a teenager is more adult than he is a child, though it is hard for us to believe because we have recently known him as a child and have never known him as an adult.

Let me suggest at this point that the reader get a copy of my book, HOW TO REAR TEENAGERS and read carefully the chapter on communicating with teens.

13. When speaking to teenagers alone, don't bend all the way to meet them. Let them know that you are aware of the fact that they are nearly adults. (They will like this.) Let them know that you don't plan to treat them like little children, but like the near adults that they really are. When speaking to teens, love must be shown and sincerity must be obvious. Teens are very adept at reading a speaker's intentions. They can spot insincerity as well as sincerity. To them, the real you will shine through!

One of the most important things in speaking to teens is to not be defeated before you start. Convince yourself that you can hold their attention. Many speakers are defeated before they begin when speaking to teenagers. If you are defeated at the start, you will be destroyed by the end. When preaching to a crowd of preachers, lay adults, teens and children, preach to the teens on behalf of the adults and let the adults identify with you as you preach to the teens. Preach to them a truth that all the adults there would like to tell them. Become the representative of all the adults present. Let the adults identify with you as you speak to the teens.

I have a sermon entitled, "Let's Hear it for the Other Son." It deals with the brother of the prodigal son. It is a sermon that reminds the young people that though the prodigal son's brother did not cooperate in the welcome-home party, he nevertheless was a man of character. It is said of him by his father; "Son, thou art ever with me." The son said to his father, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee." He also said that he had never once transgressed his father's commandments or disobeyed. I remind the teenagers that the fellow was probably a pretty good guy who had character and decency, and I would rather have them be like him than be like the brother who went into the far country and became a prodigal. While I'm preaching this sermon, I can see the adults nodding their heads up and down in agreement. I am saying to the teenagers what the adults would like to say, and they are identifying with me. In a sense, we together are preaching to the teenagers.

14. When preaching to several different groups who are sitting together as groups, preach to the crowd most obvious. Don't try to reach all. In a sense, get alone with one group and let the others listen in. It is enjoyable for an adult to watch a preacher preach to young people. They can learn from him how to do it. It is enjoyable for them to watch him handle children. This can be an education to them.

Again, it is important to have the group to whom you are primarily speaking in front of you so that you can make eye contact with them.

15. Have a list of sermons that are basically for children. Have another list of sermons that are basically for young people. Have another list of sermons that are basically for preachers. I have a list that I use for Christian educators. Then, choose a sermon or a few sermons that you would use in the presence of children and teen- agars; likewise, sermons that you would use in the presence of teenagers, preachers, children and adults. Have special sermons that you could use for any combination of groups.

16. Have one truth to put across. Hit it over and over and over again! Remember, you are dealing with minds of various abilities to retain and to comprehend. A profound truth presented in a simple manner is perhaps the best when you speak to a group of groups.

17. When speaking to a group of groups, make mention of each group in the sermon. Let them know that you are aware of their presence, even if you are not addressing them primarily 18. Include something for all emotions-- for tears, for laughter, for sobriety, for excitement.

We have been dealing rather extensively with preaching to different groups or to groups of groups. However, most of our preaching is to a mixed congregation on Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. Therefore, the following should be remembered:

1. Preach mainly to adults, but if you have become a childish, juvenile adult, even the adults will enjoy seeing your adolescence and your childlikeness. The main thing is to become what you ought to be and then when you are what you ought to be, it will manifest itself in your preaching.

2. Check your sermon for milk and meat in the same message. Remember, you are preaching to new Christians and to mature Christians and to Christians at every place on the spectrum of Christian growth.

3. Mingle old truth and new truth. By that I mean, keep fresh and new for the people who have heard you for years, but don't neglect to teach the simple and old truths, for the new Christians need them!

4. Fit profundity into simplicity True profundity can be trans- ferred only from one mind to another through the vehicle of simplicity The vehicle of simplicity can appeal to the youth, to the children and to the new Christians, whereas the truth of profundity can appeal to the mature Christians and older people. When pro- fundity is transported in simplicity, it has a way of appealing to everybody and reaching everybody.

5. If what you say is over someone's head, reach them with how you say it. You can feed a heavy piece of meat to mature Christians and yet the way you feed them can be enjoyable to young people and to baby Christians.

6. Think all week of the various groups in the congregation. Every week, sometime during the week, I pause to think of my teenagers. I pray for them and spend some time loving them. I pause to realize that they are growing up in the generation where the Devil is most active in trying to destroy them. Every weapon in his arsenal is pointed toward them.

I then spend some time thinking about my senior citizens. I pray for them and love them. I hurt with their pains and mourn with their sorrows.

Every week I spend some time during the day thinking about my men who are at work, and for that matter, the ladies who work in public. I spend some time loving those men who are working in the blast furnaces of the steel mills. I think of their getting up in the wintertime before daybreak; fighting the traffic, the zero weather and the snow to go to work; them working in the blast furnaces all day long, only to leave work after it is already dark, again to fight the traffic, the snow and the cold to come home weary and tired. I often think of them late at night gathered around in the family circle, leading their families to pray for their preacher.

Every week I take a few minutes to stop up my ears so that I cannot hear. I walk in silence for sometimes as much as thirty minutes in order for me to identify with those whom [serve who are deaf.

Each week I take time to blindfold myself. I try to shave wearing this blindfold. I try to dress wearing the blindfold. This enables me to identify at least for awhile with those whom I serve who cannot see. At certain intervals each week I also think about the educable slow, the poor' the bus kids. I try to make it so that by the time I walk into the pulpit on the Lord's Day I will have such a love and compassion for all of my people that I "preach to everybody"

2.10. Chapter 10 Compassion in Preaching

Chapter 10 Compassion in Preaching Jude 1:22 b, "And of some have compassion, making a difference."

First came the light. Then the firmament. Then God lit the starry host. Then He made the fish of the sea and all the tribes of the animal kingdom. After that God was ready for man. He made man in the image of Himself. It was marvelous. Every tree that grew was pleasant to the eyes. Rivers flowed peaceably through verdant valleys. Every sound was a melody Every scene was a delight. There was no war to unrest the breast; no sickness was there to cause a fear of death. The leaf never withered; the wind never chilled. No perspiration ever moistened the brow. There was no profanity to curse the ear. There was no weariness, no heat, no cold. No blossoms were smitten by a tempest. Man had not learned to sigh or weep. There was no withering frost to chill the rose. There was no shadow of guilt ever known. For Adam there were choirs of birds to sing to him.

Yet something was missing! Adam needed someone to share with him. He yearned for companionship. He longed for commun- ion with a kindred soul. He needed one whose wants and joys were like his own. The virgin world was cold and blank.

HERE SHE COMES! Dressed in all the beauty for a human being to possess! Milton said, "She was adorned with what all of heaven and earth could bestow to make her amiable. Grace was in her steps. Heaven was in her eye. Every gesture possessed dignity and love. Perfection was stamped upon her. The sons of God shouted for joy, the morning stars sang together, and Eden was transformed! The earth was sad, the garden wild, the hermit sighed, until woman smiled." Not a creature since Adam has escaped that need for compan- ionship. The weary housewife, the trudging laborer, the busy stu- dent, the aged mother, the harried boss and, I must confess, the preacher behind the pulpit-all have a need for someone to offer to them compassion.

Compassion is the nurse given to mankind. Compassion cares for the helpless. It mothers the orphan, feeds the hungry; clothes the cold, helps the helpless and raises the fallen. Compassion shines upon coldness and warms it. Compassion shines upon suffering and relieves it. Compassion shines upon sorrow and cheers it.

God has given us His men and has called them from the north, east, south and west to stand behind pulpits to have compassion upon mankind. Her name is College Wife, USA. She was married to her child- hood sweetheart. They lived in an apartment and sacrificed for years. Finally they were able to buy a little house. A small down payment was made, and monthly payments were paid. They drove an old rattletrap for years; now finally they are able to get a small new car. Things are looking up! Her husband got promoted at work. She sings in the choir; he is an usher. They both teach Sunday school classes.

One Sunday night her husband walked the aisle during the invitation. She wondered why When they got home, he said to her that God had called him to preach. Suddenly all of her dreams were ended; the air castles were broken on the pavement of providence! They put the house up for sale.

They sold the new car and bought an old one and put what belongings they had in a U-Haul trailer and came to Hammond, Indiana, to attend Hyles-Anderson College. They couldn't afford a little house like they had back home. They couldn't even afford one of the nicer apartments. The little house has now been traded for an attic apartment. The shiny new little car has now been sold, and an old one has taken its place. Her husband enrolls in college. He goes to college at 7:00 a.m. in the morning and gets through just in time to go to work. He works into the night and gets home and has a few hours to sleep. She hardly sees him. Oh, by the way, she has a few children for whom she cares. No longer does he come in at 5:30 after a busy day's work to spend the night with the family She who was Miss Typical Housewife now is Miss Typical College Student's Wife. There are four years, maybe five, maybe six, maybe more before it will all be over. She needs a man of God to stand behind the pulpit on the Lord's Day who feels her heartache, who feels her loneliness and who really cares and offers compassion. Her name is Grandma. She has seen her last child leave the marriage altar. Her husband was taken to Heaven. She tried to keep house as long as she could, but she began to fall. She couldn't see too well. Her hearing was failing. Her hands were trembling. Her brow is furrowed, her face is wrinkled, her shoulders are stooped, her steps are uncertain. One day the children had a meeting. They had to do something with Grandma. She suggested that they put her in a rest home. Ungrateful children said, "Well, if that's what you want, that's what we'll do, Mother;" and there she sits with hands that never open a letter, ears that never hear the ring of a phone, cheeks that never feel a kiss, feet that never take her outside, eyes that never see loved ones or friends. She hardly knows her grand- children, and there she sits fellowshipping with her memories- memories of days when she washed and ironed and cooked and cleaned house and was in the busy activities of rearing a family, but now those days are gone! A church group came by the rest home. They said they were running a bus to church. Now she can get on the bus and ride to church. There she sits in the auditorium. She needs a man of God to walk to the pulpit, to open the Book and offer her compassion. She needs to feel that someone cares, for compassion makes a dif- ference! His name is Johnny. His address is Ghetto, USA. He is a bus kid. He doesn't know where his daddy is. One day his parents called him in and told him that Daddy was leaving. His only Christmas is if the church remembers. He has never had a birthday cake or seen a new pair of shoes on his feet. He has never heard, "You are a cute little fellow." Such words as steak, love, peace and kindness are part of a foreign language as far as he is concerned. He didn't know he wasn't normal until he saw other boys and girls that had nice things. His mom leaves for work every morning early and comes back home late at night. He may suspicion you at first a little bit, and he may disturb your worship service, but he needs somebody to care. Oh, I know, buses are expensive. Your auditorium is pretty You now have a good drive-in crowd, and Johnny is a financial burden, but there he sits covering up a hole in his pants. Little Johnny needs someone to car. He needs a pastor who has compassion which makes a difference!

I can relate to little Johnny The first toy I ever owned the church gave to me. The first hamburger lever ate was bought for me by the church. The first balloon I ever blew up I got at church. I know!

I will never forget the day that I walked into the Fernwood Bap- test Church as a five-year-old lad. The Beginner Superintendent whose name was Mrs. Bethel, took me to the Beginner Depart- meant. She put me on her knee. My little bare feet were obvious. My knees were showing through the holes and through the patches of my pants. I had on a little white T-shirt, and I noticed that all the other little boys and girls had on shoes and the boys had white shirts and ties. Mrs. Bethel put

me on her knee. She said, "Boys and girls, we have a visitor this morning. His name is Jackie-boy Hyles. Aren't we glad to have him?" Nobody said a word. Then Mrs. Bethel looked at me and said, "Jackie-boy, Jesus loves you" I'll never forget how I felt! Mama had told me that, but nobody else had ever told me! I looked up and said the first words that I had said that morning. I asked, "Mrs. Bethel, does Jesus love me as much as He loves the little boys and girls that have on shoes?" A tear escaped her eye and invaded my brow as she said, "Jackie- boy, He probably loves you more than He loves anybody here this morning." The joy of Heaven flooded my soul as I heard my teacher tell me that Jesus loved me.

There are millions of little Jackie-boys all over America who need to be contacted and brought to church, to sit in a pew and look up and see a man of God walk to the pulpit who has compassion which makes a difference.

Oh, someone needs to care Someone needs to offer compassion to the one who cannot hear the whipporwill, to the one who has never heard the church choir or the voice of the preacher, but who sits in his world of silence while dedicated fingers reveal to him what is being said. He needs compassion; it will make a difference!

Someone needs to care about the one who has never seen a sunrise or a sunset, who has never seen a rose or a daffodil, who has never seen a meadow or a forest or the dogwood or the azalea. He has never seen a rainbow. He has never seen his own mother and father. He lives in a world of darkness following a white-tipped cane. He needs somebody to love him. He needs to feel that somebody has compassion that will make a difference!

He lives at the rescue mission. His world fell apart many years ago. He was too weak to face reality and now he sleeps on a cot with others who share his plight. His family has left him, his children do not want to see him, but he is still a creature of God, made in the image of God! He is the object of the love of God, Christ died for him, the incarnation was for him, Bethlehem's manger was for him, the shepherds watching their flocks by night were for him, the wise men from the East bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh were for him. Mary brought forth her firstborn Son and wrapped Him an swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger for him. Jesus lived for him. He lived a perfect life for him. He went before Pilate and on to Herod and back to Pilate for him. He was beaten with a cat-o'-nine-tails for him. He carried His cross up Golgotha's hill for him. He was crucified for him. He rose again after 72 hours for him. He ascended back to Heaven for him. He is now doing His priestly work at the right hand of the Father for him. He is going to come someday for him. Just a rescue mission man, and some folks would call him a bum, but God loves him! There needs to be some place where he can go and sit in a pew and look in the pulpit where somebody loves him and where a man of God can have compassion on him that makes the difference!

He lives in Backroom, USA. When he was born he brought the same joy and happiness to his mother and daddy that all babies bring until one day they noticed he was not developing as he should. He had a look on his face that was different from other children. Finally the doctor told the bad news to the parents that the child was not normal. He would never be able to learn like other children. He would join the special classes for the educable slow. Physically he will grow like others, but mentally he will never develop! He sits over on the left in the First Baptist Church auditorium with scores of others just like him. He is a teenager now. He looks to the pulpit. He

needs to see a man walk in that pulpit who loves him, who hurts because he hurts and cries because he cries. He needs a man who has compassion that makes the difference!

Several years ago a lady came to our church to visit. She did not like me and she voiced her displeasure at my preaching. However, to my surprise she came back the next Sunday! She returned that night and the next Sunday and that night and the next Sunday and that night. I couldn't believe that she kept coming. Finally one day I saw her in the line outside my door after the Sunday morning service. She had a harsh look on her face. I found out later that she had come to rebuke me and to criticize me to my face. Finally it was her time to enter my office. She walked into the office; her lips began to quiver and she said, "Reverend, I came this morning to tell you all the bad things I could think of that I think about you, but I have been watching the people who come into your office. I saw you as you wept when you said, "Good-bye," to a college couple who was leaving to go out into full-time work. I saw your lips quiver and your eyes fill with tears as you talked to another one who had a burden, and then it dawned on me why I keep coming to your church. I don't like your preaching; I never have, but something draws me back Sunday after Sunday It just came to me what that something is. Reverend, it's that moist spot in the corner of your eye. It's always there. That's the reason I keep coming."

Ladies and gentlemen, that moist spot is a sign of compassion. Oh, for preaching that is strong, hard, straight and Spirit-filled! Oh, for preaching that challenges, scolds, rebukes, chastens and reproves! Oh, for preaching that is a warning against sin! Oh, for preaching about judgment, Heaven, Hell, righteousness and holi- ness, but may God help us to always have that moist spot in the corner of the eye! Oh, men of God, have compassion that makes the difference!

2.11. Chapter 11 Preachers, Let's Lengthen the Cords and Strengthen the Stakes

Chapter 11 Preachers, Let’s Lengthen the Cords and Strengthen the Stakes

Isaiah 54:2, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes." In an American Legion Convention in New York City, a strange man wandered out on the platform, looked out to the delegates and asked, "Would somebody please tell me who I am?"

I wonder if maybe independent, fundamental Baptists don’t need to ask ourselves, "Who are we?" God has singly blessed us. He has commanded us to enlarge out tents, and we have dutifully obeyed. We have built the largest Sunday schools in America. We have the largest buildings and the largest budgets. We are building the largest Christian schools. We have the largest bus fleets and the largest outreach. We have large staffs. We are sought out by the press. We sit with senators and shake hands with presidents. The lights of television cameras expose our freckles. Our auditoriums have become chancels. Our "Brother" has become ’Doctor." Our lightbulbs have become chandeliers. Our Sunday school buildings are now Christian family centers. The preacher is now called the senior pastor. The custodian has become the maintenance engineer. The secretary is now the administrative assistant. Our mimeograph machines are now off-set presses. Our choirs have learned to sing "The Messiah." Neon signs have replaced hand-painted ones, and "good will" is now an attitude instead of our favorite clothing store. We meet the press and greet the mayor. Yes, our tents have en- larged.

Now the fiercest winds from Hell blow to topple our tents! Spring winds have become tornadoes. Summer breezes have be- come hurricanes. Warm air has become a winter blast. Our en- larged tents are the objects of Satan’s most deadly storms. The sharpest swords are thrust at us. The most delicate microscope examines us. The sharpest minds plot against us. The most poi- sonous pens write of us. The most incredible accusations are railed at us. We are called "hate mongers." We are called "shallow." We are called "cultists. " The truth is that winds are blowing in an effort to topple our tents. Our brethren are actually going to jail. Our churches are actually being padlocked. Many of our brethren are commuting between the church house and court house. FOX’S BOOK OF MARTYRS seems to be an incomplete manuscript, and "Give me liberty or give me death" is no longer just a high school declamation but a definite possibility! Prison walls seem as immi- nent as Holiday Inns and Howard Johnsons. Martyrdom seems more prophetical than historical. Freedom is only a slogan used by the liberal to gain liberty to enslave the fundamentalist. Detente with Russia is more popular than detente with God’s people. Some are declaring us insane, and many have had to leave the mourner’s bench for the judge’s bench. Some have left the prayer room in order to go to the court room. Ladies and gentlemen, basic training is now over; this is war! We are off the rifle range; we are in battle!

Yet, sad to say, some of our tents have toppled. Some have been toppled by financial winds; some by winds of immorality; some by winds of compromise. Our text reminds us that as our tents enlarge, we need to strength- en our stakes and lengthen our cords. Many a church has fallen as the tent enlarged and the wind increased. Many a preacher topples as the Sunday school grows, the offerings increase, the school is open, buildings rise, the staff is enlarged and outside invitations come, for he has a larger tent without stronger stakes and length- ened cords.

Watch it as your work grows! Watch it as you become more affluent! Watch it as you get more education! Be careful as you get busier in God's work and as you get more power and authority! It is so easy to have a larger tent without lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes!

We had better strengthen our stakes of the Word of God. A few borrowed outlines won't do when the storm wages. Fifteen minutes a day at the throne of grace won't hold back the hurricane. Warmed- over stories and a borrowed illustration will not stand the tornadic enemy We have larger tents now. The stakes must go deeper. Devotionals, tyrades, lectures and book reviews are not enough! As the tent grows bigger, the stakes must be driven deeper and the cords must be longer!

We had better strengthen the stakes of our walk with God. When the tent is larger, ten minutes a day won't do it any more. Grace at the table and five minutes of reading a page from a devotional book is not enough now. Our folks need to know how to get things from God. We must teach them about walking in the Spirit. Somebody has to pray all night. Somebody has to pray down fire. The tents are bigger. We must go deeper, and our ropes must be longer!

We had better strengthen the stakes of our convictions. The power of positive thinking won't do; the wind is too strong. Possi- bility thinking won't make it; the storm is too great. This new fundamentalism with no invitation will not withstand the storms that are upon us now. Religious rock won't hold back tornadic winds. Sharing the platform with cultists and false teachers won't stem the hurricane.

We need to strengthen the stakes of honesty We must not spend what we cannot afford. We must not borrow on projected income. We must not over-build and extend ourselves beyond our ability to pay We must not start things we cannot afford. We must not sell bonds that we cannot redeem. When the winds of temptation come, we had better have stronger stakes and longer cords. When the winds of discouragement come, we had better drive our stakes deeper and have longer cords. When the winds of persecution howl, we had better be sure we have made the length of our cords and the depth of our stakes commensurate with the size of our tents. When the winds of materialism blow, we will wish our stakes were deeper and our cords were longer.

Oh, men of God, some warmed-over sermons won't do! A little outline borrowed from a book is not enough! We must walk with God! We must be men of God! We must walk to the pulpit before the people of God with the message from God! May God help us as preachers to lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes as our tents enlarge!

2.12. Chapter 12 The Invitation

Chapter 12 The Invitation

Immediately when we think of the word "invitation" we think of a song such as "Just As I Am" or "Softly and Tenderly" or "All to Jesus I Surrender." We think of folks coming forward to receive Christ as Saviour or to present themselves for church membership or perhaps believer's baptism. However, the invitation starts a long time before the end of the sermon. Basically, the invitation is the response of the audience to the service and message. This response should begin before the service ever starts. Consequently, the invitation begins before the service ever starts. Following is a step- by-step explanation of what the invitation really is.

1. The invitation begins when a hand of welcome is extended at the door. When a member of the church reaches forth his hand, he is asking for a response. When the visitor extends his hand for a warm handshake, he is responding, and the invitation has begun! This is why it is so important for there to be a friendly, relaxed atmosphere in the early part of the service. This beginning of the invitation is hindered in churches that do not encourage fellowship before the services. There seems to be a certain kind of feeling that the church building is where God lives and that we come by to see Him every week. Therefore, the church house is a place of austerity and quietness, and to fellowship and shake hands is irreverent. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Spurgeon called the church build- ing simply a meeting place. God does not live inside the church building any more than He lives inside your home. To be sure, there was a Shekinah Glory that dwelt over the Holy of Holies in the temple and in the tabernacle. This Shekinah represented God's presence with His people. There is still a temple, but that temple is not a church building. The temple today is the body of the believer. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The church building is not a temple, or for that matter even a sanctuary, which means a place where God dwells. It is a meeting place where God's temples come to meet each other. A warm handshake and a "God bless you" are always in order. When a friendly greeter or usher or a happy member extends his hand to a visitor, the invitation has begun! He is beginning to respond. We trust that this will lead to total response which will lead to respond- ing to the invitation of receiving Christ as Saviour.

2. The prelude is apart of the invitation. It, too, should invoke a response. For this reason, it should be familiar hymns or Gospel songs. It should not be classical music. Now I'm not criticizing the classics. I love them, but a church service is no place for them. There is no way that it can lead to a response, but if the organist or pianist is playing "Blessed Assurance" or "Leaning on the Ever-lasting Arms," people can hum along, at least in their hearts. Even thinking of the words that are being played is a response. Hence, it becomes a part of the invitation.

3. The song service is a part of the invitation. When the song leader announces the number and the audience turns to that number; it is responding to the song leader, and the spirit of responding is being increased. When the song leader asks the congregation to stand for the next song, the fact that they grant his request and stand is in itself a response and becomes a part of the invitation. The singing itself is responding. It is the audience participating. It is used by the Spirit of God to make responding easier and to make the service conducive to a response when the invitation song is sung. This is the reason that familiar songs should be chosen-songs that sing easily and that people enjoy singing. Songs such as "At Calvary;" "At The Cross," "The Old Rugged Cross," "Amazing Grace," "How Firm a Foundation," "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing," "Rescue the Perishing," 'Sweet Hour of Prayer" and other songs that speak to the heart and envoke a response both in the heart and in the singing are certainly apart of the invitation.

4. The opening remarks by the pastor are a part of the invita- tion. Perhaps he says something that prompts a smile. This too is a response and helps to create a spirit of responding. This means that a warm introduction that causes the people of the audience to even have a nice thought is a part of the invitation. The people become participants with their thinking and with their acting. This Will make it easier for them to participate throughout the service and especially at the end of the service when they can find the spirit of responding an asset to their responding to the call of Christ to receive His gift of eternal life.

5. The recognition of visitors is apart of the invitation. The fact that they are asked to stand gives them an opportunity to respond. Of course, by this time they are accustomed to responding. They responded to the handshake at the door. They responded to the congregational singing. They responded to the pastor's opening remarks. Now they are more likely to respond by standing as visitors. In a smaller church the visitors may be asked to give their names and home town. This will be difficult for them if they have not been in a service where responding is convenient and easy, but if throughout the service there has been an interaction between the pulpit and the pew, the visitor will find it far easier to give his name when he is recognized as a guest.

6. The offering is a part of the invitation. When the plate is passed and the guest accepts it and passes it on, he is responding. When he places a gift (regardless of the size) into the plate, he is responding.

7. Responsive reading is a part of the invitation. At the First Baptist Church in Hammond we always do this in our Sunday morning and Sunday evening services. The people stand and read either responsively or in unison a portion of Scripture. This is apart of the invitation. We have invited them to respond, and they are responding. They do so readily by this time, if the service has been one conducive to response.

8. Humor is a part of the invitation. Humor, in good taste, is an excellent way to invoke response. Something is said from the platform, and people smile, chuckle or laugh. They are responding. This is one reason that humor is such a vital part of a church service. It is simply another way for the platform to seek a response and for the audience to grant it.

9. Identification with the speaker is an important part of the invitation. If the congregation feels that they are part of the sermon, if illustrations are used that pull the congregation into the speaker so that they can identify with him, it becomes easy to respond in one's mind. One of our members

once said to me, "Pastor, I feel like you and I have done so many things together because the illustrations that you use are illustrations with which I can identify and I feel like apart of you when you preach." This too is apart of the invitation. The sermon is now over. The unsaved person entered into the church and responded by extending his hand to a friendly greeter. He responded to the usher by following him to his seat. He responded to the song director by opening his song book to the number announced. He responded during the singing of a familiar song. He responded in his heart to the opening remarks. He responded with a smile or chuckle to some well-chosen humor. He responded at offering time. He responded at the recognition of visitors. He responded during the responsive reading or the reading in unison of the Word of God. For an hour or more he has been responding. Now it is time to respond to the Gospel. He is comfort- able. He feels at home. The service has not been starchy or ritualistic. The Holy Spirit speaks to him. Response has not been difficult thus far; it will not be difficult now. The invitation is begun. A song of invitation is being sung. Soon there are tears and conviction and then, praise God, a response. He is now in the aisle. He is coming to the altar. He is now kneeling with a soul winner. He is praying the sinner’s prayer. He has received Christ as Saviour! He is born again! He has escaped the fires of Hell! He is on his way to Heaven! His name is written in the Book of Life! He is a new creature in Christ Jesus, and to think, even the usher at the front door had apart!

2.13. Chapter 13 The Preacher Must Be Stable

Chapter 13 The Preacher Must Be Stable

Genesis 49:1-4, "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall YOU in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father. Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch." Psalms 112:7, "He shall not be afraid of evil fidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." For a successful ministry; there must be some predictability about the preaching. I have a little saying-it is almost a motto-"I want the services at First Baptist Church to be such that if a visitor comes on any given Sunday, he will find about the same thing that he would find on any other given Sunday" I want there to be a stability, a predictability and a consistency about the services, especially about the preaching. The congregation should not wonder in what kind of mood the preacher is going to be. They should expect him to act, not react! His temperament should lead instead of follow. A trip to church on the part of a parishioner should not be one of investigating whether the pastor is on the mountaintop or in the valley I often say to our people, 'Travel as fast as you can continue to travel. Choose a speed that you can consistently con- tinue."

Jacob was dying. He called his sons to his bedside. Reuben was called. Jacob described him. He called him his strongest boy, his most thoughtful boy, his most talented boy, his most gifted son, his smartest, his most intellectual, his most proper, his most mannerly, his best leader, his most personable, and perhaps even his most handsome son! I am not sure that such a description is given about anyone else in the Bible.

Yet Jacob sadly reminds Reuben that he will never reach his potential because he is unstable as water! When the tide of sorrow rises higher, he goes to pieces. When the dark waters overflow in life, he loses control. When the storms of bad news billow over his path, he wavers. When the tempest of testing comes, he is unsure. When the battle comes, he is blown as waves by the wind. When tides of cloudy tidings loom overhead, his mast is torn. When rumblings of recession roar; he is ravaged. When the deep depicts a depression, panic grips him. When venomous, vicious, vindicative words are vociferously voiced about him, he becomes a victim of their vice. Like water above, foul winds move him. Like water beneath, strong winds ruffle him. With all of his talents and abilities, Reuben was not usable because of one great weakness-instability

Give me the weaker one with less talent, less intellect, less ability and less personality whose anchor holds when his vessel is attacked by watery winds or windy waters. Give me the one who is stable when his soul is concerned but not destroyed by evil tidings, whose work is done midst the storm that idles others, who is not rattled by the morning papers, because he has already read his Bible! Give me the one who feels the wound of pain but it leaves not a scar of panic. Give me the one who possesses trembling but not whining. Give me the one who when his bosom heaves

midst the storm, his will is not broken. Give me the one who stands when winds of disappointments cause his soulish ship to tremble but not to sink. Give me the one whom the storm takes off his calm but not off his course. In trouble he may fold his arms for a moment, but quickly he will take hold of the wheel. When the mountains are moved and cast into the sea, he will not detour to watch them fall. He will stay where he is and do his duty in the midst of the clash. When the death message comes, his heart is smitten but not stricken. His mind may be assaulted by a panic-stricken rumor, yet he fights on! He is undercut by the undercurrent of unemployment, but he is unwavering in his undying faith in his understanding God. Tidings of disease may come, but to him they bring no defeat. Tidings of defeat may come, but to him they bring no depression. Tidings of death may come, but to him they bring no doubt. Tidings of difficulty may come, but to him they bring no despair. Tidings of depression may come, but to him they bring no detour. Tidings of delay may come, but to him they bring no discouragement. Like Obadiah of old when he heard the evil tidings of Edom, he replied with the words, "We have heard tidings from the Lord." When the evil tidings of recession come, he flees to Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His right- eousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." When tidings of depression come, he turns to Php 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." When tidings of death come, he reads John 14:1-3, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." When tidings of want come, he reads Psalms 23:1, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." When tidings of fear come, he reads Psalms 91:1, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." When tidings of betrayal come, he remembers that there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. When tidings of disease come, he remembers that "He healeth all thy diseases." When tidings of loneliness come, he finds refuge in Hebrews 13:5, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and he content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." When tidings of weariness come, he finds Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." When tidings of disappointment come, he hides in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." When times of decision come, he looks to Proverbs 3:6, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." When tidings of suffering come, he races to Php 3:10, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." When tidings of trouble come, he rushes to John 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." When tidings of temptation come, he scurries to 1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." When tidings of need come, he nestles in Php 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." When tidings of doubt come, he shouts, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" When tidings of poverty come, he flies to Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." When discouragement comes, he hustles to Revelation 21:1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:

for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

Poor Reuben! Think what he could have done! Lesser men than he have crossed seas, won battles, built cities, marshalled armies and ruled kingdoms; yet one thing held him back! How sad! How tragic!

Though the story of Reuben is such a pitiful one because of his instability, it is infinitely worse for us. Reuben had no Romans 8:28. He had no John 14:1-3. He had no Jeremiah 33:3. He had no Psalms 37:1-40. He had no Php 4:13. He had no Psalms 23:1. He had no Psalms 91:1. He had no Proverbs 3:6. He had no John 15:7. He had no Php 4:19. He had no New Testament church. He had no pastor to preach to him three times weekly He had no Christian school. He had no written promises, but we do! Think how much more stable we should be! We have a full Bible; he didn't. We look back to the virgin birth; he couldn't. We have a record of the life of Christ on earth; he didn't. We know about the sinless life of the Saviour. We know about the vicarious death, the bodily resurrection, the heavenly ascension and His promises to return; Reuben didn't.

Think what might have been for Reuben, and think what might have been for us. May we possess stability, perseverance, predic- tability and consistency Stability without anything else can have some success. All else without stability will fall. Whatever else you get, by all means get stability.

There are many things that lead to this great trait, not the least of which is schedule. At last count, 507 people are either full-time or part-time employees of the First Baptist Church of Hammond and its related ministries. All of these have a boss on duty; yet, I have no boss! There is no one who makes me come to work on time. There is no one who orders me to study Since I have no boss, I made one-I call him my schedule, and I obey him and follow him faithfully This is so necessary for preaching. There must be a scheduled time for study There must be scheduled time for medita- tion. There must be a scheduled time for praying for the power of God. There must be a scheduled time for praise, a scheduled time for worship, a scheduled time for confession. When God chose a name by which He would call His followers, He chose the word "disciples." This is very interesting. He wanted them to be disciples, or disciplined one~ To be successful in preaching, the man of God must be a disciplined one. He must be stable, consistent and, in a true sense, a disciple!

2.14. Chapter 14 Preaching Between the Living and the Dead

Chapter 14 Preaching Between the Living and the Dead

Some of the people rose up against Moses and Aaron. They said that Moses and Aaron had taken too much upon themselves. They would take away from Aaron his embroidered vest, strip him of his mitre, remove the glittering stones that sparkled on his breast, silence the bells that jangled on the hem of his garment, blot out the embroidered pomegranates near the bells and destroy both him and his brother, Moses.

Suddenly the earth opened. An earthquake consumed these rebels. Then the Israelites blamed Moses and Aaron for the death. God was furious. He sent a plague that killed 14,700 people. (Numbers 16:44-50)

Moses said to Aaron, "Quick, take a censer. Put fire in it. Run to the people. Hold it high." Aaron did so, and as he did, the plague was stayed because he was standing between the living and the dead. Picture this old man, probably 100 years old, running up and down between the living and the dead and holding high his censer. This is exactly what the preacher does when he walks to his pulpit. He is God’s man standing between the living and the dead. Oh, for a holy awe to grip us as we enter the sacred place, open the sacred Book and preach the sacred message!

Several years ago at the Bill Rice Ranch I was riding on horse- back to the morning cookout breakfast for which the Ranch is so famous. A young man rode up beside me and said, "Dr. Hyles, I’m a young preacher. I’m trying to decide what type preacher I should be-a Hell-fire and brimstone preacher or a deeper-lifer (whatever that is)." He said that he had talked to a deeper-lifer and gotten his advice; now he wanted my advice about the future of his ministry. Re said, "Could you counsel with me?"

I asked him, "Young man, is there a Hell?" He said, "Yes, there is, but would you counsel with me con- cerning what kind of preacher I ought to be?" I asked, "Is there a Hell?" "Yes," he said, "there is a Hell, but would you give me advice?" I asked, "Is there a Hell? Is there a Hell? Is there a Hell?" He said, "Dr. Hyles, aren’t you going to counsel with me? The other preacher did." I asked, "Is there a Hell? Is there a Hell? Is there a Hell?" He rode off with a look of bewilderment on his face.

Several weeks passed. I was talking to Dr. Russell Anderson on the telephone. He said, "Dr. Hyles, I heard a young man preach the other day who said that he had talked with you recently at the Bill Rice Ranch." I said, "What was his name?" He said, "I don’t know what his name was, but he sure preached a great message. I asked if he knew the title of the message. He said, "Yes, I do. The title was, ’Is There a Hell?’

It was the same young man. Re had made his choice. He had decided to stand between the living and the dead. I ask you that question: Is there a Hell? Is there a place where people are burning right now? Is there a place where they plead for one drop of water to cool their tongue for they are tormented by the flames? Is there a place where the worm dieth not and fire is not quenched? Is

there a place where He shall say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels"? Is it true that the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God? Is there a place where those not found written in the Book of Life shall be cast into the Lake of Fire? Is the rich man still weeping and begging? Is it true that my unsaved father who died a drunkard's death is there? Is he burning alter all these years? Was I standing between the living and the dead when I talked to my father that Sunday afternoon, January 1, 1950, and pleaded with him to get saved? He told me that he would, but he was going to wait until the spring-but spring never came because he died and was buried on May 13 of that same year! Is it true that there is a Hell? Is it true that your loved ones without Christ are going to Hell? Is it true that the one who carried you in her womb who is unsaved is going to burn in Hell forever? Is it true that the only man you can ever call Daddy who is lost is going to Hell? Is your unsaved brother really going to a place of torment? Do those who hear you preach and reject the Gospel really die without Christ and go to Hell to burn forever? Is it true that those millions in Chicago within driving distance of my church who live without Christ and die without Christ will burn in Hell forever? If it isn't true, I'm going home! If it isn't true, I'm not walking to the pulpit again! If it isn't true, let's eat, drink and be merry! If it isn't true, let's call the missionaries home! If it isn't true, let's stop the buses from rolling! If it isn't true, let's make a planter out of the baptistry, close the church doors and quit the ministry! If it isn't true, let's make money! If it isn't true, let's live it up! If it isn't true, I've gotten my last lonely boarding pass on an airplane! If it isn't true, I've checked into my last motel room! If it isn't true, I've made my last all-night flight! But if it is true, get the soul winning organized! If it is true, plead for God's power! If it is true, get the buses rolling! If it is true, let's set our preacher boys on fire! If it is true, let's fill the baptistries every week! If it is true, let's quit trading the prayer closet for the voting booth! If it is true, let's quit turning bus captains into precinct captains! If it is true, let's keep our concern about the murder of the unborn, but be more concerned about the salvation of the born! If it is true, let's keep our burden for the right to life but have a bigger burden for the right to eternal life! If it is true, let's get back to the old-fashioned, window-rattling, shingle-pulling, barn- storming, Hell-fire and brimstone, Bible preaching; to Christ-honoring, soul-winning, Heaven-populating preaching! If it is true, let's dust off some of our old sermons on Hell and use them again!

If it is true, "Let's talk about Jesus, the King of kings is He, the Lord of lords supreme, throughout eternity; the great I Am, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Door; let's talk about Jesus more and more!" If it is true, let's organize more soul-winning campaigns than voter-registration campaigns! If it is true, let's get back to soul winning, which is really the answer! Soul winning will sober more alcoholics than Alcoholics Anonymous. Soul winning will clean more slums than social programs. Soul winning will feed more hungry bodies than welfare. Soul winning will save America quick- er than politics. Soul winning will do more for educating children than Head Start Programs. Soul winning will keep folks from burning in Hell!

If it is true, let's get back to talking about souls more than about offerings! If it is true, let's get back to talking about baptisms more than about registrations! If it is true, let's do church work more than school work! If it is true, let's make the Sunday school more important than the day school! If it is true, let's make the Sunday school teacher more important than the history teacher! If it is true, let's make the deacon more important than the school board! If it is true, let's make saving souls more important than basketball goals! If it is true, let's make soul-winning clubs more important

than fellowship groups! If it is true, let’s find the answer in the Father’s house instead of in the White House!

All I ask is, "Dear preacher, is there a Hell?" Oh, for old- fashioned preaching about warning people about the wrath of God, the old-fashioned preaching that has a Hell that’s hot and sin that’s black and an eternity that’s long.

Several years ago a man was dying. I was called to his bedside, and these were his dying words: ’Teacher, don’t lie to me. I’m dying. Is there really a Heaven? Tell me. Is it true that there’s a Heaven?"

I ask you this question: Is there really a Heaven? Is there "a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we can see it afar, for the Father waits over the way, to prepare us a dwelling place there"? Is it true that in my Rither’s house are many mansions? Is it true that He has gone to prepare a place for me’? Is it true that He will come again? Is it true that He will receive me unto Himself? Is it true that where He is, there will I be also? Is it true that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord? Is it true that John saw the Holy City, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband? Is it true that "when we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we first begun"? Is it true that at 3:37 p.m. on September 30, 1984, my Mama really went to Heaven? Is it true that she is in Heaven now? Is it true that she is with her two little girls who preceded her in death many years before? Can she actually see Lorene, and is she with Hazel now? Is it true that her blind eyes can now see? Are her shoulders really straight? Is she beholding the face of the One she loved more than life? Is her face unwrinkled? Is her brow unfurrowed? Can I really sing, "Tell Mother I’ll Be There"? Does she hear me preach? Can she walk? Can she run? Can she jump? Can she hear? Is she watching me now’? Was she wrong when she said on her death bed, "There’s Lorene; there’s Hazel; there’s Uncle Harvey and Aunt Jimmie"? Is she really free of pain? Was she right as we talked and held hands and she said, "I’m going to Heaven, son," and we joined hands and sang, "0 they tell me of a home far beyond the sky; 0 they tell me of a home far away; 0 they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise; 0 they tell me of an unclouded day"? Is there a Heaven? Is there a Hell? Will my mother really never hurt again? Is there a city really being built there with streets of gold and gates of pearl? Was I right when I stood beside my mother’s bed and told her of Heaven? Was I right at the airport when I called her after she had died, temporarily forgetting that she was gone? The operator said, "Sir, no one answers," and I said, "Oh, I forgot, operator. Last Thursday she moved to a new address." Did she really move to a new address? Is my good friend, Dr. John Rice, really with Jesus? Is Brother Lester Roloff beholding the face of his Saviour? Is Dr. Ford Porter talking to Him now? Is Dr. Bill Rice actually with Him?

I ask you: Is there a Hell? Is there a Heaven? Do we really stand between the living and dead? Is Jesus really the difference? Is the need of man the old rugged cross? Was Paul’s message to the Philippian jailor really right when he said, ’Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"? Did God really so love "the world that He gave His only begotten Son"? Then what else matters?

Oh, men of God, it is true! There is a Heaven! There is a Hell! There is a Jesus! There is a virgin birth! There is a sinless life! There is a vicarious death! There is a bodily resurrection! There is an ascension! There is a coming back to the earth on the part of the Saviour! There is a rapture!

There is a tribulation! There is a millennium! There is a New Jerusalem! It's real! There is a Hell! There is a Heaven! As we stand to preach, we do stand between the living and the dead! May God give us that awareness as we walk to the pulpit Sunday after Sunday, as we hold the censer of the Word of God high to stay the plague, as we stand between the living and the dead!

2.15. Chapter 15 The Preacher and Language

Chapter 15 The Preacher and Language

There are several things that should be sacred to a nation: (1) Its flag, (2) Its National Anthem, (3) Its landmarks, (4) Its Pledge of Allegiance, and (5) Its language. We cringe at the thought of profaning any of these. Nothing raises to a boiling point the blood of a patriot like seeing his flag abused or profaned. A number of years ago a group of rebels gathered across the street from our church, took an American flag, dipped it in soapy water and washed a car with it. I organized a posse of our men, and we went over and captured the flag from the rebels. We were infuriated, and justly so!

All patriotic Americans are alarmed when people remain seated during the playing of the National Anthem. One fellow mentioned to me that he was at a ballgame. The person next to him did not stand during the playing of the National Anthem. My friend grabbed him by the collar, jerked him up and said, "You stand up, fellow, while our National Anthem is being played!" Whether or not this is the action all of us would have taken, it is the action that all true Americans would like to take! Not many years ago some hoodlums defaced the Statue of Liberty. All of us who hold the United States dear were shocked and angered by this defamation.

We are equally alarmed when someone refuses to pay homage to our country by refusing to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

All of the above abuses are abhorrent to those of us who love America and its heritage; yet people who would not dare profane the flag, the National Anthem, our landmarks and the Pledge of Allegiance, think nothing about defacing the fifth of those things which are sacred to us-our language. Now I am in no way a grammatical Pharisee, nor do I feel superior to those who have not had the opportunity to learn the language, nor do I condemn in the least a faithful preacher of the Gospel whose grammar is imperfect because of interrupted or denied training. Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. used to say, "I would rather a man say, ’I seen,’ who has seen something than to say, ’I have seen,’ who ain’t seen nothin’." I agree with him; yet I believe that the man of God should equip himself with the best tools available. I am not criticizing a person who drives a nail with the heel of his shoe, but a hammer would do better. I am not criticizing a person who eats with his fingers, but a fork and a spoon would be better; nor am I criticizing a sincere man of God who because of circumstances has not been allowed to acquaint himself with the English language as he would like to have done, but I do feel that the best equipment available should be used in the proclamation of the Word of God! If a person is using the best tools that are available to him, he certainly will have me in his corner cheering; and regardless of what language he used to proclaim Christ, I will pull for him and in no way criticize him; but as we have opportunity as God’s men, we need to polish our tools as much as possible. One of these tools is our language. The English language is the preacher’s trowel, his hammer; his scalpel, his chisel. The English language is the conveyor of his feelings. The more words and phrases that the preacher knows and the more proper his grammar is, the more effectively can he convey his true feelings to those who hear him.

Not only is the language the means of conveying the preacher's feelings, but it is also his means of thinking. We think in the English language, so the better that we know it, the better we can think. Not to know it well limits our minds, for the language is not only a tool with which to convey thoughts and feelings, but it is a tool with which we exercise and improve the mind. The language is also the way of communicating truth. It is the vehicle by which truth is passed from one mind to another, so the more of the language we know and the better we know it, the more able we are to communicate truth.

Someone said to a famous preacher one time, "God doesn't need your education." The preacher replied, "God doesn't need your ignorance, either." Bear in mind, we are not talking here about the person with limited opportunity. We are talking about the person who refuses opportun- ity or squanders it. We are not being critical of those with limited vocabularies; we are simply encouraging God's men to learn better how to communicate, how to think, how to transfer truth and how to express their feelings.

Language is one of the greatest unifiers of people. When the tower of Babel was built in the book of Genesis, it was done so in order that the people might become one, but God looked down and did not want them to become one; that is, He did not want them to have a one-world government, a one-world religion, etc. So God went down and confounded the language. Because of this, they were scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. Their method of unity had been taken from them.

Because of the aforementioned reasons, English is probably the most important subject for a ministerial student to study in college. Immediately the reader may think that the Bible is the most important, and he may be right. However; a successful preacher will study his Bible. A good Christian will read his Bible. God's man will search the Bible for truth and in the years following his college training, he will continually live in his Bible, but he will not continually live in his English book. Certainly he should take all the Bible in college that he can, but he should give unlimited emphasis to the learning of the English language. With it he will preach the Bible. With it he will tell of the grace of God. Whether by pen or tongue, every sermon he preaches or writes will be done in the language. Not to know it and use it well will limit his opportunity of adequately expressing the love of God and transfer- ring from his mind to the minds of the people the great truths of the Bible. If the preacher does not know it well, he should use it in the best way he can, but his best should continually improve! This is not just in order to reach a few educated snobs and grammatical Pharisees. This is so he can more effectively proclaim the greatest truths in all the world-those that God has revealed to man!

Thank God for the English language-that beautiful heirloom handed down from our fathers. May we guard it carefully and hand it down in its purity to those who follow us, and may I while I am its custodian learn it to its fullest so that I may properly express the real "me" to you, and may I so preserve it that I can express to you what I really am, what I really know and what I really feel.

Let me show you the crime of profaning the language. Read John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was John." John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Revelation 19:13, "And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God." You will notice these verses have at least one

thing in common. In each of them Jesus is called The Word of God. Why was He called the Word? Because He was God's way of expressing Himself to man just as our words are our way of expressing ourselves to man. Since Jesus is the Word of God, or God's way of expressing Himself to man, I rebel when He is not expressed properly and when someone mars the perfection of God's expression of Himself to mankind. I rebel when someone refutes and rejects the virgin birth, for the virgin birth is one of the letters in God's Word. It mars God's expressing of Himself to man. I rebel when someone rejects the sinless life of Christ; they are marring God's Word, or God's expression of Himself to man. I feel equal disdain when people deny the vicarious death, reject the bodily resurrection, verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, etc. Why do I have this rebellion and disdain? I have it simply because God's method of expressing Himself to man has been marred.

Man has a way of expressing himself to man. This expression is done through his word, or his language. What a tragedy to mar it and to profane it! Just as a sinful Jesus would be an inadequate expression of God, the man; even so a misused and abused lan- guage limits man's expression of himself to man. If one person really loves another; he should have all the tools possible with which to express that love. If a preacher really wants to convey truth to his people, he should have all the tools possible with which to convey that truth.

Now what can the preacher do who has not had the opportunities that he would have preferred? There are several things he can do.

1. He should Learn to spell. He can get a spelling book, just like a child in the first grade, get with a friend who understands, and learn to spell! For the preacher to say, "I never could spell very well," is not a shame. For the preacher to say, "I never will learn to spell very well," is a shame.

2. The preacher should learn new words on a regular basis. Learn a new word a week. It will be another weapon in your arsenal, another vitamin in your menu, and another tool that you can use in the expression of yourself and in your revealing of God's truths to your people.

3. Read. Nothing will substitute for it. One of the reasons we do not know the language is that we do not see it enough. One of the reasons that we do not spell properly is that we do not see words enough. People who read extensively will soon learn how to spell properly. People who read proper grammar will one day use proper grammar. Read, read, read, read, read! Of course, choose carefully what you read, but read! Of course, do not read heresy, but read!

4. Write. Write sermons. Write essays. Write poetry As you write, use a dictionary When you doubt the spelling of a word, look it up.

5. Do not use improper words. It is a shame and a tragedy what this generation has done to its language. Money is "bread"; a good time is "a blast"; an uncooperative person is "a square"; a nice person is "cool." We call young ladies "guys," and in general, we have profaned one of the things that should be most sacred to us our language.

I was in Jamaica preaching. On Monday I checked into the hotel It was a small hotel, so the owner and his wife and five-year-old daughter were at the desk when I arrived. They were so gracious to me. I had never been treated with any more hospitality and courtesy After chatting with them for awhile I looked to their little five-year-old daughter and said, "My, you are a real little sweet- heart!" Immediately their attitude toward me changed! Their treat- ment of me became cool and distant,

and sometimes bordered on being rude. I couldn’t understand it. All week they treated me that way While the pastor was driving me to the airport on Friday, I told him what had happened and asked him if he had any idea what caused their treatment of me to change. The pastor said, "Dr. Hyles, you don’t know? I thought you knew. When you checked in on Monday and called their daughter "a sweetheart," you were actually calling her in Jamaican language a prostitute! You thought you were saying, ’You are a little sweetheart.’ What you really were saying is, ’You are a little prostitute.’ "Think of it! A week of my life was lived in misunderstanding because of a misuse of the language! On Monday night of that week I preached to a group of Jamaican preachers and missionaries. I kept stressing a truth that Christian people should get out, knock on doors and tell folks about Christ. I noticed that there was a subdued response on the part of the Jamaican people. I could not understand it. I did understand, however, when after the service I was asked by a Jamaican, "What is this thing that you preached about tonight called "knocking on doors"?

I was stunned! Then I told him that that means that we should go out where people are and visit their home and tell them about Jesus. He said, "Oh, you mean hold-doggin’." I said, "What in the world is hold-doggin’?" He said, "That is the same thing to us that knocking on doors is to you." He proceeded to tell me that not many of the homes in his neighborhood even had doors. It was not a door that kept the family safe; it was the dog in the entrance of the house! So when you go up to tell someone about Christ or visit in the home you simply holler; "Hold the dog!" They call that "hold-doggin’." The next night I preached on, "Go into all the world and do hold- doggin’." It was quite humorous as I challenged them to go hold- doggin’ and scolded them because they were not going hold- doggin’ enough! The language is important. Of course, no one should be critical of another or think himself superior to another because his gram- mar or use of the English language is superior to that of his friend, but each of us should do the best that we can to learn the language and its use in order that we may better convey to those whom we love our true feelings and to those whom we preach a proper presentation of the truth that God gives us for a message!

2.16. Chapter 16 The Care and the Use of the Preacher's Voice

Chapter 16 The Care and the Use of the Preacher’s Voice The voice of God’s man is the thing that is used to transfer what is in his mind to the minds of his people. It is the vehicle which God has chosen with which to deliver His truth to His people. Because of this, the preacher must take extra care of his voice. It matters not how spiritual he is, how sincere he is or how prepared he is; when his voice is gone, his primary purpose is gone. John the Baptist was called a voice. Because of the importance of the preacher’s voice, he should watch it carefully and care for it properly There are four things that cause voice trouble for a preacher.

I. STRAIN.

Strain is almost always caused by improper care of the voice and by improper knowledge of its limitations. There are many things that a preacher can do to prevent this enemy from hampering or eliminating his opportunity for doing the thing that God has called him to do and being the thing that God has called him to be.

1. Perform vocal exercise. Any muscle in the human body needs exercise. Athletic teams must properly exercise before a game or they will damage their muscles. The wise pastor will perform vocal exercises before preaching and, for that matter; make them a part of his regular schedule. Singers are taught to exercise their voices before concerts. Athletes are taught to exercise their bodies before games. Soldiers exercise their bodies before battle. Why shouldn’t the preacher exercise his voice before preaching! When God called me to preach, I saw no way that I could ever be a success at it! I went to the Texas University at Arlington and told the Dean that I was going to be a preacher; so he gave me permis- sion to take an excessive number of speech and public speaking courses. It was there that I learned to exercise my voice, and though I do not have the strongest voice in the world, it has enabled me to preach over 42,500 sermons over a period of nearly 40 years. This I think would not have been possible had I not been taught vocal exercises. In the morning early I use the long vowels preceded by an "h"-like "ha, ha, ha, he~, he~, he~, hi, hi, hi, ho, ho, ho, hu~, hu, hu." I exercise with my voice coming from the stomach and not from the throat. Then I do the same thing with the short vowels, "ha, ha, ha, he, he, he, hi, hi, hi, ho, ho, ho, hu, hu, hu." Then I put my hands on my stomach and do the same thing several times. Then I lay across the bed with my head hanging off the side of the bed and go through the same exercises several times. If a preacher has the slightest voice problem he should, while he is young, take voice lessons and learn the proper care for that part of his anatomy which is the same thing as a hammer is to a carpenter, a stethoscope is to a doctor; a scalpel is to a surgeon, a trowel is to a brick mason and a needle is to a seamstress.

2. Arise early in the morning; drink a big, tall glass of hot water; and then do the vocal exercises. Some people put a little lemon juice in the hot water. This is a good way for a preacher to start the day 3. Avoid lying down and/or taking naps right before speaking.

4. Sing a lot. Singing is good voice exercise. Of course, this should not be excessively loud singing; just sing with a normal singing voice, being careful to sing from the diaphragm or stomach rather than the throat.

5. Do some public speaking prior to the service in which you will preach. I find it helpful to teach a Sunday school class before I preach on Sunday morning and to speak in some way at an early service on Sunday evening. Since the teaching of a class is not as strenuous as preaching, I find it good vocal exercise for the preach mg that is to follow.

6. Stay calm at other events. The preacher should find some way to express his enthusiasm and excitement at a ball game other than straining his voice.

7. Pronounce words distinctly A mispronunciation of words is usually caused by improper training and will often cause prob- lems with the speaker's voice. The same thing that causes a preacher to mispronounce his words also causes the voice to become strained. The wise pastor will work diligently in an effort to learn to pronounce properly his vocabulary

8. Do not force excitement. Forced excitement tightens the voice muscles. Let the excitement while preaching come from the heart to the voice, not from the voice to the heart. When excitement comes from the heart to the voice, it is a natural excitement and will aid in taking the voice to the diaphragm. When excitement is not natural, it lifts the voice to the throat and leads to strain. It is usually best for a preacher not to start his sermons with a loud voice. Start with a calm, assured voice. Then when excitement comes in the heart, the heart will send the throat a message and say that it is ready now for volume! The heart has done its work first, and strain is less likely.

9. Start slowly. Have you ever noticed two prize fighters in the ring at the beginning of round one? They spar awhile; each feels out his opponent; and then gradually the intensity builds. This is what the wise preacher will do. Re will start gradually, let his voice become adjusted to a certain pitch, and then the volume can be increased without damaging the throat.

10. Stay close to the microphone. Use the microphone! I do not like for the public address men to "ride gain" on me while I preach. By that I mean, if I get loud, I do not like for them to turn down the volume of the public address system. If I get soft, I do not like for them to turn it up. I prefer to use voice fluctuation rather than "riding gain." Because of this, I do not prefer to use a lapel mike. Many splendid preachers use them with great success; however; I would not advise a preacher who has even the slightest problem with his voice to use a lapel mike.

11. You should be able to hear your amplified voice. The public address system should have speakers placed close enough to the preacher so he can hear his own voice easily. Avoid using small speakers throughout the auditorium. The sound should come from speakers near the preacher so he can hear himself. Often I will preach in a church building where the people can hear me better than I can hear myself. This always poses a problem. In an effort to hear myself I speak louder than I should. I soon find myself hoarse and often make the mistake of straining my voice.

12. Use an excessive amount of treble on the PA system with not much bass. Get behind a microphone and test this for yourself. Ask someone to adjust the PA system to be heavy on bass. In fact, turn the treble all the way down and the bass all the way up. Notice how muffled the words

seem to be. Then turn the bass all the way down and the treble all the way up and notice how much easier it is to understand the words. This is not to say that the treble should be all the way up and the bass all the way down, but the emphasis should be on the treble rather than on the bass.

13. Do not use an adjuster or a mixer on your PA system. This will lower the volume automatically when you speak loudly and will raise it when you speak softly This may be good for lecturing, but is treacherous for preaching. Some electronic engineers who have never preached love them, but no real preacher enjoys preach- ing when the volume of his voice is controlled by a machine. of all the things that destroy my voice and cause me to strain it, this is the one that does the most damage the quickest!

14. Use a change of pace while preaching. Do not preach an entire sermon at full volume. Give your voice a chance to rest. An athlete does this with his body. A preacher should do it with his voice. This also enables the hearer to have a chance to relax. It provides added effectiveness. If everything is emphasized, nothing is emphasized. For proper care of the voice, there should be some loud speaking, some soft speaking, some conversational tone and a variety of volume.

15. Exercise your voice on days you do not do any public speaking. The voice is like a muscle. It can be sore if it is not used regularly A preacher who preaches daily and who cares for his voice properly will have less voice trouble than a preacher who preaches one day a week, all other things being equal. So on days when the voice is not used for preaching, it should be exercised on a regular basis.

16. Try to avoid tension while preaching. The more relaxed the preacher can be, the less likely he is to strain his voice. Enjoy preaching. Don’t let it be a chore or a time of unnecessary tension. Relax in the Lord while you preach. Enjoy it, and avoid tension as much as possible.

17. Use your voice early in the service so as to test it and therefore learn how to pace yourself and use it when you preach. By that I mean, make the announcements and/or recognize the visitors so that you will know your voice and its condition before you stand to preach.

18. If following another preacher, learn to be yourself Do not fret if he has taken the congregation to a high pitch and to a lofty spiritual experience. Realize that God has you there for a purpose too. Do not compete with him. Do not fret or try to out-preach him. Just be yourself. Yield yourself to the Holy Spirit and let Him use you for the purpose that He has you there.

19. Do not try to deliver a sermon, but deliver your soul and lose yourself in a truth. The throat loosens when a preacher is lost in his message. When he is totally consumed with what he is saying, there is less strain on his voice.

II. TENSION.

Just as strain causes voice problems, tension is also a great enemy to preaching.

1. Prepare in advance, and avoid the meeting of a deadline. When a deadline is approaching, the preacher’s entire body be- comes tense. It affects his voice and will lead him to not having his tool sharpened for its work.

2. Do not discuss problems before preaching. Do not allow church problems or personal problems to be a part of your con- versation or thinking process before you preach. Problems will tense up the body, including the voice, and often cause serious voice problems while preaching.

3. Take care of no church business before preaching. Do not have board meetings, committee meetings or counseling sessions that could cause tension.

4. Do not read your mail before preaching. It could bring some bad messages that could cause you to enter the pulpit with a tense body and a tense throat.

5. Avoid fellowship before preaching. There should be no coun- seling or fellowship. This too could create tension that could affect the voice.

6. Avoid heavy praying before preaching. This is mentioned in another chapter and on both occasions I approach this point with fear and trembling for fear I be misunderstood. I believe in heavy praying. I believe in all-night praying. I believe in fasting and praying. I believe in supplication and prayer, but I do not believe that right before a sermon is the time for a preacher to become tense. It can affect his voice adversely

Nothing should be done that would take the slightest chance of causing any disagreement before the man of God walks in the pulpit. This will not only affect him adversely in his preaching, but also it could damage his voice.

7. Always preach with a collar that is loose. If you like to button your collar while preaching, then buy shirts that are a half size too large. Do not be timid about unbuttoning your collar and slightly loosening your tie. Of course, there are circumstances when this should not be done. These would include commencement exer- cises, weddings, funerals, etc., but behind his own pulpit, the pastor should feel free to do what is necessary to care for his voice.

8. Do not preach to individuals. This also is mentioned else- where under another subject, but when a preacher preaches to individuals and uses the pulpit as a whipping post or scolding place, he will more than likely become tense, and his voice could be affected.

All of this is to say that the preacher should avoid tension. Voice problems are caused not only by strain but also by tension.

III. STOMACH.

Most voice problems are really stomach problems. If the stom- ach is in good shape, the voice is usually in good shape.

1. Never speak right after eating. I try to leave at least three hours between my last meal and my sermon.

2. Eat very little at bedtime.

3. Wear loose clothing. Tight pants can cause a problem with the preacher’s voice while he delivers his sermon.

4. Rely a lot on juices. Many years ago I used to preach revival campaigns. Sometimes I would begin a revival campaign with a hoarseness. When such was the case, I would get off all solid

foods and stay on vegetable and fruit juices for the entire revival. Usually my voice was in better shape at the end of the revival meeting than it was at the beginning.

5. Eat plenty of vegetables. Though I do not live on strictly a vegetarian diet, I believe that I could do so because I believe one of the great secrets to health is the consumption of many vegetables. Eat salads that include lettuce, celery, greens, cucumbers, etc. Then enjoy cooked vegetables such as carrots, asparagus, green beans, zucchini, squash, greens and other leafy vegetables.

6. Avoid dairy products within two hours of preaching. Dairy products have a way of causing a congestion in the throat and should be used on a limited basis and not at all near the time of preaching.

IV. COLDS AND SORE THROATS.

I travel every week. In January I am in the Florida Keys one week and in Alaska the next week. I go from sub-zero weather to tropical weather within a matter of days. I am in all types of climates, all degrees of humidity, and I must constantly watch myself. Thanks be to God, I have not missed a speaking engagement in over 20 years. Part of this is because I fight constantly to avoid sore throats and colds.

1. Keep your head and feet warm and dry. My mother used to say to me, "Son, the most important thing about being outside in the cold is to keep the extremities warm. Keep your feet warm and your head warm."

2. Avoid drafts. Avoid drafts on airplanes, while driving in a car, while sleeping, and by all means, while preaching. Pamper your- self. When you are in a draft, do whatever you can to have it removed or to have yourself removed from it.

3. Watch auditorium temperature. A building that is too hot or too cold can play havoc with a preacher’s voice. Every Sunday morning at 7:45 I go to the auditorium in our church, read the temperature and look at a chart of days in the past when the outdoor temperature was nearly the same. Then my maintenance man and I decide the degree of heat or air conditioning that we will need for the service.

4. You may be wise to wear year-around suits. It may be below zero outside, but the temperature in the auditorium will be about the same in January that it is in July If the preacher preaches in a heavy wool suit in January and a thin light suit in July in the same auditorium with the same temperature, it could affect his voice and his throat.

5. Always keep a coat, a hat and rubber shoes available. Weather can change. In the fall and winter do not be very far from a hat, coat and rubber shoes. If the preacher must stay late after the service, it might be wise to have some dry underclothing available. If he is perspiring heavily when he finishes his sermon, it might be wise for him to consider changing his undershirt and perhaps his shirt before counseling or fellowship or caring for other duties before he goes home.

There are many other things that a preacher should do or avoid doing, but time and space will not permit us to cover them. For example, it is wise for a preacher to choose a sermon that will fit the condition of his voice. It is wise for him to know the condition of his voice and to decide to keep his sermon within the range of his voice for that particular day.

Perhaps the most important thing that we can say is, let your voice be honest. Let it show your heart. Use the same voice in preaching that you always use. Be yourself and take good care of that part of your anatomy that God has chosen to use to spread His truth, to train His people, and to point sinners to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world! You have only one voice; it is the only one you will ever have! Take care of it! God needs it!

2.17. Chapter 17 The Importance of Preaching

Chapter 17 The Importance of Preaching

Several years ago a poll was taken among preachers concerning the different duties of the ministry: (1) administration, (2) teaching, (3) preaching, (4) pastoring, (5) priestly work, and (6) church business. The question was asked to hundreds of preachers, "What do you think is the most important of these ministries?" Overwhelmingly the response was, "Preaching." The second question was asked: "Which occupies most of your time?" To that question the answer was overwhelmingly, "Adminis- tration," and preaching was last on the list.

How tragic! That which we feel is most important is what we do the least.

Oh, how America needs preaching! When John Knox left Scotland, the country had deteriorated morally and spiritually. Finally John Knox decided to return to Scotland. It is said that on every street corner the word was being spread, "Knox is coming! Knox is coming! Knox is coming!" The entire country was filled with electricity because the preacher was returning. Scotland needed Knox. England needed Spurgeon. America needed Moody, and this old sin-cursed world needs preaching again! In Isaiah 61:1, Isaiah called himself a preacher. In Luke 4:18 Jesus was a preacher. In 2 Peter 2:5 Noah was called "a preacher of righteousness." In Ecclesiastes 1:1 Solomon was called "the Preacher." In 1 Timothy 2:7 Paul said that he was "ordained a preacher." In Mark 1:14 we find that Jesus came to Galilee "preaching the Gospel." In Matthew 3:1 a we find, "In those days came John the Baptist, preach- ing." In Jonah 3:2 Jonah was admonished to preach to Nineveh the preaching that God bade him to preach. Acts 8:4 says, "Therefore they that are scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word." In Acts 14:1 we find that they "so spake" that multitudes believed. Oh, how we need some "so-speakers!" Preaching is exactly that. It is "so-speaking." The most important hour of the week in a nation is the hour when God’s men approach the pulpit. Several years ago the mayor of our city called our offices. Our receptionist answered the phone, whereupon the mayor asked if he could speak with Jack. Our receptionist replied that there was no one here who answered to the name Jack. The mayor told her that there was such a person there, and that he was the pastor, and he said, "Let me talk to Jack!" Our receptionist said, "Your honor; we have nobody here who answers to that name. We have a Brother Hyles, we have a Preacher Hyles, we have a Pastor Hyles, we have a Dr. Hyles, but no one answers to the name Jack." The mayor told her that he wanted her to know that he was the mayor. She replied that she wanted him to know that she was the receptionist and that she would connect him to my office if he would call me the proper title! Finally he yielded and she put the call through. She was not being stubborn; she was simply giving to the preacher his proper position and to preaching its proper place!

Years ago I was on an airplane flying to Denver; Colorado. I sat down beside a man who appeared to be a businessman. He had on a very beautiful navy blue suit and was very neatly dressed. We talked for some time before we introduced ourselves by name. I finally asked him what business he pursued. He replied that he was a chemical engineer. He then asked me, "Do you know

anything about chemistry?"

I replied, "Yes, I know a little." (I did know a little. I knew that H2O was water; that AU was gold, and that I dropped chemistry in college for the safety of the student body!) Re informed me that he was so impressed that a layman was knowledgeable about chemis- try I assured him that I did know a little-a little is exactly what I knew! He called off a long formula and said, "What do you think about that?"

I replied, "I like the good in that formula, but I am concerned about the bad."

He said, "Put her there! That is exactly how I feel. I am so refreshed to know that you know a little about chemistry." He then called off another formula that made the other look very simple.. He said, "What do you think about that one?"

I said, "Well, I feel that we should not make an opinion on that one until we are sure and that a person should not make a hasty decision."

Again, he said, "Put her there! That's exactly how I feel. How refreshing it is to meet someone who is a layman who knows something about chemistry!"

Then he asked me the $64,000 question: "What is your busi- ness?" he asked.

I suddenly replied, "I am an ambassador."

He sat up in his seat and said, "Sir; do you mean that you are a real, live ambassador?"

I said, "That's exactly right."

He said, "I've never met an ambassador before. May I shake your hand?"

I said, "You certainly may" After we had shaken hands, he said, "Sir, let's get this straight. You mean your citizenship is in another country, and you represent a king here in America?" Well, praise God, that's exactly what I've been doing for years, so I said, "Yes, sir. My citizenship is in another country, and I represent a King in America!" He said, "Sir; could I ask you, what country and what king?" I replied that the country was Heaven and that the King was Jesus! He smiled and in fifteen minutes he too was an ambassador and a citizen of my country.

Years ago I read a famous Southern preacher's sermon entitled, "I Magnify Mine Office." How important it is to magnify the office of a preacher!

Preaching is teaching with a tear in the eye. Preaching is truth on fire. Preaching is the Word of God in the hand, the fire of God in the heart and the zeal of God in the soul. Preaching is the gift of God wrapped in an excited voice. Preaching is the moral conscience of a nation. Preaching is the soul of the church. Preaching is the throne room of society Preaching is the scepter and crown of the preacher. Preaching is the moral level of the succeeding generation. It was preaching that originally built our secular colleges. It was preach- ing that originally built our public school system. It was preaching that originally established our law system, and in the early days of our country, a degree in theology was a prerequisite to a law degree. Every great denomination was founded on preaching. It was John Wesley who said, "I just set myself on fire and folks come to watch me as I burn."

Sam Jones, the famous Methodist evangelist, went to a workers' conference one day with a friend. As they rode their horses home, Sam Jones looked to his friend and said, "I learned something today" His friend asked what he had learned, whereupon Sam Jones replied, "I learned that my pulpit is my throne, and I am a king." Richard Baxter said, "I preached as never sure to preach again, as a dying man to dying men.

John Hall said, "A strong and faithful pulpit is the safeguard to a nation's life."

Thomas Betterton said, "Actors speak of things imaginary as if they were real; preachers speak of things real as if they were imaginary"

Philip Brooks said, "Preaching is truth delivered through per- sonality. Preaching is personal counseling on a group scale."

Hugh Latimer said, "Preaching is the delivering of meat, not strawberries."

John Newton said, "Preaching is breaking the hard heart and healing the broken one.

William R. Nicoll said, "Of all vocations, the Christian ministry is the most sacred, the most exacting and the most humbling."

Richard Whately said, 'Preach not because you have to say something but because you have something to say"

Abraham Lincoln said, 'When I hear a man preaching, I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees."

Preaching is the answer. Let nothing take its place. Let no concert be given at preaching time. Let no cantata be given at preaching time. Let no movie substitute for the preaching of the Gospel. Let no vespers take the place of preaching. Let no play or dramatical presentation be given at preaching time. Preaching is the loftiest of the professions and the greatest of the arts.

Preaching is truth set on fire. Preaching is demolition of error. Preaching is doubt's healing balm. Preaching is the Holy Spirit's amplifier. Preaching is the Saviour's projector. Preaching is fact on fire and truth aflame. Preaching is worship's entree. Preaching is the adornment of the Bible. Preaching is the power of God unto salvation. Preaching is revival's forerunner. Preaching is the church's heart. Preaching is doctrine clothed in excitement. Preaching is love's smile. Preaching is sin's greatest adversary. Preaching is frustration's funeral. Preaching is doubt's demise. Preaching is fear's failure. Preaching is depression's death. Preach- mg is disappointment's decline. Preaching is faith's food. Preach- ing is profundity delivered in simplicity. Preaching was the first thing done by the Mayflower pilgrims. Preaching is the mender of broken relationships. Preaching is the healer of broken hearts. Preaching is the revival of broken dreams. Preaching is Hell's greatest enemy Preaching is the sinner's best friend. Preaching is the saint's diner. Preaching is genius with a halo. Preaching is fire in the pulpit that melts the ice in the pew.

Preaching saved Nineveh, ignited Pentecost and turned the Jude- an wilderness into a Baptist revival. When the man of God approaches the pulpit, let angels stop flying, let Heaven's hosannahs hush, let adults hearken and chil- dren listen, let young people be alert, let E. F Hutton pay attention, let Heaven respond, let Hell tremble, let ushers sit down and listen, let the church

wait in holy expectation, let all eternity tremble, let Satan and his angels be anointed with fear!

Oh, how I love preaching! I have preached on street corners. I have preached in jail houses. I have preached in taverns. I have preached in brush arbors. I have preached in tents. I have preached from the back of pick-up trucks. I have preached in city parks. I have preached in barber shops. I have preached in living rooms. I have preached on vacant lots. I have preached in school rooms. I have preached in city auditoriums. I have preached in coliseums. I have preached in football stadiums. I have preached in gym- nasiums. I have preached in opera houses. I have preached in many of our states, including Hawaii and Alaska. I have preached in Canada, Mexico, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Jerusalem, Egypt, Japan, St. Thomas, Cyprus, Lebanon, Germany, Jordan and other coun- tries around the world. Over 42,500 times I have stood and pro- claimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is nothing like it! Thank God for preaching, and thank God for making me a preacher!

Years ago I was preaching in the city of Wichita, Kansas, at a convention. The convention was held in a beautiful church au- ditorium, but the preaching pulpit was over in a comer, and there was another pulpit in the other corner of the platform. I stood in the corner and tried to preach, but I simply could not do it. I had no other recourse. I just lifted up the pulpit and carried it to the middle of the platform and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I simply cannot preach when preaching is put in the corner. I must preach when preaching is the center and the focal point of the service." Hallelu- jah for preaching!

Now I am not minimizing social work. I am not minimizing the importance of the Christian being involved in politics. I am not minimizing fighting for righteousness. I am simply exalting preaching. If I had my way, every tavern would be padlocked. If I had my way, prohibition would return to America. If [had my way, to make or sell alcoholic beverages would be a penitentiary of- fence. If I had my way, driving while intoxicated would be a major crime. If I had my way, one who killed another while under the influence of alcohol would be considered a murderer. If I had my way, every package store in America would close, and no stewar- dess would ever again walk down the aisle of an airplane serving alcoholic beverages! If I had my way, not one sweet woman would be hit again by a drunken husband. If I had my way, not one child would see his dad walk out. If I had my way, not one mother would be left to rear her children alone. If! had my way, no one who sits in Congress would be allowed to drink as he governs the affairs of our nation. If I had my way, no judge on a bench would be allowed to drink. If I had my way, no car would ever swerve, no hotel would have a lounge, no Playboy bunny would take liquid poison to tables of deceived customers, no TV screen would advertise John Bar- leycorn. If I had my way, not one child would be orphaned by alcohol, and the local tavern owner would not be a respected member of society. Yet, in spite of my hatred for the liquor traffic, we are not commanded in the Bible to work in Alcoholics Anony- mous. We are not commanded to work in the Christian Temperance Union, though I am not opposed to those who work in either organization. We are not commanded to give our lives just to fighting liquor; but we are commanded to preach the Gospel and to preach righteousness. Preaching will close more taverns than Alco- holics Anonymous will, and it will dry up more cities than the Christian Temperance Union will.

If I had my way, every adult bookstore would be burned. If I had my way, every Playboy Magazine would be destroyed. If I had my way, all adult movie houses would be demolished. If I had my way,

every curse word would be taken from radio and television. If I had my way, no filth would ever appear on television screens. If I had my way, every questionable book would be banned from the school room. If I had my way, every nude painting would be taken from our art galleries. If I had my way, every immoral professor would be fired. If I had my way, books like CATCHER IN THE RYE would be declared unfit for use. If I had my way, every Playboy Club would be closed, never to reopen. If I had my way, Penthouse and all other dirty magazines would be made fuel for a bonfire. If I had my way, all sexy and suggestive shows would be removed from radio and television. If I had my way, rock music would be banned from the department stores and shopping centers. If I had my way, our newspapers would be free of profanity, and I am for every anti- smut organization in America. I am for the Anti-Defamation League, I am for the Clean-Up Television movements. Yet, we are not commanded just to be moral reformers by supporting organiza- tions that improve society, but we are commanded to preach!

If I had my way, every office in America would be filled by a capable, born-again fundamentalist. If I had my way, Lee Roberson would be President; Tom Malone, Secretary of State; Bob Jones, Secretary of War; David Gibbs, Attorney General; Wendell Evans, Secretary of Education; Bob Gray, Secretary of the Interior; Curtis Hutson, head of the Welfare Department; Gary Coleman, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Bill Pennell, President of Cuba; Johnny Ramsey, President of Mexico; Raymond Barber, Secretary of Finance; and John Rawlings, Secretary of Labor; Harold Henniger, Secretary of Agriculture; Bruce Cummons, Sec- retary of Finance. If I had my way, Bob Jones III would be Vice- President; Buddy Franklin, Governor of Maine; A. V. Henderson, Governor of Missouri; Myron Cedarholm, Governor of Wisconsin; Al Janney, Governor of Florida; Walt Handford, Governor of South Carolina; Steve Byrd, Governor of North Carolina; Bob Kelley, Governor of Tennessee; Cecil Hodges, Justice of the Supreme Court; Tom Wallace, Governor of California; Greg Dixon, Gover- nor of Indiana; Jim Vineyard, Governor of Oklahoma; Ed Nelson, Governor of Colorado; Wally Beebe, Secretary of Transportation; Bill Dowell, head of Department of Physical Fitness; Mrs. John R. Rice, head of National Organization for Women; David Cavin, Speaker of the House; Russell Anderson, Director of the National Budget; and Bob Billings, United States Representative to the United Nations. Every city would have a fundamentalist mayor; every school board would be staffed by fundamentalist deacons, every courtroom would be occupied by a fundamentalist lawyer, the security guards of Hyles-Anderson College would be the Indi- ana State Police, and the politics of our nation would be run under God; but in spite of this, we are not commanded to clean up politics, to head movements for better government or to head political actions groups, but we are commanded to preach!

If I had my way, not one Communist would ever speak on a college campus. If I had my way, Cuba would be blockaded until Russian troops are pulled out. If I had my way, every Communist book would be taken off the library shelves of every classroom in America, and every person found guilty of spreading Communism would be tried for treason. If I had my way, no Communist would ever again appear on a talk show, and the Communist party would be outlawed in the United States! If I had my way, no pink professor would ever again criticize George Washington; yet, in spite of this fact, we are never commissioned to head the Committee of Un- American Activities and we are never commanded to join the Anti- Communist League, but we are commanded to preach!

If I had my way, a person found guilty of growing or selling marijuana would be placed in prison. If I had my way, never again would a teacher teach evolution in our schools. If I had my way, the classroom would never be a place of profanity again. If I had my way, sex education would be turned back to the parents. If I had my way, it would be illegal to bottle or sell alcoholic beverages. If I had my way, there would not be a coeducational dorm in America. If I had my way, there would not be another half-time chorus line at a football game. If I had my way, no Christian child would be again ridiculed for refusing to dance at the local high school. If I had my way, not one girl would be allowed to attend school in a mini-skirt, shorts or pants. If I had my way, no Madalyn Murray O'Hair would be allowed to shake to faith of our youth, and yet we are never commanded in the Bible to join "Clean-up America" campaigns. I am for all of them, but there is no Bible command about it. There is a Bible command to preach!

If I had my way, there would be a fundamental Christian school in every city, town, village and neighborhood in America. If I had my way, every child would sit under a soul-winning teacher. If I had my way, no Christian young people would ever go to a heathen school. If I had my way, every school in America would be built on the Bible and its principles and would be bathed in prayer, but we are not commissioned to be educators primarily or to leave our pulpits for Christian education; we are commanded to preach!

If I had my way, America would be the strongest military power in the world again. If I had my way, America would have won the Vietnam War. If I had my way, we would never have relinquished the Panama Canal. If I had my way, not one gun control law would ever be passed in the United States so that only thieves and crooks would have guns and the common citizen would be at their mercy

If I had my way, America would never again enter into an arms treaty with Russia. We would simply become the most powerful nation on the face of the earth and ready to defend ourselves at any cost! If I had my way, the Bay of Pigs would not have failed. If I had my way, America would stand up in defense of Taiwan. If I had my way, America would pull out of the United Nations, and draft dodgers would be convicted of treason. If I had my way, our Navy would be second to none, our Air Force would be the greatest in the world, our Army would be the mightiest on earth, and we would stop Communist aggression in Cuba, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Cam- bodia, San Salvador; Iran, Poland, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Mexico. If I had my way, nobody on the face of the earth would live in fear of the slavery of Communism, and every free nation on earth would sleep peacefully because of our dedication to their indepen- dence and freedom. If I had my way, the mightiest military defense in history would be ours; and yet, we are not commanded in the Bible as God's men to spend our time improving the armed forces, but we are commanded to preach! The Pentagon needs to be improved, but the hope of this nation does not rest in the Pentagon. The White House needs to be improved, but the hope of this nation does not rest in the White House. God knows the Supreme Court could use a world of improvement, but the hope of this nation does not rest in the Supreme Court. Congress needs improving, but the hope of this nation does not nest in the Congress. Our city halls need cleaning up, but the hope of this nation does not rest in the city halls. The United Nations General Assembly could use some housecleaning, but the hope of this country and this world does not rest in the halls of the United Nations. It was preaching that saved Scotland under John Knox. It was preaching that spared England under Whitefield, Wesley and Spurgeon. It was preaching that spared America under Moody and Sunday, and it is

preaching that will save America again if she is ever saved. 1 Corinthians 1:21 b, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." It was preaching that inspired Pentecost. It was preaching that saved Nineveh. May God take us back to old-fashioned, Spirit-filled, Christ-honoring, sin-hating, soul-winning, Bible preaching! It is the hope of the church! It is the hope of the nation! It is the hope of the world!

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