

THE BIBLE NOTEBOOK

EPHESIANS

The Supremacy of God

The Sufficiency of Grace

A Practical Study

by

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FOREWORD

KENNY WAGNER

“How would you meet Kenny Wagner?” Chaplain Roscoe Hicks of the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman probably anticipated my interest because all the papers in the region had been carrying the story of his recent surrender to authorities after years of freedom. I was a ministerial student and Mississippi College, taking a course in criminology under Dr. R. R. Pearce. I had stopped by Parchman on my way home to Sledge, Mississippi to interview the chaplain concerning rehabilitation of criminals.

How would I like to meet Kenny Wagner? Wow! I had heard stories about Kenny Wagner for as long as I could remember. Kenny Wagner was the most notorious criminal in the history of Mississippi. He had killed several people in three or four states, but according to reports he had killed them in “shoot-outs” with law enforcement officers after they opened fire. This was all years before. For years he had trained bloodhounds and used them to run down escapes. His marksmanship was legendary and when a bloodhound trailed an escapee to a house the word was that if the bloodhound touched his nose to a door, Kenny Wagner stuck his foot through it and stepped in with a .38 S&W in his hand, and he always took the man back to Parchman. His reputation was such that, no matter how vicious the criminal, or how desperate, he did not resist the gigantic Kenny Wagner. Except for his closest friends, nobody called him Kenny, and no one called him Wagner. He was always Kenny Wagner.

The chaplain told me that Kenny Wagner had surrendered because of failing health. He needed medical treatment. He had apparently lived with friends near Corinth, Mississippi for years and even though all the neighbors knew him, no one reported him. Many suspected that many authorities knew where he was and that he might have been paroled if other states had not wanted to extradite him.

Chaplain Hicks drove me to the hospital on the sixteen thousand acre Parchman farm (there was also a six thousand acre farm near Lambert), and when we got out of his car he said, “You can go on in and talk with Kenny Wagner. I have someone else I need to see.” By then we were in front of the hospital door and before I could ask how I would know him, the chaplain had veered off in a different direction. There were bars inside the main doors and as I approached there was a very large man standing facing me on the other side of the bars, his face in a space between two bars and either hand holding a bar on either side, even with his shoulder and a little higher.

The door opened and the man stepped back and as I entered he greeted me. . I introduced myself and he acknowledged my introduction and immediately began talking without giving me his name. No one had to tell me I was talking with the infamous Kenny Wagner. I liked him immediately and understood why almost everyone liked him. There was genuine warmth in his smile and friendliness in his voice. I was all but inundated with mixed emotions - whatever I may have anticipated, I was not prepared such a gracious and open man as he. I had had cons to try to con me before and I would have them try it many times afterwards, but Kenny Wagner showed no interest in trying to con me. He was simply frank and honest.

After visiting for a few minutes standing just inside the door he told me he was weak and needed to lie down, and motioning me to the bed next to his in the prison hospital, he stretched out with his head propped up on pillows. I asked questions I wanted to ask, questions friends in my criminology class might find interesting. He answered my questions and expounded on them. For example, I said, "I recently read that alcohol was involved in 94.6% of the cases in which one is sentenced to prison. Would you agree with that?" He responded, "It=s higher than that. It is involved in almost all of them." That was before drugs and gambling became major factors.

As we talked I cleared my throat a few times and noticing it, Kenny Wagner reached around and picked up a little plastic tube with some little discs in it and handed it to me. "Take those. They gave them to me for my throat." As he continued talking about his surrender and comments Governor J. P. Coleman had made him, I sat on the side of the other bed facing him, holding the lozenges. *This man has killed several men and he wants me to take these strange looking pills!?!?* "Go ahead and take them," he commanded. I said, "Yes sir," and put one in my mouth. While I was still wondering what I had in my mouth, I realized he was still talking about Governor Coleman when I heard him say, *AI could put a bomb under him.* *He=s killed several men and now he wants to put a bomb under the governor?!?! I=m not sure I should be hearing this.*

When I finally found an opening, I asked him if he believed in God, and if he believed Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He cut in, *A I don=t have anything against God. A preacher told me one time that if I wasn=t for Him I was against Him. I don=t have anything Him, so I must be for Him.*" I never got him back on the subject of his salvation because he immediately launched into a deliberation on his ethics and standards, his philosophy of life. He looked me squarely in the eye and declared, *AI will never tell you a lie (flashback - a bomb under the governor!), and I would respect your sister just like I respect my sister.*" I believed him. How sad that a lot more church members do not live up to Kenny=s Wagner=s standards in these areas. Before leaving, I even realized that he was talking about putting a political bomb under the governor. *Whew!*

As soon as the chaplain and I left for his office, he asked, *ADo you think he will ever be saved?"* I answered, *ANo. He has too much pride.*" Chaplain Hicks responded, *ANother preacher told me the same thing a few days ago.*" It was obvious that he had not taken me to see Kenny Wagner to satisfy my curiosity. He was genuinely burdened for his soul. We both grieved eight days later when Kenny Wagner and went to hell by his own choice.

TOMMY

I knew I was going to meet Tommy. I directed the Mississippi College BSU (Baptist Student Union) mission trip to the Hinds County Jail in Jackson every Thursday for two or three years. When I picked up the Jackson Clarion Ledger the first of the week and read the headlines, I was as shocked as anyone else in the area. Tommy, a 22 year old carnival worker was in town with the Mississippi State Fair. He has been living in a motel room with a young woman who was seven

months pregnant. It was not his baby, but he told her he could live with it. However, in a drunken stupor, he decided that he could not live with it, so he brutally beat and strangled her to death.

When I arrived at the jail, I assigned various friends different cells to visit, reserving maximum security for myself. The heavy steel door was open and I heard loud voices coming from the little area in front of the double set of bars. A local reporter was badgering the prisoner. The jailer said, "Go on in. That reporter has been in there long enough." I stepped through the door as the reporter challenged, "You must think you're pretty tough, beating up a woman, don't you?" Tommy snapped, "You come behind these bars and I'll show you how tough I am."

Turning to me, the reporter arrogantly demanded, "Who are you?"
"I'm Johnny Sanders."
"Where are you from?"

I looked him in the eye and firmly said, "Home." We stood facing each other until he finally turned and walked out. I was not going to give him any ammunition to use in an article about Mississippi College or the BSU. The jailer had told me that Tommy had sent for a priest and the priest came in and talked a few minutes and after leaving a tract, said, "I'll come back in a few days and give you a test on that." The jailer also told me that Tommy asked him not to let the priest back in because he needed help right then.

Tommy listened respectfully, and by the grace of God I was able to get past the horror of Tommy's crime and see a desperate young man who knew he had committed a despicable crime. After I left, the other man in maximum security, Bill, advised Tommy, "You should stop talking to reporters. They are going to get you executed! But you need to listen to Johnny Sanders when he comes back." A few days later I got a letter from Tommy in which he said, "Johnny, I am trying to find God." I immediately wrote back, "Tommy, before you ever thought about finding God, He was trying to find you. You never would have known you needed God if He had not revealed that to you. He was loving you before you ever thought of Him and He has provided for your forgiveness through Jesus Christ."

Tommy was saved on my next visit and I visited with him a number of times in the Hinds County Jail. Tommy was sentenced to life for his brutal crime - and rightly so - but by the grace of God, Tommy was forgiven, his sins covered by the blood of the Lamb of God. Tommy is my brother and the two letters I have in my desk drawer are a reminder that God's grace is sufficient for all who call on Him.

Later I preached in Tommy's camp at the state penitentiary at Parchman. Tommy assured me that he was reading his Bible and praying and, he added, "When I get out of here, I want to serve God." I expressed my joy in his testimony and counseled, "Tommy, you don't have to wait until you get out to serve the Lord. You will never find a place that needs it any more than right here."

A PORKCHOP"

For a little over a year, while I was a student pastor, enrolled at Mississippi College and serving as pastor of the Dockery Baptist Church between Cleveland and Ruleville, I preached at 8:00 A. M. every Sunday morning at one of the many camps at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman. At first the chaplain assigned me a camp, but after a few months he said, "Anytime you get here before I get to my office you can go on to any camp you want to and tell them I sent you." Some Sundays and certain camps stand out in my memory above all others. It was a special blessing to visit with prisoners at Parchman I had led to Jesus Christ while they were in the Hinds County Jail in Jackson awaiting trial. Another memory was of a rather special man.

The chaplain told me one Sunday he wanted me to meet "Porkchop." "You have to hear his testimony." I do not recall his mentioning any other name. All I ever knew was his nickname. The chaplain explained that Porkchop had been a hardened prisoner, an avowed atheist, who was very hostile toward anyone who talk with him about Jesus Christ. He insisted that he did not believe in anything he could not see, hear, or feel. Every effort on the part of the chaplain had been rebuffed, until the day Chaplain Hicks walked into his office and his assistant, a prison trustee, told him that Porkchop was asking to see him.

The previous day Porkchop was on a work detail when he decided to make a break. They were working alongside a railroad track, under the watchful eye of prison guards, including the one guard whose marksmanship with a 30/30 Winchester was legendary. Prisoners were firmly convinced that he could not miss a running prisoner if he was in range. Porkchop was as convinced of this as any other convict, but when he looked up and saw that they were working near of railroad trestle, the desire for freedom overcame him.

Porkchop watched the guard out of the corner of his eye and measuring the distance to the trestle. Suddenly, when the guard seemed to be looking off, he made his break. He had not reached the bridge when the marksman fired the first time. He had reached the end of it when he fired the second time, and was diving off the trestle into the bayou when he fired the third shot. Porkchop was captured before he could make good his escape and returned to his camp.

When the chaplain went to see him Porkchop said, "I want you to tell me about God." Chaplain Hicks said, "I thought you didn't believe in God. Have you changed your mind?" Porkchop looked him in the eye and replied, "Now, I know there is a God. There is no way that guard could have missed his first shot. He could not have missed such an easy shot. Then He missed again as I reached the bridge, and again as I jumped. No power of earth could have saved me with that man shooting at me. Only God could have saved me." Before the chaplain left that day the God who had saved his physical life had saved him spiritually. Porkchop was saved by the grace of God, through faith which God alone can supply. When I met Porkchop he was a model prisoner, a positive influence and a very convincing witness for Jesus Christ.

Those are interesting stories, but what do they have to do with the Book of Ephesians? They have a lot to do with it! There are two basic themes in the New Testament - (1) how to be saved, and (2) how the saved ought to live. To be more specific, the entire New Testament tells the lost

person how to be saved, and it teaches the saved person how to live. Both themes are applicable indiscriminately to every person - from Kenny Wagner, Tommy, and APorkchop” to a young child like Will and Joanna, my brother=s twin son and daughter whom I had the privilege of baptizing when they were seven years old. God saves the young (but hardly innocent) the same way he saves the older (even the grossly guilty) - by grace through faith.

The Book of Ephesians tells us how we must be saved - by grace, through faith. It also tells the saved how to live - again, by grace through faith. It teaches us how to live victoriously - by grace through faith. It tells us how to win the spiritual warfare that every believer faces - once again, it is by grace through faith. His grace is sufficient for all our needs and only the faith that he provides is compatible with His grace.

PREFACE

A number of years ago I talked with a retired pastor whom I knew by reputation as a possible

hyper-Calvinist. When he discovered that I had written a verse by verse study of Romans as a part of *The Bible Notebook* series, he asked, "Do you believe in the supremacy of grace?" Our discussion was brief because we were enjoying a meal with pastors and other church leaders from churches throughout the area. I stressed my convictions about the importance of grace, but stressed that I did not subscribe to theory of irresistible grace.

I was disappointed with the discussion and bothered by my response. I would think about our discussion over the new few years, always wondering how I might better answer that question in the future. Sometime later while thinking of those wonderful words Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church: "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor. 12:9), the Lord gave me an answer with which I am theologically and practically comfortable. If asked that question today I would respond, "I believe in the supremacy of God and the sufficiency of grace." This glorious Epistle affirms that answer. I ascribe supremacy to a Person, not a force or emotion.

CHARACTER OF THE EPISTLE

Students of the Word of God speak in superlatives when they turn to the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians. They use expressions like: "the supreme letter" (Barclay); "the queen of the epistles;" and "the divinest composition of man." W. O. Carver wrote, "The greatest piece of writing in all history is this Ephesian epistle."

There is a very close connection between the Epistle to the Ephesians and The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians. Tychicus delivered both letters (Col. 4:7; Eph. 6:20). Either Colossians is an overflow of Ephesians, or Ephesians is another, and greater, version of Colossians (greater, not in terms of inspiration or truth, but in composition).

The same Gnostic heresy is met in both places, but with a difference. "In Colossians the emphasis is on the dignity of Christ as the head of the Church, while in Ephesians, chief stress is placed upon the dignity of the church as the body of Christ, the head" [11: 515]. Gnosticism was an incipient heresy that had begun to creep into the church in the middle of the first century and would gain momentum in the decades ahead. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write these epistles as both a corrective and a preventive measure. Later John would deal with this same heresy in a dramatic and dynamic way in introducing the Gospel account that bears his name.

The root of the heresy is seen in the Gentile philosophy and religion that had formerly dominated the lives of the new Gentile converts who were coming into the church. They embraced Christianity, but some of them would not give up the old pagan philosophy that had been a strong influence in their lives. They sought to blend the truth of Christianity with the errors of Gnosticism, in much the same way that modern cults do today.

The answer to the Gnostic cult of the first century is found in the inspired Word of God. And the answer to the modern cults like Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, the Unification Church, and the New Age Movement is found in the divinely inspired, infallible, inerrant, holy, living Word of God. The Holy Spirit Who inspired the writing will illumine the heart and mind of the Christian reader that he may understand it.

CIRCUMSTANCES

Ephesians was clearly written when Paul was in prison, thus one of the prison epistles. "Paul

was one of a long list of godly men and women, beginning with Joseph in Egypt, whose prison experience was used by God to bring forth His praises" [12: 103]. W. M. Taylor has written a book, *The Prison Literature of the Christian Church*, which deals with this. He cites Savonarola, Ann Askew, William Tyndale, Lady Jane Grey, John Bunyan, Samuel Rutherford, Madame Guyon. We might add Deitrich Bonnhoeffer and others. Paul calls himself "the prisoner of Christ" (3:1); "the prisoner of God" (4:1); and "an ambassador in bonds" (6:20). Ephesians was clearly a prison epistle written near the end of Paul's life.

The city of Ephesus was the seacoast capitol of proconsular Asia (modern Turkey), one of Asia's great religious, political, and commercial centers. The famous Temple of Diana (or Artemis), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was located in Ephesus. It had taken over 200 years to build this temple for Diana worship (See Acts 19:23-41).

When Paul wrote from the Roman prison he showed the saints that in the invisible church they had a temple, not made with human hands, which was infinitely more glorious than Diana's. Worshipers gathered from all over the empire, believing their image of Diana had fallen from heaven (Acts 19:35). This great religious center was a hot bed of cults and superstitions, and the arts.

Introduction of the Gospel into the province of Asia may be traced back to Pentecost, or to contact with disciples of John the Baptist. When Paul first arrived in Ephesus he found "certain disciples" (Acts 19:1f) who had a belief that was not unto salvation. He led them to salvation, beginning his work at Ephesus. An error in translation could mislead some, but Acts 19:1f does not teach that one receives or may receive the Holy Spirit as some second blessing after salvation. These believers knew the Lord only through the preaching of John the Baptist. They knew nothing of Pentecost.

PROBLEM: TO WHOM WAS THE EPISTLE WRITTEN?

In 1:1 early manuscripts do not contain the words, "in Ephesus." They read, "Paul...to all those who are saints and faithful in Christ Jesus." The epistle contained no title. We know: (a) it was written to Gentiles (2:11); (b) it was the most impersonal letter Paul wrote, which is surprising since Paul spent longer in Ephesus than any other city and had a warm personal relationship with believers there (Acts 18:9-10; 20:17-35); and (c) there is an indication that Paul and at least some of the recipients did not know each other personally (1:15; 3:2).

Ephesians was probably a general or circular letter for all the churches in the Roman province of Asia. It is possible that the manuscript in Ephesus was best known and the most copied. Quite naturally, the epistle came to be known as the Ephesian epistle.

AUTHOR

The human author was Paul, Saul of Tarsus the former Pharisee who persecuted Christians in Jerusalem and Judea and was planning to take this to Damascus when he met the Lord and was

dramatically converted. The style and vocabulary may differ from other Pauline epistles, but as Barclay says, "It would be ridiculous to demand that a man with a mind like Paul's should never add to his vocabulary and should always express himself in the same way" [1: 74].

The style is different, but while other letters were written to deal with specific problems, Ephesians is a theological tract, or possibly a religious meditation. It is filled with some of the most moving expressions of praise for the Lord to be found in all the Scripture.

The length of sentences is astounding (1:3-14; 15-23; 2:1-9; 3:1-7 are all long meandering sentences). Ephesians has been called "a poem of prose." Paul obviously changed his style to fit the circumstances. He was in prison with plenty of time to compose the letter. Health may have been a factor. Urgency of the situation may have been a factor in some of the other epistles. If this was intended as a circular letter, the style might have been adopted to that purpose.

In looking for a way to tie all the introductory material together and relate it to other Pauline Epistles, I was delighted with a discovery I made in the introduction to J. Vernon McGee's commentary (*Ephesians, Thru-the-Bible Series*, Vol. 47, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1991). The following excerpts are from that introduction.

A quartet of men left Rome in the year A.D. 62 bound for the provinces of Asia which was located in what was designated as Asia Minor and is currently called Turkey. These men had on their persons four of the most sublime compositions of the Christian faith...

(1) Epaphroditus was from Philippi, and he had the Epistle to the Philippians (see Phil. 4:18); (2) Tychicus was from Ephesus, and he had the Epistle to the Ephesians (see Eph. 6:21); (3) Epaphras was from Colosse, and he had the Epistle of Colossians (see Col. 4:12); and (4) Onesimus was a runaway slave from Colosse, and he had the Epistle to Philemon who was his master (see Philem. 10) [9: vii].

These epistles present a composite picture of Christ, the church, and the Christian life, and the interrelationship and functioning of them all.

Ephesians presents the church which is Christ's body. This is the invisible church of which Christ is the Head.

Colossians presents Christ as the Head of the body, the church... In Ephesians the emphasis is upon the body, and in Colossians the emphasis is upon the Head.

Philippians presents Christian living with Christ as the dynamic. All can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me: (Phil. 4:13).

Philemon presents Christian living in action in a pagan society [9: vii-viii].

Contrary to what McGee says (above), if you check the references you will find that Tychicus, not Epaphras delivered the Epistle to the Colossians. Epaphras was with Paul: "Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings" (Col. 4:12a, NAS).

THEME

In Ephesians, we find something of a double thesis: (1) Christ is God's instrument of reconciliation (chapters 1-3); (2) The church is Christ's instrument of reconciliation. The church must bring Christ to the world and it is within the church that all the middle walls of partition and separation must be broken down.

Students of the Word are keenly aware of two basic doctrines in the New Testament: how to be saved (Justification by grace through faith plus nothing); and how the saved ought to live (Sanctification in the Holy Spirit). Ephesians stands near the top in any consideration of these doctrine.

Commentary writers approach Ephesians from many different directions. Various themes and sub-themes are suggested. We cannot forget the Gnostic heresy Paul deals with in Colossians, nor can we overlook his emphasis on pure grace. There are other major thoughts which run through sections of the book. A central thought of Colossians is the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:9, 14; 2:3,9). In Ephesians there is a further development of that concept as Paul writes of God as "having made known unto us a mystery..." (1:9-10).

To some, the theme is, "the gathering together of all things in Jesus Christ." He is the center in whom all things unite, and the bond who unites all things. He is the answer to disharmony, disunity, and division in the world today. It has been suggested that every man is a walking civil war. There is a cosmic battle raging between the powers of good and evil. The origin of this thought of the unity of all things in Jesus Christ is found in (1) the all sufficiency of Christ (Colossians) and (2) the unity philosophy of the Roman Empire (Pax Romana, spirit of Rome, the goddess Rome, etc.).

Paul and others introduced the province of Asia to a new religion. It was welcomed by many, but violently opposed by others. Ephesus was strategically located for the spread of the Gospel. Christianity was different from both Judaism and Gentile worship. Salvation in Judaism was a matter of works, fully and completely. "To Greek philosophy, it was not so much the matter of merit acquired through legal regulations as it was a state of release from the restraints of evil and a realization of personal peace and quiet achieved through intellectual processes, speculations, and rules of conduct" [13: 3].

The mystery religions also had followers in Ephesus. They were related to Greek philosophy,

but distinct from it. These religions were, for the most part, cults stressing the processes of nature and fertility.

Christianity clashed with these religious systems. It still clashes with such paganism. There is a story of a Jewish rabbi who was invited to speak to a New Testament class. He was asked, "What, as you see it, is the basic difference between your religion, that of the Old Testament, and our religion, that of the New Testament?" With some hesitation, but with remarkable discernment, the rabbi answered, "My religion is a religion of the hands, doing the works of the law as a means of being right with God. Your religion is a religion of the heart, believing someone else (that is, Jesus Christ) has done for you what you could never do for yourself to make you right with God." Dr. Summers adds, "no more exact distinction than that can be found" [12: 5].

Ephesians was written against the background of Judaism and other religious systems. The mystery religions were very popular and Gnosticism found fertile soil for growth in Ephesus and throughout the Province of Asia.

THE CHURCH

In chapters 1-3, Paul deals with the church ideal. In Chapters 4-6, he deals with the church in the world. In chapters 1-3, we see the church united in Christ. In chapters 4-6, we see the place of the church in God's plan to bring about that unity. In a sense, chapters 1-3 deal with doctrine and chapters 4-6 deal with an application of the doctrines set forth, so we have both theory and practice.

What is the function of the church in God's plan? Here Paul presents a great thought, which is sort of a sub-theme. The church is the body of Christ. The church is to be the hands to do Christ's work, feet to run His errands, a mouth to declare Him, an instrument, or a body through which He can work in this world.

SUMMARY

Paul wrote to the Colossians to deal with a definite situation, a specific outbreak of heresy. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to take the great truth revealed in Colossians (the all-sufficiency of

Christ) and develop it and try to get the message across to all men. So, he removed the local, temporary, and the controversial aspects of it, and wrote a new letter to tell all men of the all-sufficiency of Christ.

Barclay says:

Ephesians, as we see it, is the one letter Paul sent to all the eastern churches to tell them that the destined unity of all men and of all things could never be found except in Christ, and to tell them of the supreme task of the church - the task of being Christ's instrument and body in the task of world-wide and universal reconciliation of man to man, and of man to God. That is why Ephesians is the "queen of the epistles" [1: 83].

Unity is in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. It is not in Hellenization, not in Romanization, but in Jesus. Only in Christ are men and women really brought together in a true spirit of unity.

OUTLINE

I. THE CHURCH UNITED IN CHRIST--Chapters 1-3.

A. Greetings.

B. The Superiority of Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14).

C. Paul's First Prayer for the Church (1:15-23).

D. New Life in Christ (2:1-10).

E. Demolition of the Wall (2:11-22).

F. A Mystery Unveiled (3:1-13).

G. Paul's Second Prayer for the Church (3:14-21).

II. THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD (APPLIED CHRISTIANITY) (chapters 4-6).

A. A Call to Unity (4:1-6).

B. A Diversity of Gifts (4:7-16).

C. The Christian Walk (4:17-5:21).

1. The old man and the new man (4:17-24).

2. The Christian conversion (4:25-32).

3. Imitating the Father (5:1-21).

D. Christian Unity in the Home (5:22).

1. Wives and unity (5:22-24).

2. Husbands and unity (5:25-33).

3. Children and obedience (6:1-4).

4. Servants and masters (6:5-9).

E. The Christian's Arsenal (6:10-20).

III. CONCLUSION (6:21-24).

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

I. THE CHURCH UNITED IN CHRIST (CHAPTERS 1-3).

A. 1:1-2--Greetings.

The key thought in the first chapter of Ephesians, according to Warren Wiersbe (QuickVerse Library - Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament), is "The wealth of blessings we have as Christians, spiritual blessings that are ours because we are in Christ (1:3). Paul informs us that each Person of the Godhead has blessed us (vv. 1-14), and then he prays that we might understand these blessings and the power they can be in our lives (vv. 15-23)" [23: QVL].

Paul introduced himself to his readers simply as an apostle of Jesus Christ. The world "apostle" was built on a Greek verb meaning to send with a message. The modern parallel is "missionary." Paul's apostleship suggests that: (1) he belonged to Christ; (2) he was commissioned by Christ; (3) his authority was designated by Jesus; and (4) he was an apostle through the will of God.

SAINTS. The word for saint in the New Testament (*hagiois*) denotes "a holy one." As applied to the believer, the meaning is separated, or set apart. Saint is an adjective meaning "holy," and the word faithful is an adjective meaning "believing." The message, therefore, is addressed to those who are identified as the people of God, set apart by Him, and believing in Him. "They are a part of the universal church by virtue of their salvation in Christ" [BKC].

AT EPHESUS...IN CHRIST. The believer has both a human address and a divine address. Wherever we live in this world, our eternal address is "in Christ." "In Christ Jesus" emphasizes the believer's relationship to Christ on the one hand and Christ's centrality in God's redemptive purpose on the other hand.

GRACE. This points to the unmerited favor and love of God. Grace (*charis*) describes a gift which it would have been impossible for one to procure for himself, one which could never earn, and no way deserves. God's gifts to us come from the sheer generosity of His heart. In other words, grace is the unmerited favor which God bestows upon men in relationship to the redemptive work of Christ. Peace is the condition which results in the heart of man when grace has done its work.

The following things are ours because of grace: (1) salvation (Eph. 2:8); (2) justification (Romans 3:24); (3) victory over sin (Romans 5:20); (4) power to testify (Romans 12:3; 15:15; Col. 4:6) (5) strength for service (II Timothy 2:1; Heb. 12:28); (6) a spirit of generosity (II Cor. 8:7); (7) sweetness in singing (Col. 3:16); (8) ability to stand (I Peter 5:12); (9) strength in suffering (II Cor. 12:9).

PEACE. In the Bible the word peace (*shalom*, Hebrew; *eirene*, Greek) is never a purely negative word. It never means simply the absence of war, strife and trouble. "Shalom" refers to everything which makes for a man's higher good. It involves everything which helps him reach his highest potential, everything which helps to make life really worth living.

Christian peace is independent of outward circumstances. One person might live a life of luxury and ease and be completely miserable (i.e., Howard Hughes). Another might be very poor, in

poor health; and without recognition, and still be genuinely happy. There is but one source of real peace - God. There is a place for the psychologist, but the real answer to genuine peace will not be found in analysis. In Jesus there is peace that really does pass all understanding. Paul combines the two forms of salutation used by the Hebrews and the Greeks to send his Christian greetings. Grace and peace are compatible in the Christian experience. The gospel Paul preached was always the gospel of grace. God does not offer peace apart from grace. To accept His grace is to know peace. In the pastoral epistles mercy is added. Summers says:

Grace takes care of the sin problem, peace takes care of the problem of conscience. They stand in proper sequence. Just as in the Old Testament sacrificial system, the sin offering had to proceed the peace offering, so here grace must do its work before there can be any peace in the heart of man [13: 8].

Paul, recalling his background and conversion, knew he was saved by grace. He was certainly not deserving of God's favor; he was fighting God!

B. The Superiority of Spiritual Blessings (1:3-14).

The wise student of the Word will be reminded that all our blessings come from God the Father. These spiritual blessings (1:11-6) are certainly from the Fathers. In verses 3-4 we see that He has chosen us; in vs. 5, He has adopted us; and in vs. 6, He has accepted us. There is no more exalted passage in the New Testament than the one long sentence which extends through verses 3-14. It has been called Paul's hymn of praise to the redemptive work of the Trinity. It has also been called "The most cumbersome sentence in the Greek language!" [QV: BKC].

W. O. Carver saw in this section the purpose of world redemption revealed in a condensed outline of the plan as it revolves successfully around each Person of the Trinity. There is no formal statement of the doctrine of the Trinity here or elsewhere in the Scripture. But the role of each person of the Trinity is recognized. "Here, as always, where the three appear, in purpose, function, and work, they are entirely at one" [2: 69]. Paul shows the work of each person in providing redemption. Paul summarizes the triune God's plan for the church (The New commentary of the Whole Bible, edited by author):

1) the *Father's* work of love (1:3) in choosing us to holiness (1:4), sonship (1:5), acceptance (1:6), to receive the knowledge of his will (1:8, 9), to participate in his heading up all things in Christ (1:10), to be his inheritance (1:11), and to be his glory (1:12).

2) the *Son's* act of redemption (1:7) and head of God's ultimate summation (1:10).

3) the *Holy Spirit's* work of sealing us (1:13) and becoming the earnest (or, token) of our eternal inheritance (1:14) [QV: NCWB].

There are three stanzas in the hymn and each is followed by the same chorus. The three stanzas relate the work of the Father, Son and Spirit. This provision is presented against the background of Judaism and Greek philosophy, both of which viewed salvation or deliverance from evil as a matter of human attainment.

First stanza - The Work of the Father (1:3-6)

Second stanza - The Work of the Son (1:7-12)

Third stanza - The Work of the Spirit (1:13-14)

THE FIRST STANZA

1:3-6 - THE WORK OF THE FATHER

1:3 - BLESSED (eulogetos). This form is used only of God in the NT. It means that He is entitled to receive blessings from man. He is worthy of our praise. More than 25 years had passed since Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus and he was still counting his blessings. Many who have known only a few of his problems can only lament their misfortunes.

WHO HAS BLESSED. A different form of the same word is used. God is the source of our spiritual blessings - those that are irrevocable and those that are conditional, both temporal and eternal.

EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING. This is the third use of this word. Paul is obviously making a play on the word. The believer is a citizen of Heaven and the spiritual blessings count most to him. Too many of us place emphasis upon the temporal and transient while we neglect the values that are spiritual and eternal. God also provides temporal and transient blessings - "Give us this day our daily bread" - and we should praise Him for them. But to fail to appreciate our spiritual blessings places us in danger of atrophy and loss of further blessings.

IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST. (See 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12) "This precise phrase occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. In 2:6 the believer is conceived as already seated with Christ. Heaven is 'the real abode of the citizen of Christ's kingdom (Phil. 3:20) who is a stranger on earth (Phil 1:27; Eph. 2:19)" [11: 517]. **Æ**Ephesians 1:3 tells much about God=s blessings on believers: (a) *when*: eternity past; (b) *with what*: every spiritual blessing; (c) *where*: in the heavenly realms; (d) *how*: in Christ" [BKC].

1:4 - CHOSE. The word means to pick out, to choose.

This is the wonderful doctrine of election, a doctrine that we cannot fully explain but one we can fully enjoy. Do not try to explain away the mystery of grace. God did not choose us in ourselves; He chose us in Christ, by grace. Note 1 Cor. 1:26-29; 2 Thes.

2:13-14; and John 6:37 [23: QVL].

Here we have a definite statement of God's elective grace concerning believers in Christ. Literally, this should be "chose us for Himself." "In eternity past, God had certain settled purposes which He accomplished at various times during the dispensations of human history, and here we are carried back into the remotest ages of past eternity where, says Paul, God was loving us and planning that all who are in Christ...should be holy and without blame before Him" [12: 119]. It is not difficult to see how God should purpose in His heart, before the world came into existence, that He was going to have a holy people who would be "to the praise of His glory" (vs. 12).

Strauss says, "The ultimate purpose of God's choice is not salvation but sanctification" [12: 119]. We might amend that. I would suggest that the perfection of salvation and sanctification is glorification. This does not mean that God either saves or condemns men in violation of their own wills. The New Testament clearly teaches that all have sinned and all deserve death. "The fact that God elects some to salvation is not an indication of injustice where others are concerned; it is an indication of grace where anyone is concerned" [13: 11].

The secret of God's election is His infinite love. Barclay says Paul is thinking of:

1. The fact of God's call (see John 15:16). It would not be so wonderful that man should choose God; the wonder is that God should choose man."
2. The bounty of God's choice. God chose to bless us with blessings beyond the grasp of mortal man. Righteousness and peace come only from God. God chose to give us those things which only God can give.
3. The purpose of God's choice. God chose us that we should be holy and blameless. God chose us to make us like Himself (Romans 8) [1: 88f].

FOUNDATION. The word literally means "to fling down." It was also used to portray the laying of a foundation. God's grace (His redemptive love) was no after-thought on His part. It was a reality before the foundation of the world. Redemption is seen as preeminent over creation, and in the mind of God before creation.

HOLY. The idea of difference and separation is suggested. A thing which is holy is different from ordinary things (temple, Sabbath.) God chose the Christian that he should be different from ordinary men. The Christian in the early church understood that. The tendency in the modern church is to play down the difference between the church and the world, but if enough believers would become genuinely holy, it would revolutionize the world.

BLAMELESS (*amomos*). This is a sacrificial word meaning without blemish. Before an animal could be offered as a sacrifice, it had to be examined and declared blameless, or without blemish. The whole life (the total person) is an offering of holiness and spotlessness before God; not just in the eyes of men who are too much inclined to accept lower standards. What is called for is holiness

and blamelessness in the presence of the living Christ. He predestined believers to be holy and blameless.

1:5 - HAVING PREDESTINED US. Predestined is from *proorisas*, "marked out beforehand." Before we become bogged down in speculations about predestination, let us first ask to whom this is addressed. About whom is he speaking? We should ask to whom he is speaking, but also to whom he is not speaking. On the subject of predestination we must be conscious of what the Scripture is saying - and what it is not saying. The answer is that He is speaking to Christians here, not lost people, as in Romans 8:29, where Paul writes, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." Whom God foreknew redemptively, he predestined, or predetermined that they should be conformed to the image of His Son (that is Sanctification). The Glorification of those who are justified is seen as an accomplished fact in Romans 8. Our security is in Him. In this passage, what has God predestined, or foreordained for the redeemed? It says that we are preordained to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

Predestinated (foreordained) means to define or decide beforehand. To paraphrase it, "He before-horizoned us," that is, he drew a circle about us - before the foundation of the world. This tells how He chose us - by drawing a circle about us. To what have we been predestined? Neither this verse nor any other verse in the Bible teaches that God decrees that some men are foreordained to everlasting life while others are foreordained to everlasting death - sometimes called double predestination. We are foreordained unto adoption as sons. Summers says, "Surely the doctrine of foreordination and the doctrine of election in the New Testament are, to all practical purposes, identical (Romans 8:28-30)" [13: 13]. One commentary summarizes:

Thus the emphasis of predestination is more on the *what* than the *who* in that the believer's predetermined destiny is their being **adopted as full-fledged sons of God through Jesus Christ**, the Agent of the adoption [BKC].

SPURGEON AND CALVINISM

A well educated professional shared with a friend his reasons for embracing Calvinism. He then informed his friend, "Spurgeon was a Calvinist." He was right in that Spurgeon openly embraced certain aspects of Calvinism, yet he strongly and courageously opposed Hyper-Calvinistic teachings which this young man was advocating.

Predestination seems destined to be one of the next great areas of debate among Bible students in America. We have seen the debate over Eschatology (the study of last things), and the battle for the Bible (inerrancy), and for some time the old debate about election is resurfacing with renewed energy. I have received free books on the subjects, magazine articles address it, and the Internet abounds with material on the subject. The Southern Baptist Founders' Journal (also on the

Internet) has carried numerous articles on this and related studies. One volume I received via the Internet (*Spurgeon V. Hyper-Calvinism*), by Ian H. Murray was a free gift from The Founders= Journal.

Throughout his long and illustrious ministry, Charles Haddon Spurgeon was often embroiled in the battle between Calvinism, to which he subscribed, and Hyper-Calvinism whose adherents attacked him relentlessly. He was deeply committed to some of the basic tenants of Calvinism, but uncompromisingly opposed irresistible grace unconditional election. He was conscious of the threat to evangelism inherent in the view of Hyper-Calvinism.

Spurgeon was conscious of this critical element when he preached one of his early sermons in his first pastorate on, >All that the father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). He introduced his text with the words, >Surely this passage will suit all, from the AHyper” down to the Primitive [Methodist].= At the end of his notes on the same sermon he wrote this private comment:

>Read, write, print, shout, - AHim that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Great Saviour, I thank Thee for this text; help Thou me so to preach from it that many may come to Thee, and find eternal life!” [10: 50].

Spurgeon opposed Hyper-Calvinism for four specific reasons:

(1) The first reason is that AGospel Invitations are Universal.”

Spurgeon believed that historic evangelicalism differed from Hyper-Calvinism over the persons to whom the promises of the gospel are to be preached. Hyper-Calvinism views gospel preaching solely as a means for the ingathering of God=s elect. It argues that such words as, >Trust in Christ and you will be saved=, would only be addressed to elect sinners for it is their salvation alone which the preacher should have in view. For a preacher to convey to his hearers the impression that they are all called to receive Christ, and to believe in him for salvation, is to deny, in the opinion of Hyper-Calvinists, the sovereignty of divine grace. It is to represent salvation as available to those whom God has excluded by the decree of election [10: 69].

Spurgeon was opposed to restrictions placed upon the invitation of the gospel by Hyper-Calvinists.

The gospel is >good news= which God would have proclaimed throughout the world and to >every creature=. Its message is not simply a statement of facts. It also contains is clear, unrestricted general promises, such as, >He that believeth on him is not condemned= (John 3:18); >Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved= (Rom. 10:13); >Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely=

(Rev. 22:17) [10: 70].

(2) The second reason for his opposition to Hyper-Calvinism is "The Warrant of Faith".

A second reason why Spurgeon rejected Hyper-Calvinism was that it turned individuals away from their only sure warrant for trusting in Christ, namely, the objective commands and invitations of the gospel....The call to the sinner is to commit himself to Christ, *not* because he has been saved but rather because he is lost and must come to Jesus in order to be saved.

... >Repent and be baptized every one of you=, said Peter. As John Bunyan puts it - one man might have stood up in the crowd and said, >But I helped to hound him to the cross!= >Repent and be baptized *every one of you*= >But I drove the nails into his hands!= saith one. >*Every one of you*=, says Peter. >But I pierced his side.= >*Every one of you*=, said Peter. >And I put my tongue into my cheek and stared at his nakedness and said, >If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the Cross!= >*Every one of you*=, said Peter. >Repent and be baptized every one of you.= I do feel so grieved at many of our Calvinistic brethren; they know nothing about Calvinism I am sorry to say, for never was any man more caricatured by his professed followers than John Calvin [10: 75-76].

Spurgeon insisted that the warrant lies in Scripture alone, that is, the command of God to believe in Jesus Christ and repent of their sins. As Murray reasons, "To deny a universal warrant, and to require subjective experiences before Christ is trusted, is bound to lead to confusion and legality. Such teaching make men look at themselves instead of the Saviour" [10: 77].

(3) The third reason Spurgeon opposed Hyper-Calvinism was "Human Responsibility."

The two convictions so far stated - that gospel invitations are to be addressed to all, and that the warrant to believe lies in the commands and promises of Scripture - lead us to the heart of the dispute between evangelical Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism. It concerns the place of man's responsibility or, to use an equivalent term, his free-agency. Terminology here is important. Free-agency is not to be confused with >free-will=. Since the Fall, men have not lost their responsibility but they have lost the ability, the will, to obey God. Thus Spurgeon could say, >I dread more than anything your being left to your own free-will=. Hyper-Calvinism argues that sinners cannot be required to do what they are not able to do, namely, to believe in Christ for salvation. The ability to believe belongs only to the elect, and that at the time determined by the Spirit of God [10: 80].

Spurgeon's response to this Hyper-Calvinist argument was to assert another equally biblical truth, namely, that man is wholly responsible for his own sin. God is not its author. Those who hear the gospel and reject the Saviour will not be able to plead that sovereignty prevented them

from exercising the obedience of faith. None will be able to claim that God excluded them” [10: 81].

(4) The fourth reason he rejected Hyper-Calvinism concerns the love of God.

Spurgeon saw that behind the distortion of predestination, and the unwillingness to believe that gospel invitations are to be addressed freely to all men, lay a failure to understand what Scripture reveals about the character of God himself. If God has chosen an elect people, then, Hyper-Calvinism argued, he can have no desire for the salvation of any others and to speak as though he had, is to deny the particularity of grace. Of course, Hyper-Calvinists accepted that the gospel be preached to all, but they denied that such preaching was intended to demonstrate any love on the part of God for all, or any invitation to all to receive mercy. On the contrary, they taught that no man has any right to trust in a loving God until he has first some personal evidence that he is one of the chosen [10: 88-89].

Spurgeon stressed that God loved all people and that the Gospel invitation should make this clear to the lost sinner.

But it is more than knowledge of the love of God as taught in the Scripture which preachers need. They must themselves be possessed by the love of which they speak. Invitations to trust Christ preached without love are no invitations at all [10: 93-94].

ADOPTION. The Greek word denotes the legal placement of a child into the position and privileges of sonship. Adoption is one of the pictures Paul uses to show what God does for those who trust Him. In Galatians he explains that Jesus died to redeem us in order that "we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:5). John wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). When God designed His church in eternity past, He "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the Good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5).

The concept of adoption is also found in Romans 8:15, 23; and Galatians 4:4-7. In adoption a son is brought into a family and is given the same rights as a child who is born into that family. AIn this context it seems that predestination logically precedes election: after God looked forward to the glorious destiny of adopting believers into His family, He looked down on sinful humanity and chose believers” [BKC]

The Apostle Paul introduces us to some terms that the average person does not use on a daily basis. Christians, however, need to have some understanding of these terms. Warren Wiersbe offers a brief definition of some of those terms as they are used in this passage.

A"Election” refers to persons; predestination to purposes for those persons. God elects

us to be saints (set-apart ones), then predestines that certain purposes in our lives shall come to pass (see Rom. 8:28ff). Adoption in the NT refers to the official act of a father who bestows the status of full adulthood on a son of minor status [23: QVL].

Adoption here does not refer to the taking of an outsider into one's family, but to the placing of a family member into the privileges and blessings of adulthood. This means that even the youngest Christian has everything that Christ has and is rich in grace" [23: QVL].

1:6 - TO THE PRAISE. Verse six is the chorus at the end of the first stanza of this hymn of praise: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

In ourselves, we are not acceptable to God, but in Christ, we are made accepted." Read the Epistle to Philemon for a beautiful illustration of this truth. Paul wrote, "Receive your slave Onesimus as you would receive me" (Phil. 17). Though we have sinned, Christ says to the Father, "Receive this saint as you would receive Me." Trace that wonderful phrase "in Christ" throughout Paul's letters - you will be thrilled! [23: QVL].

SECOND STANZA

1:7-12 - THE WORK OF CHRIST

WIERSBE'S OUTLINE OF THIS PASSAGE:

- II. Blessings from the Son (1:7-12)
 - A. He has redeemed us (v. 7a).
 - B. He has forgiven us (v. 7b).
 - C. He has revealed God's will to us (vv. 8-10).
 - D. He has made us an inheritance (vv. 11-12).

1:7 - IN WHOM. Clearly Paul makes the blood of Christ the cost of our redemption.

REDEMPTION. Ransom, deliverance - as in the setting free of a slave. The word is used for freeing of a person from the penalty of death for some crime. It is used of God's deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt. The word always refers to the delivering or setting free of a person from a situation from which he himself was powerless to liberate himself, or from a penalty which he himself could never have paid. In Christ God delivers us from a situation from which we could never deliver ourselves.

Our redemption, purchased by Jesus Christ on Calvary=s Cross is total and complete - past, present and future. He has delivered us from the penalty of sin, He is delivering us from the power of sin, and He will deliver us from the presence of sin.

We do not have to go beyond the word "redemption" to claim God paid Satan (or Himself) for our release. From the penalty and bondage of sin we have been delivered by the redemptive work of God in Christ. This deliverance was accomplished at the cost of the death of Christ on the cross. If one would know what it cost God to forgive sin, he must look at the cross and see what sin did to the One He loved. Calvary is God's estimate of sin - and His greatest expression of love.

FORGIVENESS. Literally, the sending away of our trespasses. The ancient world was haunted by the sense of sin. In a sense the whole Old Testament is a commentary on the verse, "the soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). They knew sin and dread of God. Jesus revealed God as a God of love and forgiveness, not a God of hate.

"Forgiveness for the believing sinner is an act of God whereby He sets aside absolutely and eternally, by judicial decree, all condemnation and guilt" [12: 124]. Judicial forgiveness is distinguished from the Father's forgiveness of His sinning child (I John 1:9). Judicial forgiveness covers all sin - it acquits all sin forever. But it cost the Father dearly.

The word "forgive" literally means "to send away." Sin is a terrible burden that is sent away when a sinner turns to Christ. Christ carried the burden on the cross (1 Peter 2:24). It is pictured by the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, taken into the wilderness (Lev. 16:20-22) [23: QVL].

ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE. A thoroughly Pauline phrase: riches of kindness (Romans 2:4), riches of glory (Col. 1:27; Eph. 3:16; Phil. 4:19), riches of fullness of understanding (Col 2:7), riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). It is noteworthy that God blesses us "according to the riches of His grace," and not just out of the riches of His grace. A wealthy person might throw a coin to a beggar "out of" his riches, but that does not mean that he has helped him "according to" his riches.

1:8 - WISDOM AND PRUDENCE. Wisdom (*sophia*) is a "knowledge of the most precious things" (Aristotle). It was the knowledge of the searching intellect, or the questioning mind. In a sense, it deals with the knowledge of eternal things. Prudence (*phronesis*) was defined by Aristotle as the knowledge of human affairs, and of the things in which planning is necessary. Plato defined it as the disposition of mind which enables us to judge what things are to be done and what things are not to be done. It is the most practical thing in the world. It is the common sense which helps us to solve practical problems of everyday life.

1:9 - MYSTERY OF HIS WILL. In the New Testament mystery refers to something once hidden and now revealed. God has made known to us "the mystery of His will." A long-kept secret has now been revealed. It is still incomprehensible to the person who has not been initiated into its

meaning. "Mystery means that which could not be explained and understood until in the purpose of God it was brought out into the open by way of divine revelation" [13: 19]. What for Paul was the mystery of the will of God? It was that mystery was that the Gospel was open to the Gentiles, too. Paul introduces a great truth. Up until now, men had been living in a divided world.

Wherever you look there is division. There is division between men, between men and beasts, between nations. All over the world there is strife, tension, war. What was true of the world is true of each individual. Every man is a walking civil war. Every man's life is a battlefield. The battle rages between good and evil, passion and reason, God and Satan. Jesus came to wipe out divisions, to resolve the tensions, to close the gaps and to gather all men into one. Jesus came not just to save the Jews, but Gentiles as well. That is the mystery, the secret of God now made known. Jesus came to bring the world together in Himself as one body, the body of Christ. When Jesus brings together people who have been separated by some barrier, He heals them socially. When He brings together the fragmented pieces of one's heart, He heals him psychologically and emotionally. So, when He saves us He heals us spiritually, socially, and emotionally.

1:10 - DISPENSATION. Administration, household management, stewardship. All history has been a working out of this process. There has been a planning, an arranging of things so that this day of unity might come. The word Paul uses for this preparation is *oikonomia* (household management). God's purpose in this administration or stewardship of Christ's redemptive work extends beyond the fact of the cross. It extends on to the ultimate purpose of God in the expression to sum up all things in Christ. A Mystery" (vs. 9) is a divine truth known only by God's people through revelation. In Christ we are a part of God's eternal purpose to gather together all things in Christ" (v. 10) [23: QVL].

It is the Christian conviction that history is a plan, that history has a purpose, that history is the working out of the will of God. Lost people do not see it that way. Oscar Wilde said, "you give the criminal calendar of Europe to your children under the name of history." G. N. Clark, in his inaugural lecture at Cambridge, said, "There is no secret and no plan in history to be discovered. I do not believe that any future consummation could make sense of all the irrationalities of preceding ages. If it could not explain the, still less could it justify them." Barclay quotes Andre Maurois, "The universe is indifferent. Who created it? Why are we here on this puny mud-heap spinning in infinite space? I have not the slightest idea, and I am quite convinced that no one has the least idea?" [1: 98].

The Christian believes God's purpose is being worked out. Dr. Robert Witty refers to this as "the spiral of history" [17: Int.]. We are being moved toward a divine encounter. At this moment the authority of Jesus Christ is not fully acknowledged in the earth, but in the end of the age all things in heaven and earth will find their headship in Christ (Phil. 2:9-11).

1:11 - WE HAVE OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE. Here Paul shows that we have come to be a part of God's inheritance through this ministry of Christ and His coming to be the captain or administrator of all God's affairs.

HAVING BEEN PREDESTINED. Believers, he says, have been Apredestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will..."

1:12 - TO THE END. This points to God=s purpose (vs. 11) in our predestination. Unlike man, the actions of God are never without purpose. Here we have the same general chorus as seen in verse 6. AGod has not only given us an inheritance in Christ (1 Peter 1:3-4), but He has made us an inheritance for Christ. The church is His body, temple, and bride; we shall some day share His glory" [23: QVL].

TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY. The purpose of God (and that to which we are predestined) is Athat we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory" (NNAS). "We" probably refers to Jews before Christ who looked for the spiritual Messiah even before His coming (as Simeon and Anna). The Jews had a role in God's plan. They were the first to believe in and to expect the coming of the Anointed One. Their part in God's scheme of things was to be the nation from which God's Messiah would come.

THIRD STANZA

1:13-14 - THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Note the transition from Christ to the Holy Spirit and from "we" to "you."
We have seen blessings from the Father and the Son; now we see:

Blessings from the Spirit (1:13-14)

- A. He has sealed us (v. 13).
- B. He has become the earnest of our salvation (v. 14).

1:13 - IN HIM, YOU ALSO. The same Gospel that was preached to the Jews works for the Gentiles. This verse us outlines succinctly the way of salvation. The sinner first hears Athe message of truth"(the gospel of your salvation), then trusts in Christ, at which time he (or she) receives the Holy Spirit, and is sealed forever. The possession of the Holy Spirit is the sign and seal which shows that one belongs to God. We are not sealed by the Spirit, but with the Spirit. He is our seal. The seal is the mark of authenticity and ownership.

The King James version reads, Aafter that ye believed," which might imply to some that you may receive Christ and then at a later date receive the Holy Spirit as a second Blessing. The proper translation should be Ahaving believed" (as in NAS, NKJV), with the idea of Awhen you believed." The Spirit enters the heart the instant the sinner places his trust in Jesus Christ. Sealing with the Holy Spirit means that we belong to God; He will keep us; and no one can break God=s seal.

1:14 - THE EARNEST. The word means deposit, or down payment The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance. The earnest (arrabin) was a regular feature of the Greek business world. "It was

a part of the purchase price of anything paid in advance as a guarantee that the rest of the price would in due time be paid" [1: 101]. The presence of the Spirit is God's pledge that our salvation will be consummated. Earnest money is common today. You may ask the automobile dealer to special order a certain automobile. To be sure you will accept the car when it arrives he asks you to put down some earnest money. At the same time, when you pay the earnest money you are assured that when that automobile arrives it is yours. No one else can claim it and the salesman cannot sell it to anyone else, regardless of how much money he offers.

Today we know only faint foretastes of the joy into which we will someday enter. But the Holy Spirit is our earnest, assuring us that eternal life is ours and can never be taken away from us. It is expressed in that great passage in 1 Peter 1:3-5:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (NAS).

C. Paul's First Prayer for the Church (1:15-23).

There are two prayers in Ephesians, here and in 3:13-21. Wiersbe comments:

(1) "That you might know," 1:15-23; and (2) "That you might be," 3:13-21. The first is for enlightenment, the second for enablement. Paul prays first that we might know what Christ has done for us; then he prays that we might live up to these wonderful blessings and put them to work in our daily lives [23: QVL].

These verses express a prayer of thanksgiving and a request for spiritual enlightenment concerning our salvation and Savior. In vv. 22, 23 we are informed of the wonderful truth that Christ is "head over all things to the church, which is His body." This is a theme that will be more fully addressed as the remaining chapters unfold [18: QV].

In this passage Paul sets before us in a perfect summary, the characteristics of the true Church. He had heard of their faith in Christ and love for the brethren. These two things must characterize any true church: (1) loyalty to Christ, and (2) love for others. Some have attempted to demonstrate their loyalty to Christ without manifesting love for others (hermits, monks, heresy hunters of the Spanish Inquisition, Pharisees). A church may be very orthodox and at the same time be unlike Christ in relation to others. The true Christian knows he cannot love Christ without loving

his fellow man.

Paul's prayer for the church reveals his burden for the church.

- (1) He prays for the spirit of wisdom. He prays that the church may be led deeper and deeper into knowledge of the eternal truths of God. Certain things are necessary: a thinking people, a good teaching ministry, and a re-adjusted sense of proportion.
- (2) Paul prays for a fuller revelation and a fuller knowledge of God.
- (3) He prays for a new realization of the Christian hope.
- (4) He prays for a new realization of the power of God.
- (5) He prays for victory over Satan.

Paul's prayer might be outlined as follows:

Paul prays that believers will:

- (1) Have spiritual understanding (vv. 17-18a).
- (2) Know the hope of His calling (v. 18b).
- (3) Know the riches of His inheritance (v. 18c).
- (4) Know His power (vv. 19-23).

Verses 1:15-19 gives a clear insight into the nature of redemption. One of the blessings of redemption is that we may have spiritually enlightened eyes to help comprehend the nature of redemption. Summers says this clear insight will be realized in three ways:

- (1) They will understand the hope of Christ's calling. All of the Christian religion is related to the element of hope.
- (2) By spiritually enlightened eyes one sees "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."
- (3) Spiritually enlightened eyes have clear insight for understanding "the abounding greatness of his power with reference to us who believe" [13: 27].

The prayer is that believers may be given the ability to know fully the blessings that are theirs in Christ. They can have this full knowledge only through divinely imparted wisdom and revelation. Tolbert says, "If Ephesians has a fundamental doctrine, that doctrine is: a saving relationship with Jesus Christ means being incorporated into his body." He adds, "Prejudice

obstructs God's ultimate purpose, which is to bring together all believers into one family" [14: 24].

1:15 - HAVING HEARD. Verse 15 introduces Paul's prayer and reveals that his prayer is based on certain things he knows about them. It is not a shot in the dark. The NAS renders it: "For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints." As already observed, he is aware of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and their love for the saints. It is sad that the next generation would need to be commanded to return to their "first love" (Rev. 2:4).

Paul had heard of their faith and their love. He knew the Ephesian Christians intimately. Faith is not valid in and of itself. In fact, if what we call faith does not have the proper object, it may be little more than superstition. It has no validity if (1) it is not directed toward Christ Jesus and (2) it does not change one's life.

1:16 - DO NOT CEASE GIVING THANKS FOR YOU. Paul set a good example for all believers. He kept up with them, or he would not have known to thank God for their faith and love. He prayed for the church without ceasing, always mentioning the church, if not members, in his prayers.

1:17 - THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. His prayer is to the First Person of the Trinity, "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul always prayed to the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. "Our Lord Jesus Christ" is a title the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use over and over. In the Old Testament, "Lord" refers to God the Father; in the Pauline Epistles "Lord" is the title given Jesus Christ. The word denotes sovereignty. Jesus is Lord - and if He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all!

THE FATHER OF GLORY. The God characterized by glory (the shekinah, Hebrews 9:5) as in Acts 7:2. Only a Christian may think of God as his Father. He is the "Father of Mercies" (II Cor. 1:3), the "Father of our Spirits" (Hebrews 12:9), and the "Father of Lights" (James 1:17). In Christ He is our Father! What a glorious title for our God - The Father of Glory!

MAY GIVE TO YOU. Our Heavenly Father is the one and only source of all we need, the one and only source of all you will ever have. I recently heard some one on a "talk radio" program say, "The most important things in life are the things you have to work for." I do not often talk back to the radio, but my immediate response was, "No! The most important things are the things you cannot work for. They come to us by the grace of God, which means that are unmerited."

A SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND OF REVELATION. Human beings, even lost people, may learn something about God through study and observation. I listened to radio talk show host, G. Gordon Liddy explain to a caller the steps that led him from agnosticism to theism. He does not hesitate to express his conviction that there is a God. At the same time, he distinguishes himself from fellow Nixon White House attorney, Chuck Colson, a born-again evangelical Christian. For a number of years I witnessed to a scientist at a health club. He knew more about the Bible than most

church members, but acknowledged having only Aminimum faith.”

As Paul clearly reveals in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, spiritual truths are only discerned by the spiritually minded - never by the carnally minded. I observed a friend from the time he enrolled in of the most outstanding Christian colleges until his graduation from one of the finest seminaries. He was one of the most moral (shall I say religious) young men I have ever known. He was a good student and he learned a lot of theology, but he discovered that there was something missions. He had never been born again. He received Jesus Christ and a new dimension was added to his ministry. When he became a salve to Christ he was set free from the shackles of religion (thou shalt and thou shalt not). He was given spiritual wisdom and insight through divine revelation that he could never acquire through academia.

I listened to an very liberal attorney mock Christians who believed in a revealed truth. Ultimate truth is divinely revealed - but, of course, that seems as foolish the lost today s it did to the ancient Corinthians.

IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM. In full knowledge of Christ as in Colossians 2:2-3. Every believer has the privilege of knowing God. How tragic it is that some professing Christians show so little interest in knowing Him!

1:18 - EYES OF YOUR HEART ENLIGHTENED. This is a beautiful figure, the heart regarded as having eyes looking out toward Christ. With the eyes of the spirit (only with the eyes of the spirit) we may see Him. Paul prays that the Aeyes of your heart may be enlightened,” for a specific reason:

so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe (18a-19b).

AHeart= in Scripture is considered the very center and core of life. Paul prayed that believers would know (1) the hope of God's calling, (2) the riches of God's inheritance (which the saints are), and (3) the great power of God displayed in Christ's resurrection and exaltation (v. 20)” [22: QV].

HOPE OF GOD=S CALLING. The Lord equips His saints with eyes of the spirit so that they may know this blessed hope.

Because God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, we have a blessed hope for all eternity that depends not on our goodness but on His grace. Review vv. 4-6, where this calling is summarized for us. The Christian who does not know his high calling (Phil. 3:14), holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9), and heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1) will never be able to walk worthy of that calling (Eph. 4:1, where Avocation” is Acalling”) [23: QVL].

We have an inheritance in Christ (see also vs. 11), and we are an inheritance to Christ. The word Ariches” appears a number of times in Ephesians, appropriately here in connection with our inheritance. This seems to suggest that there is nothing lacking in what we receive from the Lord. This is not a new concept - David expressed it so well in Psalm 23:1 (Someone has paraphrased it, AThe Lord is my Shepherd, that=s all I want”).

1:19 - THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER. To enlightened eyes the greatness of God's power is even more amazing. Paul points to the Resurrection as a proof of His great power, but there are countless proofs of His omnipotence, including the creation and maintenance of the universe.

TOWARD US WHO BELIEVE. AThe exceeding greatness of His power” May be known, but only to eyes enlightened by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 1 & 2). Wiersbe summarizes it:

Of course, all these blessings are only for those who meet the conditions set forth in vv. 1-2. Note that Paul writes to living saints (not dead ones), people who have put faith in Christ. These saints (set-apart ones) have experienced God=s grace and now enjoy God=s peace. Nowhere does the Bible teach that the church makes people saints; only God can make a sinner a saint. And the sinner must become a saint while he is still alive, for after death is the judgment (Heb. 9:27) [23: QVL].

1:20 - WROUGHT IN CHRIST. For Paul, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the most crucial part of the Gospel. If Christ is risen, Christian faith is validated; and if Christ is not risen, Christian faith is a colossal hoax.

A second blessing of redemption is realized in the fact that only the redeemed can fully comprehend and appreciate the nature of Christ. He understands that:

- (1) A full comprehension of the nature of Christ grasps the truth of his resurrection from the dead. No concept of Christ can be the New Testament concept if it stops short of the resurrection.
- (2) Next, there is the greater awareness of the exaltation of Christ. His position of authority in the heavenlies; supremely exalted above every name and every ruler.
- (3) A third discovery about the nature of Christ is seen: God put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things in the church.

It is important for modern day Christians to understand that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available for us today. We must see that Jesus Christ has already won the victory over sin, death, and hell for us. AGod=s people do not fight for victory but from victory! We are seated with Him in the heavenlies, where there are power, peace, and victory” [23: QVL].

1:21 - FAR ABOVE ALL RULE. In the New Testament, this expression is used only here and in Hebrews 9:5. "As in Col. 1:16, here Paul claims primacy for Jesus Christ above all angles..., and what not" [11: 521]. These titles all were used in the Gnostic speculations with a graduated angelic hierarchy. The Holy Spirit inspired the Scripture writer to apply it to the Lord Jesus Christ - the only One deserving of the title. "A Rule and authority and power and dominion" "Ain rabbinic thought of the time, described different orders of angels (see Rom. 8:38; Eph. 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15; Titus 3:1)" [22: QV].

1:22 - CHURCH. Jesus is Lord over creation, but He is Lord over the church in a very special sense. "The church's primary characteristic is its recognition of and responses to Christ as Lord" [14: 33]. The church is the body of Christ and as the human body responds to signals from the brain, the church must respond to its Head.

PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION. Or, put them under his feet. God is declared to have arranged all things in orderly system under the feet of the reigning Christ. At present an idea, but it will be realized perfectly. This is a common theme in Scripture:

then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him (1 Cor 15:24-27).

GAVE HIM TO BE HEAD. God gave Christ (once for all) to be head of the church (the universal spiritual church, as in Col. 1:18). This concept runs all through Ephesians (3:10), 21; 5:23-25, 27, 29, 32). The entire Book of Ephesians is about the church. For the first time in the epistle; however, we find the word *Aekklesia*."

1:23 - HIS BODY. The church is the body of Christ. Here Paul introduces one of the greatest thoughts the world has ever known, calling the church by its greatest title: "The Body of Christ." Christ is the head of the church and the church is the body of Christ. It was to bring all men into one family and into one unity that Christ died. But clearly, that unity does not as yet exist.

The Abody" is the universal (spiritual) church to which every true believer belongs, regardless of his affiliation with a denomination or a local church.

It is a spiritual organism entered by means of the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). Christ is the risen Head of the church, and its members are subject to Him (Eph. 5:24). Local churches should be miniatures of the Body of Christ, though it is possible to have unbelieving members in local churches who are not, therefore, members of the Body of Christ [22: QV].

THE FULNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL. The church Awhich is His body,

the fulness of Him who fills all in all" (NAS). All things are summed up in Christ (1:10), Who is the fullness of God (Col. 1:19). And Christ fills the church universal (which is His body). "Hence we see in Ephesians the Dignity of the Body of Christ which is ultimately to be filled with the fullness of God (3:19) when it grows up into the fullness of Christ" (4:13,16) [11: 522].

D. New Life in Christ (2:1-10).

We need to keep in mind the thoughts expressed in 1:3-14, where Paul speaks of the blessings of a man "in Christ." In 2:11-3, he speaks of man's condition outside of Christ.

Man is described in these verses as (1) a corpse (v. 1), (2) one who is controlled by the world, Satan, and the sin nature (vv. 2, 3), and (3) one who is justly condemned (v. 3b). Man's utter depravity and rebellious nature could not be expressed more concisely or clearly (cf. Rom. 3:9-20) [18: QV].

Looking at the broader passage, 2:1-10, the Scripture

gives three reasons why God wanted to save people: (1) to show His love (vv. 1-6); (2) to show His grace (vv. 7-9); and (3) to show His workmanship by our doing good works (v. 10) [22: QV].

Warren Wiersbe=s outlines 2:1-10 with the sentence, "We Are Raised and Seated on the Throne." His explanation is worth noting:

Chapter 1 emphasized our possessions in Christ; chapter 2 emphasizes our position in Christ. Your position determines your possessions and authority. Regardless of where the President of the United States may be physically, his position as the man who sits behind the desk in the White House gives him power and authority. So with the Christian. Regardless of where we might be physically (Paul was a prisoner when he wrote this letter), we have power and authority in the spiritual realm because of our position in Christ [23: QVL].

2:1 - QUICKENED. He made alive. "You" referred initially to Gentiles, but has an application today to all who have come to experience redemption. "Another blessing of redemption in Christ is the believer's transition from the darkness and gloom of spiritual death to the glorious light of spiritual life" [13: 31].

WHO WERE DEAD. This refers to their former pagan state (and today to all who are without Christ). They were spiritually dead, alienated from God and destined to an eternity in hell. Death in the Scripture never means annihilation. Death means to be separated from God because of sins. This is spiritual death. If a man continues in this state, by continuing to reject Christ, spiritual death becomes the second death, eternal separation from God (Rev. 20:14)" [22: QV].

Three kinds of death are identified in the Bible: (1) physical - the separation of the soul, or life from the body (I Cor. 15:21, 22; Heb. 9:27); (2) spiritual -the separation of the spirit from God (2:1; 4:18; I John 5:12); (3) eternal - the everlasting banishment from the presence of God (I Cor. 6:9, 10; II Thes. 1:9). This paragraph presents the greatest possible contrast between "once" and "now."

One may be physically and mentally alive to all the pleasure of this world but dead spiritually (I Tim. 5:6). They were dead in the realm of trespasses and sins, but now they are alive in the realm of good works. It is a contrast between being dead in the area of trespasses and sins and being alive and walking about in the area of good works. "Trespasses refers to personal acts (1:7) and sin is the more general word which relates to sin as a habit or power" [13: 32]. The Greek word translated trespasses originally meant to fall beside, a false step, a slip, a deviation from the truth, a misdeed, sin. The Hebrew equivalent meant to cross over the line (with your eyes wide open), to deliberately transgress.

2:2 - IN TIME PAST. Before their conversion. "You" points to Gentile converts, who in time past "walked according to the course of this world..." Before their conversion these Gentile believers "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (NAS).

THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD. This denotes this age (I Cor. 1:20) and this world (I Cor. 3:9). See "Dispensation", verse 1:10.

THE PRINCE OF POWER OF THE AIR. Satan is pictured as the ruler of the demons and other agencies of evil. Jesus called him "the prince of this world" (John 16:11). Hebrew thought portrayed Satan as ruling over the upper regions short of the "heights," which would be Heaven itself.

NOW WORKING. "Those who deny the existence of a personal devil cannot successfully deny the vicious tendencies, the crime waves in modern man" [11: 523]. The power of the devil in the lives of men does explain the evil at work in "the children of disobedience."

SONS OF. This is a Hebraism that means people who are characterized by a certain quality. "Son of" means in the likeness of. Jesus had told rebellious Jews they were of their father, the devil, rather than Abraham (John 8). Kurt Koch has written a number of books about the work of Satan; and various other writers of our day have provided much help in understanding the occult. The spirit of Satan is working in the "sons of disobedience."

2:3 - WE TOO ALL FORMALLY LIVED. See Paul's use of "all" in Romans 2:14, 3:20, 5:12). "We" and "all" are comprehensive and refer to all believers. The KJV reads, "We all had our conversation in times past..." Conversation in 1611 referred to one's behavior, or his way of life, and at the time of the translation of the Authorized Version was an acceptable translation.

The point is that all, both Jews and Gentiles, Aformerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath. The Scripture clearly teaches that our basic nature has been affected by sin, making all unsaved people children of wrath.

LUSTS OF OUR FLESH. This is a general word for desire. It is not basically a word for evil, but used with Aflesh” and in this context it does convey the idea of evil desires. The lust of the flesh is a deadly force if left unchecked as Craig Brian Larson illustrates.

As a kid, I saw a movie in which some shipwrecked men are left drifting aimlessly on the ocean in a lifeboat. As the days pass under the scorching sun, their rations of food and fresh water give out. The men grow deliriously thirsty. One night, while the others are asleep, one man ignores all previous warnings and gulps down some salt water. He quickly dies.

Ocean water contains seven times more salt than the human body can safely ingest. Drinking it, a person dehydrates because the kidneys demand extra water to flush the overload of salt. The more salt water someone drinks, the thirstier he gets. He actually dies of thirst.

When we lust, we become like this man. We thirst desperately for something that looks like what we want. We don't realize, however, that it is precisely the opposite of what we really need. In fact, it can kill us [19: #667].

WERE BY NATURE CHILDREN OF WRATH. This is a Hebraism which suggests that they were deserving of wrath. Modern humanists did not get their philosophy from Paul's letters! Here he says that the unconverted Jews as well as the unconverted Gentiles are objects of God's wrath because of sin (Romans 2:1 -3:20). "The implication of original sin is here, but not in the form that God's wrath rests upon little children before they have committed acts of sin. The salvation of children dying before the age of responsibility is clearly involved in Romans 5:13ff" [11: 524].

2:4 - BUT GOD. Change in sentence structure shows Paul is returning to the thought in verse 1 (dead in trespasses and sin) after a break in thought (they were quickened from the dead by God). Sinners are dead in trespasses and sin, ABut God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us” saves us from sin when we place our trust in His Son.

BEING RICH IN MERCY. He is rich in what we need most! God's mercy means that we do not get what we deserve - death. God's grace means we do not get what we do not deserve - eternal life. Even while God looks with wrath upon man's sin, He looks with mercy upon man himself. We all deserve wrath, but God offers mercy. There are two aspects of mercy - love and faithfulness. Everyone deserves whatever judgement his or her sins call for; but while deserving wrath, all who trust God receive love. He is faithful to forgive. An illustration of the way mercy works in this world may help us to better appreciate the richness of God=s mercy.

When a former mayor of New York befriended a poor, dejected outcast of society, he was reproved by the prosecuting attorney who said, "That tramp's no good. He's getting only what he deserves." hearing this, the judge interrupted the harsh counselor by asking with a smile, "Did you ever hear of the mother who visited Napoleon on behalf of her condemned son? The emperor told her the young man had committed the same offense twice, and justice demanded the death penalty. 'But Sire,' she pleaded, 'I don't ask for justice -- only for mercy.' 'He doesn't deserve it,' said Napoleon. 'No, he doesn't,' she admitted, 'but it would not be MERCY if he deserved it.' 'You're right!' said the ruler quickly, 'I'll grant your request and show him mercy!'" [19: # 2296-2301].

LOVE (*agapen*). Affection, goodwill, unconquerable benevolence, love; the love of God toward men, of men toward God, and of men toward each other in Christ. This is the highest form of love and it encompasses mind (intellect), emotion, and volition - the total person. It is also source of, and reason for His mercy.

2:5 - EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD. Paul repeats the thought introduced in verse 1, but he changes from "you Gentiles" to "us Jews."

QUICKENED. "To make alive with another." A literal resurrection in the case of Jesus, a spiritual resurrection in our case - as pictured in baptism. We are alive (quicken) with Jesus. He died that we would not have to pay the price of eternal death for our sins. He arose that we might live.

Tolbert points out that the Greek suggests two relationships involved in our resurrection. First is our relationship with Christ. "Our resurrection from the dead is linked inextricably to Christ's resurrection" [14: 43]. He adds, "salvation is not some kind of soul insurance by which we escape hell and receive a mortgage on Heaven. Redemption does not mean that we can make a decision and go on about our business. Not at all! From the moment of conversion, our life is bound indissolubly with Christ's life" [14: 43]. The second relationship is not made clear in English translations. We are not only alive in (or with) Christ, we are made alive "together" with other believers. Birth brings one into a family. Conversion brings one into the family of God as God's new people.

BY GRACE HAVE YE BEEN SAVED. It is all of grace because all were lost in sin. Salvation is solely the work of God through grace (2:8). The wonder of God's grace is really beyond the scope of simple definition (i.e., God's unmerited love). Illustrations often help. J. Wilbur Chapman often told of the testimony given by a certain man in one of his meetings:

"I got off at the Pennsylvania depot as a tramp, and for a year I begged on the streets for a living. One day I touched a man on the shoulder and said, "Hey, mister, can you give me a dime?" As soon as I saw his face I was shocked to see that it was my own father. I said, "Father, Father, do you know me?" Throwing his arms

around me and with tears in his eyes, he said, "Oh my son, at last I've found you! I've found you. You want a dime? Everything I have is yours." Think of it. I was a tramp. I stood begging my own father for ten cents, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all that he had."

What a wonderful illustration of the way God longs to treat us, if we will only let Him [19: #1445].

2:6 - RAISED US UP WITH HIM. We are raised up together in Christ Jesus, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."

IN HEAVENLY PLACES. As in 1:3, this is literally, "in the heavenlies;" A i.e., in the realm of heavenly possessions and experiences into which the Christian is brought because of his association with the risen Christ. The term also occurs in 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12; cf. John 3:12" [22: QV]. Heaven is the ultimately and true home of every citizen of the kingdom of God is in heaven.

IN CHRIST JESUS. All the preceding blessings and relationships hinge on this phrase. "In Christ" is closely related to a theme which runs through Paul's letters. We are:

- (1) Crucified with Christ -- Galatians 2:20
- (2) Dead with Christ -- Col. 2:20
- (3) Buried with Christ -- Romans 6:4
- (4) Made alive with Christ -- Ephesians 2:5
- (5) Raised with Christ -- Col. 3:1
- (6) Suffering with Christ -- Romans 8:17
- (7) Glorified with Christ -- Romans 8:17
- (8) Seated with Christ -- Ephesians 2:6

2:7 - IN AGES TO COME. We really do have something to look forward to! Job asked, "If a man dies, shall he live again?" Jesus answered, "Because I live, you shall live also." He was speaking to Martha when He said, "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26a).

THAT HE MIGHT SHOW. Or, show forth, point out, demonstrate, manifest. The Epistle to the Ephesians emphasizes the present meaning of our salvation more than any other Pauline epistle. In other letters salvation is more futuristic. With many professing Christians it is primarily futuristic. In 2:7, Paul shows us that the significance of and blessing from salvation are not exhausted in the present. Its fullness can only be known in ages to come. God raised up Jesus Christ in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." Both now and throughout eternity, believers are on display as a manifestation of the grace of God.

EXCEEDING. From two Greek words, "hyper" (over) and "bulla" (to case, throw); hence to exceed, to surpass.

RICHES OF HIS GRACE. See 1:7. This is a beautiful expression, and appropriate since His grace opens to each believer the riches of Heaven.

2:8 - FOR BY GRACE. Explanatory reasoning is employed - "For by the grace" (with the article), already mentioned in verses 5 and 7. Grace is the unmerited favor and love of God. We are saved by God's grace - or we are not saved! There is no other way; Pure grace - amazing grace! Grace is free, but Christians must reject any suggestion that it is cheap. You cannot buy it, but it cost God His Son's life on the cross of Calvary. You cannot buy it, but it will cost you everything you have.

THROUGH FAITH. Faith is the channel through which God's grace flows to the heart - the channel for the operation of the saving grace of God. You press the button on the water cooler and drink the water which quenches your thirst. The pipes (tubing) through which the water flows does not quench your thirst. The water does. But without pipes and tubing you would not get the water to quench your thirst. Faith is the channel through which grace flows. The two are totally compatible. Grace is God's part; faith is man's part. Faith is the only response man can make which is compatible with the grace of God.

The necessity of the new birth is vividly portrayed in the life of George Whitefield. At 16 he became deeply convicted of his sin. He tried everything to become acceptable to God. He wrote, "I fasted for 36 hours twice a week. I prayed formal prayers several time a day and almost starved myself to death during Lent, but only felt more miserable. Then by God's grace I met Charles Wesley, who put a book in my hand that showed me from the Scriptures that I must be 'born again' or be eternally lost." Finally, Whitefield understood that he had to trust in Jesus Christ. He believed and was both forgiven and changed. After he became a preacher, he spoke at least a thousand times on the subject, "You must be born again" [19: #1203].

AND THAT. This refers to the act of being saved by grace, conditioned on faith on our part. Salvation has its source in God, not men. And it is God's gift, not the result of our work. How is our faith the gift of God? Through the revelation of God the Father that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Holy Spirit is the agent of that revelation.

THE GIFT OF GOD. Salvation by grace through faith is in no way a human accomplishment. For more on the subject of justification by grace through faith, see this writer's study in Romans (the Doctrine of Salvation).

THREE THEORIES OF JUSTIFICATION

There are three theories of justification and only three - and every denomination (and every individual) subscribes to one of these theories. The following outline and brief discussion of these three theories will also be found in this writer's study on Galatians in *The Bible Notebook* series.

1. JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS

Paul wrote to the Galatians, "Knowing that a man is **not justified by the works of the law** but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for ***by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified***" (Gal. 2:16 NKJV, emphasis added).

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **not of works, lest anyone should boast.** (Eph 2:8-9 NKJV)

The Bible is very clear on this - no one is ever saved by works. In the first place, God rejects man's works and in the second place, works are totally incompatible with grace.

2. JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE PLUS WORKS

Man is not saved by any combination of grace plus works. Nor, can he be saved by grace and they maintain his salvation by works. Paul was shocked that the Galatians thought they could be saved by grace plus circumcision. He was equally shocked by the implication that one could be saved by grace and then add works later as a means of maintaining one's salvation. How could they not see the folly of such a preposterous teaching? He wrote, "Are you so foolish? ***Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*** (Gal 3:3 NKJV)

Paul was inspired to reveal to us through the Epistle to the Romans that grace and works are mutually exclusive approaches to God and His salvation. Either, in any measure, cancels out the other. No one is saved by grace plus anything else, be it baptism, good works, or set of rules, regulations, and revelations. Romans 11:6 (NKJV) reads: "And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work."

The theory of justification by any combination of grace plus works is emphatically rejected by our Lord. Jesus Christ is totally, completely adequate, as John MacArthur stresses in three of his books - *Charismatic Chaos* and *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, and *Faith Works*. To claim that anything other than the Grace of God is required for our salvation is to imply that the Cross is necessary, but inadequate - that what Jesus Christ did for us at Calvary was essential, but somehow insufficient.

3. JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE

The Scriptural proof is irrefutable: we are saved by grace, through faith.

1. (Gal 2:16 NKJV) - Knowing that a man is **not justified by the works** of the law but **by faith in Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.
2. (Gal 2:21 NKJV) - I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.
3. (Eph 2:8 NKJV) - **For by grace you have been saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.
4. (Rom 5:1 NKJV) - Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
5. (Rom 8:1-4 NKJV) There is therefore now ***no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

As I stated at the beginning, if someone asks me today, "Do you believe in the supremacy of grace?" My response is, "I believe in the Supremacy of God and the sufficiency of grace." God is the Person, grace the attribute. Furthermore, I do not find that the Scripture teaches either "Irresistible grace" and I like to have the terms "limited atonement" and unconditional election clearly defined before stating my position. That is not the Gospel Paul preached. To anyone who asks, "What must I do to be saved?," our answer should be the same as that of Paul and Silas: "They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.'" It must be stressed, however, that no one believes on his own - faith is the gift of God. Fallen man does not naturally trust in Jesus Christ. In his famous sermon on Mars Hill, Paul exhorted:

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, ***God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent***, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31) (emphasis added).

2:9 - NOT OF WORKS. This is a major theme of the Pauline Epistles. See Galatians 2:16; 3:3 and the doctrinal section of Romans. Romans 11:6 clearly reveals that grace and works are mutually exclusive. They are completely incompatible. We will see that works are very important

once you become a Christian, but totally worthless in producing or preserving our salvation.

2:10 - WORKMANSHIP. This word carries the idea of creation, handiwork, workmanship. Grace is prior to good works. Grace is the root and good works are the fruit of one's salvation. The believer is saved by a mighty, miraculous, supernatural act of God. He is God's workmanship. This helps explain why Paul says in verse 9 that no one is saved by his own works - "lest any man should boast." No believer has any grounds for boasting or for self-glory. God must receive all the glory. God's plan for our salvation laved no room for human pride. The word "boast" means to exalt proudly.

This may not be popular with the high self-esteem advocates, but the Scripture plainly teaches that God will receive the humble and reject the proud. No one is saved because he has lifted himself up by his own boot strap. No one can boast of his own righteousness, or of special knowledge. His part is to yield in faith, or to simply trust in Jesus Christ and God does creates in him a new heart. The redeemed person is God's "workmanship," saved Aunto good works."

CREATED. This is not the original creation, as in Col. 1:16 and Eph. 3:9, but moral and spiritual renewal in Jesus Christ. This is the new birth of which Jesus spoke in His discussion with Nicodemus (John 3. See also, Eph. 2:15 and 4:24).

E. Demolition of the Wall (2:11-22).

2:11 - THEREFORE. ATherefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called >Uncircumcision= by the so-called >Circumcision,= which is performed in the flesh by human hands--“ (NAS). The "therefores" of Paul are significant in that they tie together what has been said and what is about to be said. Often a carefully worded conclusion is placed on a carefully constructed foundation with this conjunction. Here it makes the argument of 2:10 apply to Gentile Christians. The former state of the Gentile believers is seen in verses 11 and 12.

The Jews called Gentiles "Uncircumcision" and themselves "the Circumcision." This superficial badge of their Jewishness was made in the flesh by human hands. Several points are implied:

- (1) Idols are made by human hands.
- (2) Circumcision had become idolatrous. The symbol had become more important than the reality symbolized.
- (3) Jews who trusted in circumcision believed that what human beings did with their hands was the decisive thing in salvation, rather than what God did.

We have to be aware of the same kind of thinking today. While circumcision may not be the issue, there are other things to which this point must be applied. There are some today who profess a relationship with Christ based on baptism or membership in a particular church or denomination.

Most pastors know people who are placing their hope for eternal salvation on membership in some little church they joined back in Mississippi” when they were eight years old. They don't remember much about it, they have never supported it and the only time they attend a service is when a relative dies.

When I became pastor of Forest Baptist Church in 1978, I discovered that many of the residents of Forest and Oak Grove, Louisiana (or their parents) moved there from south-central Mississippi early in the twentieth century. Many were active members of local churches, but some never transferred their membership from Mississippi. It was reported that a few may have been granted their own "church letter" and they kept in a safe place in their home for years. If you asked them, they would tell you they were saved, but rather than point to a relationship with Jesus Christ, they would point to their membership in that little church back home. In some cases you discover that their love for that church has more to do with the fact that their parents and grandparents were buried there than to anything else.

We do not need shrouds, relics and rituals to worship Jesus Christ. We do not need splinters from the cross or water from the Jordan River to have a meaningful relationship with the Lord. We must never let the ordinances become our religion, and denominationalism must never become a matter for boasting (the same may be said of some who proudly proclaim that they do not believe in denominations). There are people who talk a lot more about their denomination than about their Lord.

2:12 - WITHOUT CHRIST. This was the former condition of the Gentile believers. When they were in paganism they were "without Christ." But one does not have to be involved in paganism in order to be without Christ. Unbelievers are (1) without Christ (contrast v. 13), (2) aliens (cf. v. 19), (3) strangers (cf. v. 19), (4) without hope (cf. 1:18), and (5) without God (cf. v. 18) [22: QV].

ALIENATED FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL. This term is used only twice in the New Testament, rendered "commonwealth" here (spiritual Israel, Kingdom of God) and "citizenship" in Acts 22:28. In the Roman world the word signified citizenship. It was God's purpose to reveal Himself and His salvation to the world through the nation of Israel. Israel, however, became legalistic and exclusive. She took the approach, "we have the one and only true God and if you Gentiles want Him, you will have to become a Jew first."

God makes a distinction between Jews and Gentiles racially (1 Cor. 10:32), but not individually (Rom. 10:11-13). The Gentiles were without Christ; that is, they had no promise of a Messiah. They were not a part of the nation of Israel; in fact, the OT laws put a great gulf between Jews and Gentiles. Instead of being "the people of God," the Gentiles were aliens. They were strangers, without hope and without the true God in the world. Contrast this sad plight with the privileged position of Israel described in Rom. 9:4-5 [23: QVL].

NO HOPE. This means no hope of any kind. "Having no hope" and "without God" may be seen

as two separate descriptive terms, but they may be two parts of one descriptive term. Some Greek philosophers held a view of the immortality of the soul, but it was inferior to that hope possessed by the Jews. They had no concept of the resurrection as we know it. Hope is something Christianity introduced to Gentiles that they had never known in paganism. It is in the matter of hope that the Gospel of Jesus Christ stands in possibly the sharpest contrast to the message of paganism. The pagans boasted of many aspects of their religion, but hope was a missing element.

Hope in the New Testament is not mere wishful thinking, or a desire for something one may or may not receive. Hope is a present possession as well as a guarantee of the fulfillment of all the promises of God for the future.

In his book *Dare to Believe*, Dan Baumann illustrates the unique experience of knowing that something is ours, yet longing to enjoy it more fully. He explained that at Christmas time he would always do a lot of snooping, trying to find the gift --wrapped presents and figure out what was in them. One year he discovered a package with his name on it that was easy to identify. There was no way to disguise the golf clubs inside. Baumann then made this observation: "When Mom wasn't around, I would go and feel the package, shake it, and pretend that I was on the golf course. The point is, I was already enjoying the pleasures of a future event; namely, the unveiling. It had my name on it. I knew what it was." But only "Christmas would reveal it in its fullness."

The glories that await the Christian defy our comprehension. What we can grasp about them, however, fills us with great anticipation. We look longingly to that day when we shall enjoy heaven in all its fullness [19: #1691-1693].

WITHOUT GOD. "Atheists in the original sense of being without God and also in the sense of hostility to God from failure to worship him" [11: 526]. "In the world" goes with both phrases, "having no hope" and "without God." It is a terrible picture that Paul paint of the unregenerate, but a true one. Those who are without Christ are also with- out hope!

2:13 - BUT NOW. ABut now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near (to God) by the blood of Christ" (NNAS). ABut now" in v. 13 parallels ABut God" in v. 4. Strong contrast is shown, meaning as opposed to "at that time" or "in time past."

When Christ died on the cross, He broke down every barrier that stood between Jews and Gentiles. Jesus Christ tore down the wall that separated them. AHe tore down the physical wall, for in Christ all are made one (v. 15, and see Gal. 3:28-29). He tore down the spiritual wall and brought the Afar off" Gentiles near (v. 13)" [23: QVL].

IN CHRIST. This is the key. Note the frequent use of this phrase. It is also used frequently in other Pauline Epistles. Philippians is laced together with the phrases, "in Christ" and "in Christ Jesus." "The phrase is used to indicate the viable relationship that exists between the believer and Christ; those who have been born of the Spirit - born again (John 3:1-8). The expression may refer

collectively to his people, the church, the body of Christ" [3: 31].

FAR OFF. They were so far off that they were without hope (as far as finding salvation through their pagan efforts was concerned). They were further off than the unbelieving Jew in that they did not have the Law, prophets, and sacrificial system and centuries of teaching and positive tradition associated with Jehovah worship.

Verse 13 sums up the Gentiles= condition in two words: "Far off." While the problem of sinners in general (vv. 1-10) was spiritual death, the problem of the Gentiles in particular was spiritual distance from God and His blessings. Note in the Gospels that whenever Christ helped a Gentile, He did it at a distance (Matt. 8:5-13; 15:22-28) [23: QVL].

ARE MADE NIGH. Now they are made nigh (near) to the commonwealth of Israel, the Kingdom of God. The word for "nigh" means close or near; "near as to time and space as well as absolutely (Mt. 24:32,33; 26:18; Phil. 4:5). Figuratively used of spiritual relations (Eph. 2:13, 17) [26: 1685].

IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. This is essential. It was important to emphasize this in view of the Gnostic denial of Christ's real humanity (and thus His suffering and death). It is important to emphasize the importance of shed blood of Jesus Christ in this day when the blood seems too gory for some of our squeamish members. It is also important to emphasize the blood of Christ because of the number of people who lean toward universalism.

To some people, it does not matter what your religion is. It does not matter if one claims to have no religion. They say that since there is but one true God, only that God can be worshiped, regardless of what you call Him. But the Bible is very narrow at this point. There is but one Name by which one can be saved (Acts 4:12), and "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22b).

2:14 - FOR HE HIMSELF. Jesus Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall." In 2:14-22 we see that redemption makes all men one in Christ. A universal brotherhood of man is not taught in the Bible. In fact, it is clearly refuted. Children who say the pledge to the Christian flag in Vacation Bible School say the words, "uniting all Christians in service and love." At one time the words in the pledge were, "uniting all mankind in service and love." It was changed because all mankind is not united under the banner of Christ. Only those "in Christ" are united in His kingdom and in His service.

PEACE. Generally, this refers to well-being under God's sovereign rule. Peace is "that tranquil state of mind and heart that is independent of circumstances and that results from being in Christ and in doing God's will in all things" [3: 21]. It must be stressed that one must first receive God's grace before he can obtain this peace. Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, is our real peace; Jesus Himself, not something one might know about Him - He Himself, not just what He did (as

necessary as that was). He is our peace with God and with each other (Jews and Gentiles). Any peace that is not in Christ is both superficial and short-lived. J. Oswald Sanders said, "Peace is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of God" [19: #3012].

BOTH ONE. Or, the both. Jesus said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold" (John 10:16). "One" is neuter singular (oneness, unity), as in Galatians 3:28. Race and national distinctions vanish in Christ. If all were really "in Christ" we would indeed know a peace that passes all understanding.

THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION. Only here in the New Testament. In the temple courts a wall (partition) divided the court of the Gentiles from the court and Israel. There was an inscription on that wall of partition forbidding a Gentile from going further (under penalty of death). To see how seriously they observed this distinction, recall the uproar when Paul was accused of taking Trophimus beyond this wall (Acts 21:28).

Study notes in the Believer's Study Bible agree:

The "middle wall of separation" refers to the Mosaic Law, but may be symbolized by the wall in the temple which separated the court of the Gentiles from the court of the Jews -- the wall beyond which no Gentile was permitted to pass. Stone markers, engraved in Hebrew and Greek, warned Gentiles against crossing the line on pain of death. One complete marker and a fragment of another have been excavated from Herod's temple. In Acts 21:27-29, Paul was falsely accused of bringing the Ephesian Trophimus into the Jewish area and desecrating the temple [18: QV].

Furthermore:

The elaborate Jewish observances of the law, including the painful rite of circumcision, had long represented hindrances to the Greeks' coming into the synagogue as full Jews. Many preferred to remain "God-fearers" and worship God at a distance. There was no longer any reason for one to feel left out of the full worship of the true God [18: QV].

This is not to condemn Judaism. It was the only true religion during the Old Testament period and until the coming of Jesus Christ. There was no comparison between Judaism and any other religion the world had even known. By the same token, there is no comparison between Judaism and Christianity (as every completed Jew knows). In Christ the walls of partition are broken down. As Wiersbe points out:

He tore down the legal wall, for He fulfilled the Law in Himself and ended the reign of the Mosaic law that separated Jews and Gentiles (vv. 14-15). Christ not only made peace between sinners and God (Rom. 5:1), but He also made peace between Jews and Gentiles. He took sinful Jews and sinful Gentiles and through His cross made a

A new man”Cthe church [23: QVL].

One may well point out that many Jews today are more liberal in their attitude toward the rights of others than many Christians. But a study of the New Testament will reveal why there is no peace in the Middle East today. Neither Judaism, nor Islam knows anything of the forgiveness taught by Jesus Christ. All they know is retaliation. Once in a television interview concerning Middle East problems, an individual made the statement, "I don't get mad, I get even." That attitude will guarantee strife, conflict and war.

Anis Shirosh deals with this in his book, *A Liberated Palestinian*. This writer has heard Shirosh state that when he can stand in Jerusalem and look at a Jew and love him, he knows that is a miracle. As a youth his greatest desire was to kill Jews. Today, in Christ, he loves Jews. There could be peace in the Middle East today, but only in Christ.

Unfortunately, many professed Christians who are very concerned about doctrines and morality are unforgiving and even vindictive. They have left their first love. They have a new first love - self.

In October of 1978, on the 33rd anniversary of the completion of the Bridge of the River Kwai, Dennis Roland of New York and his former guard, Ryuji, walked together arm in arm, over the black, steel-girded span. Said Roland: "I bear no bitterness (toward the Japanese), but I have many memories."

Although it was not part of his plan, at Calvary rebellious man constructed a bridge. In crucifying the Son of God, man had a part in building the "new and living way" to God. Now all of us, whether we are Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, can walk together across that bridge. "For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." (Ephesians 2:14) [19: #2971].

2:15 - BY ABOLISHING. Having abolished, (NKJV). The word translated abolished means to make null and void. Jesus Christ has made null and void many barriers that divide people. Unfortunately, many professing believers keep rebuilding those walls (based on possessions, professions, sex, race, or nationality).

IN THE FLESH. In the New Testament the word for flesh [sarx] may refer to:

- (1) Flesh, whether man, beasts, fish, or birds (I. Cor. 15:39).
- (2) The human body (as here and in 5:29. In Jude 7 the expression "going after strange flesh" refers to unnatural homosexual acts (see Rom. 1:27).
- (3) Man (mankind, or humankind). This the meaning in John 1:14 where we find, "The Word became flesh..."
- (4) The weakness of human nature (Heb. 5:7).
- (5) The corrupt nature of man subject to vile, filthy passions (John 3:6; Rom. 7:18) [26: 1727].

It seems that here the flesh denotes the physical death of Christ.

THE LAW OF COMMANDMENTS CONTAINED IN ORDINANCES. The Law here means the entire Jewish legal system as found in the Word of God, (the Torah).

THE ENMITY. The enmity between Jews and Gentiles was highlighted by the middle wall of partition. The wall was a constant reminder of the real problem. While there may not be a literal wall between the believer today and his neighbor, there are still some very serious barriers that must be overcome if there is to be peace and unity in the church and in the Christian community. There are racial barriers, social barriers, political barriers, educational barriers, and economic barriers that create relationship problems in society. In Christ Jesus the walls of partition are broken down, so that a diverse people may become one body and experience the joy and peace that God makes available to all of us.

For centuries, God had kept Jews and Gentiles separated, and the Jews had taught that the only way a Gentile could be brought near to God was by becoming a Jew. Now the truth was revealed that the cross of Christ condemns both Jews and Gentiles as sinners, but also reconciles to God in one body those that believe on Jesus [23: QVL].

THAT HE MIGHT CREATE. The two, Jews and Gentiles, are made into "one new man" in Jesus Christ (one flesh, Col. 3:9-11). The KJV has "make," but the Greek word mean to "create from nothing;" or to make or compose in a spiritual sense (as here). Man seeks through various means to establish peace and understanding between nations, races, or between groups within a nation or race. Peace is the common goal of most people, but the only real, lasting peace is the peace created between individuals by the Prince of Peace.

2:16 - RECONCILE. This means to restore completely; to bring back to a former state of harmony. God in His great love is reconciling us to Himself through His Son, Who gave Himself as the Lamb of sacrifice.

BOTH. His purpose was to reconcile both Jews and Gentiles unto Himself in one body. He is still seeking to reconcile different people unto Himself in one body. Any unity in the church that is not in Him is superficial. There are a lot of hidden barriers in many churches that need to be confessed and not denied. A young man grew tired of listening to two ladies in his church tell how much they loved each other when in reality they said harsh things to, and about each other. He finally said to one of them, "You don't love each other - you can't stand each other!" Whether or not he was right in his assessment of their relationship, or in saying what he did will be left to the Lord to judge. But one may wonder how many times such a relationship exists in various churches.

IN ONE BODY. The "one body" here is the "one new man" of verse 1:5. This is the body of which Christ is the head (1:23. "Paul piles up metaphors to express his idea of the Kingdom of God

with Christ as King (the church, the body, the commonwealth of Israel, oneness, one new man in Christ, fellow-citizen, the family of God, the temple of God)" [11: 527].

THEREBY. On the cross Jesus slew enmity between Jew and Gentile. Repetition was a common rabbinical method of teaching and since Paul was a trained rabbi, it should not surprise us to find repetition in his epistles.

2:17 - PREACHED PEACE. Jesus preached peace to both Jews and Gentiles (to those who are far off and to them that were nigh). By the cross, through the cross, because of the cross, Jesus could preach the message of peace. His most effective sermon on peace was the cross itself. When did Christ preach to both Jews and Gentiles?

Certainly this refers to the preaching of peace by the apostles rather than Christ Himself because Christ preached almost entirely to Jews (Matt. 10:5-6; 15:24-27). Also the peace that was preached was on the basis of Christ's death rather than during His life on earth [BKC].

2:18 - THROUGH HIM. Through Christ. The "in Christ" emphasis continues. The wall is demolished between Jews and Gentiles in and through Jesus. It is easy to understand why the walls of separation are not being demolished between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East today. There is no power of reconciliation in Judaism or in Islam. They know no forgiveness in Jesus Christ. They both live by laws of retaliation, revenge, threat, intimidation, and force. They both reject the reconciliation that is available to them in Christ.

WE BOTH. "For through Him we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access by one Spirit to the Father." Both have access to the Father in the Holy Spirit.

Under the Jewish economy, only the high priest could go into the presence of God, and that only once a year. But in the new creation, every believer has the privilege of coming into the holy of holies (Heb. 10:19-25). Both Jews and Gentiles now belong to the household of God, and the Jew can no longer claim greater privileges. It is through faith in His blood that Jews and Gentiles are justified [23: QVL].

OUR ACCESS. The NKJV reads "have access," whereas the NNAS has "we both have our access." The word carries with it the idea of access, approach, introduction (see Romans 5:2 where Paul tells us that justification by faith provides access to God). We are given access (once for all time), eternal access, to our heavenly Father.

IN ONE SPIRIT...UNTO THE FATHER. The Trinity is seen throughout the epistle. We worship the great Three-in-One God; one is essence, revealed to us as three in personality. The Father, Son and Spirit are one in the work of redemption. "As all people have direct access to God through Christ by means of the Spirit, any intermediate priest is unnecessary" [NCWB].

2:19 - THEREFORE. Here we have another of the "Atherefores" favored by Paul. The significance is that he uses them to build his argument on the foundation he has just carefully constructed. On the basis of what he has just said he is now going to make a point or draw a conclusion: "So then you (Gentiles) are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household" (Eph 2:19).

NO LONGER. He reminds them of their former state and then leads to look forward with assurance to their new life in Christ. There is a marked contrast between the old life and the new life in Christ.

STRANGERS. This is an old word meaning to dwell by (near by, but not in). See Acts 7:6-29; I Peter 2:11). The word is also used of strangers in a foreign land, or temporary residents who had not established a permanent residence, as the Jews of the Dispersion ("scattered abroad," James 1:1). Hellenistic Jews often went to Jerusalem for the great feasts lived as sojourners among the Palestinian Jew. This became a problem in the early church and it led to a murmuring of the Hellenistic Jews against the Palestinian Jews. Seven men of good report, filled with the Holy Spirit, were elected to a new office (Deacon) to help meet the needs of the widows and orphans who were being neglected (Acts 6).

The idea here seems to be that the Gentiles were dwellers just outside the house or family of God. These new Gentile converts had formerly lived near by, but not in the family of God. Even though the Jews were considered sojourners and foreigners in this Gentile land, as far as the Kingdom of God was concerned, the unredeemed Gentiles were spiritually the foreigners.

FELLOW CITIZENS. They are now members of the commonwealth (fellowship) of Israel, enjoying all the benefits that citizenship brings. There are no second-rate citizens in the Kingdom of God. They were no longer sojourners and foreigners.

HOUSEHOLD OF GOD. These Gentiles, once strangers and aliens, are now in the family of God. Those Gentiles, and all converts today, are adopted into the family of God when they believe in Jesus Christ, His Son. They enjoy all benefits of being a member of the family - they are joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

2:20 - HAVING BEEN BUILT. Or, being built upon. Paul uses the metaphor of a building (temple) for the church, as he makes a transition from the idea of a body of people to a building. The same idea is seen in I Cor.3:10, where Paul speaks of Christ as the sole foundation [RSB]. This was a fitting image, both for the Jews who held such reverence for their temple at Jerusalem, and for the Ephesians who had the great temple of Diana in their own city (See Acts 19:21-41).

The church today is a living, growing temple; when it is completed, Christ will return and take the temple to glory. God dwelt in the Jewish tabernacle (Ex. 40:34), in Solomon's temple (2 Chron. 7:1), in the temple of Christ's body (John 1:14 and

2:18-22), and today in the individual believer (1 Cor. 6:19-20) and the church (Eph. 2:21-22). What a privilege to be the very habitation of God through the Spirit! [23: QVL].

THE FOUNDATION. In this figure of a temple (building), the church is the temple, Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone, the apostles and New Testament prophets are the foundation, and each Christian is a stone in the building (1 Peter 2:4-8).

THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS. If one is surprised that Paul would refer to the apostles like this (being one himself), he should observe that Peter does the same thing (II Peter 3:2). Paul repeats this in Titus 3:5. He would also do well to remember that this epistle is not the product of the mind of Paul, but of the Holy Spirit.

THE CORNER STONE. The NKJV has, "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." Jesus had spoken of Himself as the stone rejected by the Jewish builders (religious leaders), but chosen of God as the head of the corner (Matt. 2:42). The chief corner stone was "the primary foundation stone at the angle of the structure by which the architect fixes a standard for the bearings of the word and cross-walls throughout" [3: 33]. This expression points to the preeminent position of Christ. This new building belongs to Him.

2:21 - ALL THE BUILDING. Or, every building. The reference is to the Jewish building and the Gentile building now brought together as one building in Christ, "fitly framed together." This is a picture of a genuine New Testament Church - the members are fitly framed together."

UNTO A HOLY TEMPLE. This refers to the whole structure, Jews and Gentiles. Compare this with Peter's "spiritual house" in which each is a living stone being built into the total structure (I Peter 2:5). "The error of the Jews was in thinking that God's redemptive mercy was for Jews only. The Gentiles were off limits and no effort was made to face them with their responsibility to God's fulfillment of his offer to provide a Redeemer" [13: 51]. In summary, in verses 20-21, we see here an important figure.

In summary, we have the figure of the church as a temple, Christ is the corner stone, the apostles and prophets are the foundation, and each Christian is a stone in the building (1 Peter 2:4-8). In 1 Corinthians 3:11, Paul speaks of Christ as the sole foundation. This is especially fitting, considering the great pride the Ephesian pagans had in the great temple of the goddess Diana and the reverence the Jews had in their glorious temple in Jerusalem. In Christ we have a greater temple.

2:22 - IN WHOM YOU ALSO ARE BEING BUILT TOGETHER. Believers are being built together into a Dwelling of God in the Spirit." To build together with others, or out of varied materials is the basic idea here (only here in N.T.). Both Jews and Gentiles are included.

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is built together with various people for a habitation of God through the Spirit. Frequent attempts have been made to provide a comprehensive definition

for church. Some are simple and some are complex. But one thing most Christians agree on is that the church is not the building, but a body of believers. Some use the word to refer to a denomination (the Roman Catholic Church, or the Methodist Church).

In the New Testament the word is used in two ways. First, there is the local church, a body of believers bound together in Christ by the Holy Spirit. There may be any number of churches in a town or city and members may have chosen that particular church for different reasons. The basic doctrines of the church should be a major factor, but some join because of family or programs or possibly because the people made them feel welcome.

In the second place, there is the church universal, or the spiritual church which is made up of all those who have experienced new life in Christ. All true believers are members of the spiritual universal church and all true believers should be members of a local church where they seek to glorify God through worship and service. This does not mean that all members of local churches are a part of the spiritual church of our Lord. Unfortunately, there are members of local churches who have never been born again and have no part in the spiritual church or the Kingdom of God.

An important point needs to be considered here. The church is still built together out of varied materials. In other words, the church is made up of many different individuals, with various gifts, different talents, different interests, and different socioeconomic backgrounds. There are poor people and wealthy people, highly intelligent people and ignorant people, new members and long time members, young adults and senior adults in the same local church. It is God's will for all these members to be "fitly framed together" in one building (body or fellowship). It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring us together as one in worship and ministry.

The will of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit are frustrated by those who sow discord, and by those who refuse to be "fitly framed together" with other church members. A major problem in evangelism is that many churches do not reach out to some people because, "they are not our kind." If some of those people come into the church there are members who keep them at a distance. There are churches where new members are thought of as new members for years and while they are expected to attend and tithe, they are often treated as outsiders. Some illustrations may help.

Bill and Sharon move into a new community with their two children. They prayerfully seek God's will in choosing a church and they all join Sunday School classes. Bill and Sharon are in a couples' class and members are friendly enough when they are in class. They try to cultivate relationships. They invite members to their home for fellowship, but they are not invited to visit in other homes. At times, when they get to their Sunday School class they discover that during the past week most of the members had gotten together for one thing or another. In time they discover that other members are regularly called, but they are left out. What will they do? Stick it out; find another church, or drop out?

Why were they treated like this. Possibly, Bill was an attorney and Sharon was a doctor and people were intimidated by them. Or maybe Bill worked at a service station and Sharon cleaned up tables at Wendy's and other members of the class were professional people. In that case you may say that what happened is natural. It might be natural, but it is not spiritual.

Another illustration may help. Pam's husband works on construction jobs and away from home two weeks and home two weeks. They live with her parents so that Pam will have help with two small children. A pastor visits the home and invites them to services the next Sunday. Pam brings the children and after leaving them in preschool departments, the pastor takes her to her Sunday School class and introduces her to those who have arrived early. Over the next several weeks he stops by the class before the class begins and observes that all the older members are laughing and talking excitedly about one thing or another. And right in the middle of them sits Pam, totally ignored and miserable. What do you think she is going to do? Sometimes the most loneliest place in the world can be in a crowd, even in Sunday School.

I was a Youth Pastor at one time during my seminary days (about 1961), working with an outstanding pastor and some wonderful people. They were building two new educational buildings and furnishing them. I was excited about what they were doing and commented on it to an elderly lady. I discovered she was not as enthusiastic as some of the other people. She said, "Some of those people were not around here during the Depression, when if it hadn't been for us they would have had to close the doors."

When one considers all the things we might disagree on, he comes to understand that real unity in any church is a miracle. It is literally a miracle! The key to that miraculous unity is found Paul's often used phrase, "in Christ," or "in Christ Jesus" (See Philippians).

A DWELLING OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT. The believer is the dwelling place of God in that at the point of salvation he, or she, is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is far removed from New Age monism - all is one and one is all. "Possibly each of us is meant to be the >habitation of God in the spirit= and all together growing into a holy temple in the Lord, a noble conception of brotherhood in Christ" [11: 529].

F. A Mystery Is Unveiled (3:1-13).

Chapter one describes the church under the imagery of the body of Christ (1:23). In chapter two the church is seen as the building (2:21). The body is possessed of life; the building is inhabited by His very presence. Under the Old Covenant, God met with man in a temporary temple specially designated for such a meeting. Under the New Covenant the body of the believer is that temple (I Cor. 6:19). Chapter three depicts the mystical body of Christ, the building, as made up of both believing Jews and Gentiles. Warren Wiersbe writes:

This chapter closes the first half of Ephesians in which Paul has described our wealth in Christ. Paul is about to move into the practical section (our walk with Christ), but first he pauses to pray. He begins his prayer in v. 1, but does not continue until he gets to v. 13! The intervening verses form a long parenthesis, but they are important, because they explain Paul's special ministry to the church body and to the Gentiles [23: QVL].

3:1 - FOR THIS REASON. For what reason? This refers to God's elective grace by which all believers are united in one body (Chapter two). It seems that Paul was about to begin the prayer (verse 1), but interrupted it and returned to it as he repeats the words "for this reason." If so, he may have been diverted by the words "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the sake of you Gentiles." He adds the paragraph showing how God has used him in behalf of the Gentiles.

I PAUL. Throughout the history of God's dealings with human beings God has had a plan. That plan has been a man (or a woman). God calls individuals to serve Him and anoints them with the Holy Spirit to carry out His purpose.

At the beginning of my junior year in high school at Sledge, Mississippi, our English teacher told our class about a week she had spent at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly near Ashville, North Carolina. She particularly stressed the theme for the week (which must have been youth week). The theme was, "God has a plan, a purpose, and a place for every life." I recall that she repeated that sentence a number of times. I never asked what it meant to other students, but it seemed that the Lord took those words and engraved them in my heart and mind. The Lord had called me into his ministry when I was thirteen and He used this high school English teacher and that statement to reaffirm His claim on my life.

The following summer my teacher took three of her students with her to attend another youth week at Ridgecrest. I was fortunate enough to have been one of those young people. It was my privilege to hear Dr. Chester Swor twice each day. Once again, the Lord revealed to me that He had "a plan, a place, and a purpose" for my life. He has a plan for each and every life. It is as important for one today to find God's purpose for his life as it was for Paul. Your call may not be as dramatic as his; your gift may not be as great; and your contribution may not be as significant. But your obligation to God and your accountability to Him is just the same as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

PRISONER OF CHRIST JESUS. At the time he was writing this epistle he says that he was "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the sake of you Gentiles." He was the Apostle to the Gentiles and not even the Roman prison could prevent his ministry to them. He had been in prison three times before this. It is interesting that Paul calls himself a prisoner and that he connects his imprisonment to the Gentiles (see Acts 22). Following his third missionary journey, He had gone to Jerusalem where he was preaching the Gospel and reporting on God's work among the Gentiles. They listened to him until he got to the word "Gentiles" (Acts 22:21), and at the mention of the Gentiles, a riot broke out and Paul had to be rescued from the mob.

3:2 - IF INDEED YOU HAVE HEARD. This seems strange in light of the fact that Paul had spent more time in Ephesus than any other place on his three missionary journeys. One explanation is that there may have been a turn-over in membership and many of the people in the church had not been there when Paul was there. We might also find in this a hint of humility that some miss in reading Paul's epistles, primarily because he is often forced to defend his apostleship against the Judaizers.

STEWARDSHIP. Where the NAS has Astewardship,” the NKJV has Adispensation.” Dispensation is a translation of *oikonomia*, a term which combines the words for "house" and "law." So, the basic idea then is "household law." The word denotes stewardship or administration. It is used in the N.T. to Adescribe an epoch in which God emphasizes a particular aspect of His purpose for the human family. Here consideration is provided for the dispensation of God's grace, the epoch in which we now live. Note 1:10, in which the same word is obviously used of a future era” [18: QV]. Wiersbe has written:

In the OT, God revealed through prophecy His program for the people of Israel: that He would establish them in their kingdom when they received their Messiah, and then through Israel He would convert the Gentiles. God offered them the kingdom through the ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2), whom the Jews permitted to be slain; through Christ=s ministry (Matt.4:12-17), whom the Jews asked to be slain; and through the apostles and Stephen (Acts 2-7), whom the Jews themselves actually killed (Acts 7:54-60). Three offers of the kingdom were made to Israel, but the nation rejected each of them. They had rejected the Father, who had sent John; the Son; and the Spirit, who was energizing the witnessing apostles. With the death of Stephen, the offers of kingdom ceased temporarily; the message went out to the Samaritans and the Gentiles (Acts 8 and 10); in the meantime Paul was saved miraculously in Acts 9 [23: QVL].

3:3 - BY REVELATION. This was Paul's qualification for preaching. He had both a divine mandate to preach the Gospel and a divinely revealed message. Every preacher of the Word of God should be absolutely sure that he has a divine call and that the Bible is the revealed Word; infallible, inerrant, and applicable to human needs today. For that matter, why else would anyone want to be a pastor or a missionary? If his call is not from God and if his message is not the Word of God, are his efforts not ungodly?

THE MYSTERY. In the New Testament the word for mystery is used in a number of ways. Basically, it means something once hidden, but now revealed; something which may not be known by human reason, but something which may be known only by divine revelation. The mystery of the Gospel must never be confused with that of the so-called mystery religions. They are poles apart.

In the writings of Paul the word mystery is sometimes used in reference to the calling of the Gentiles. In Ephesians 3:3-6 the mystery is that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body with the Jews in Christ Jesus. AThe mystery spoken of here is not that Gentiles would be blessed (for that was predicted in the OT) but that Jews and Gentiles would be equal heirs in the one body of Christ (v. 6)” [RSB]. This is what was unknown in OT prophecy but was revealed by the NT apostles and prophets (v. 5).

Paul's meaning of a mystery is the exact opposite of its use in the mystery religions, in which esoteric teachings were communicated to an elite few, who were enjoined never to divulge the secrets. Paul uses the term "mystery" ironically to herald the publication of the

long-hidden secrets of God to the entire world. Chief among these is the fact that God is now welcoming Gentiles into His kingdom and affirming them as having equal standing before Him with Jewish believers in Christ [18: QV].

AS I WROTE BEFORE. When? Is it possible that he had written another letter to them as he had to Corinth (I Cor. 5:9)? If so, the letter was a personal letter written at his own initiative and not an inspired epistle that was lost. However, it seems more likely that he is referring to the preceding discussion, especially in 1:9-10 and 2:11-22. In other words, if they want to understand this more clearly, they should go back and read the previous chapters in this book.

3:4 - BY REFERRING TO THIS. ABy referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ” (NAS). Paul is trying to help them to understand his knowledge of the mystery of Christ to which he has alluded in vs. 3.

WHEN YOU READ. The epistle was a circular letter which would be read aloud before the church. A copy of the letter would be made and kept for further study and the original would then be sent to the next church where it would be read, copied and forwarded again.

MY INSIGHT INTO THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST. Paul understood the mystery and communicated it to others. "Every sermon reveals the preacher's grasp of the mystery of Christ. If he had no insight into mystery of Christ, he has no call to preach" [11: 530]. If any believer has ever understood this mystery it was Paul. The phrase, the mystery of Christ, can be understood in three ways:

(1) AChrist=s mystery” (i.e., Christ has a mystery, which is the church composed of Jewish and Gentile believersC3:6); (2) Athe mystery which is Christ himself” (see Col. 1:27); or (3) Athe mystery pertaining to Christ” (i.e., God=s secret plan, as described in chapters 1 and 2, is intricately related to Christ). All three interpretations are defensible [NCWB].

3:5 - WHICH IN OTHER AGES. Or, in other generations. Paul has claimed this revelation for himself (3:3). Now he claims it for all the other apostles and prophets of God. This is Anot a comparison (the mystery was not so much revealed in the OT as it is in the NT). Rather, it introduces new information (as in Acts 2:15; see also Col. 1:26)” [QV: RSB]. Paul is looking to the past here, but this has an application today. Those who accept the doctrine of Priesthood of the Believer believe each individual has both the right and the obligation of read and interpret the Scripture for himself.

That does not minimize the need for God-called preachers who have been set aside by the Lord to proclaim His Word. God reveals Himself through the written Word and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to His servants. The spirit-filled pastor, evangelist or missionary will experience divine revelation and then seek to communicate that to his people. There should be something

supernatural in every sermon - both in the pulpit and in the pew.

The prophets were both fore-tellers and forth-tellers of divine truth. There were times when God gave the prophet a special revelation of future events. But most of the time the prophet was proclaiming the word of God. The preacher today will do well to proclaim, or preach, the Word and let God take the initiative in revelation about future events. What we really need to know about future events is recorded in the Bible. Before we get too far out on a limb with someone's eschatological charts and calendars, we had better heed the warning of our Lord: "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matt. 24:4).

3:6 - FELLOW HEIRS. A To be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." God had revealed that Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and members of the same body. The word translated fellow-heirs might also be translated Aa co-inheritor." The "same body" is, by metaphor, the church. The church, the called-out body of believers, is the body of Christ. The great mystery to which Paul refers is that in the church, the body of Christ, all are fellow heirs, fellow members, and fellow partakers. AThe truth of the one body was given to Paul and its significance dawned gradually upon the early church" [23: QVL].

THE GOSPEL. The word actually means good news. In the New Testament it is given a deeper meaning. It refers to preaching of the good news of Jesus Christ, His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, intercession and promised return.

3:7 - I WAS MADE A MINISTER. Minister (*diakonos*) refers to a servant, ministering attendant, one who executes the commands of another. Hence, our word "deacon." The term, as Paul used it was still fluid, not technical. Distinction between offices and roles would be more clearly defined later. In vs. 7-10, Paul gives his concept of his own ministry. ANotice that this was God's doing (v. 7), that he was to make available to all mankind Israel's hope for a Messiah (v. 8), that he was to be a theologian-teacher as well as a missionary (v. 9), that his ministry would even bring angelic beings to see the wisdom of God in His plan for the church (v. 10). On rulers and . . . authorities, see note on 1:21" [22: QV].

Paul was not a self-made minister. He was "made a minister." In other words, he was a God called minister. A divine call is the only justification for any person entering a vocational ministry. Every believer is called to minister to others, but certain individuals are set aside by the Lord for a special ministry to which he is to devote his entire life. In the latter half of the twentieth century a lot of emphasis has been placed on the ministry of the laity. Sometimes a distinction is made between the lay-minister and the "full-time" minister. But the ministry of the lay person is also a full time ministry.

I answered God's call to the ministry when I was thirteen years old and was licensed at age 17. My home church expressed faith in my call and asked to ordain me following my second year at Mississippi College. That is not the way it is usually done. Normally the young minister is called to a church and asks his home church to ordain him the Gospel ministry.

I lived with a sense of divine call from the time I was thirteen and I was aware that many other people were aware of my call to the ministry at an early age. To help pay college and seminary expenses I worked for the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) in Quitman County, Mississippi for several summers. I plotted fields on aerial photographs and did other things that kept me in touch with a lot of farmers in the area. I still cringe when I recall two statements I heard more often than I like to remember. The first was, "Johnny, I hear you making a preacher." The second was, "Johnny, I hear you are going to school to be a preacher." I explained that I was already a God-called minister and that I was going to school to receive training that would help be more effective in the ministry to which God called me.

Recently someone talked with me about one of his relatives who is in the ministry. He tried to distinguish between his relative and me by pointing out that his cousin did not go to school to become a preacher; he was just called by God. The call is essential. Some have studied on their own and looked to others for help and have been very effective without attending seminary. Many others, especially those who respond to God's call at an early age, recall both the call to the ministry and a strong conviction that the God Who called them also led them to seek formal training in the ministry.

Soon after I was called to be a minister I became convinced that the Lord wanted me to go to Mississippi College and then to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to receive training in the ministry. Later, when I enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program with Luther Rice Seminary, a number of us met for our first seminar with Dr. Charles Williams. Dr. Williams announced, "We are not training you for the ministry. You are already in the ministry. We are providing training for you in your ministry."

There are times when the work becomes particularly trying, or when one has a difficult time providing for his family, that a sense of divine call to the ministry is the only thing that will keep him in it. Many do drop out, and others might if there was not a deep and certain knowledge that God had called them for this ministry and only He has a right to revoke that call.

3:8 - THE LEAST OF ALL THE SAINTS. Here Paul shows genuine humility. At the same time he stands up for his rights as an apostle (II Cor. 11:5). Some suggest that Paul was given to self commendation, but let us remember that the divine author of this material is the Holy Spirit, Who obviously wanted the readers to know Paul's credential, as well as what it cost him to be faithful to his calling.

THE UNFATHOMABLE RICHES OF CHRIST. ATo me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ." The expression, unfathomable riches (unsearchable riches, KJV) is from Job 5:9 and 9:10. It is used by Paul here and in Romans 11:33, as he undertakes to trace out the untraceable riches of Christ. Paul speaks of the riches of Christ Aas a trail or a road which is lost in the infinite depths of the divine plan and love of God" [13: 57]. In imagination one may trace the trail a part of the way. It can be traced by the Mount of Olives, the tomb in the garden, Golgotha, Bethlehem, and on and on.

The Gentiles can know something of the riches of Christ=s blessings (cf. "The riches of God=s grace" in Eph. 1:7 and 2:7 and the richness of His mercy in 2:4). Yet Christ=s fathomless spiritual wealth can never be fully comprehended... Paul was to disclose publicly *to everyone*, not just the Ephesians (cf. Eph. 3:2) this stewardship of God=s sacred secret (vv. 3-4, 6). This secret had been **hidden in God** (cf. vv. 5), the Creator of the universe [BKC].

3:9 - TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE. The idea is to enlighten, or to turn on the lights so others can see. With the eyes of the heart enlightened (Eph. 1:18) one can then turn on the light for others to see (Col. 1:26). It must be remembered that the Holy Spirit Who inspired the writing of the Scripture is also the One Who illumines the heart that we may understand the mysteries of Christ.

WHO CREATED ALL THINGS BY JESUS CHRIST. This is consistent with what he reveals in the prologue to the Gospel according to John. Jesus Christ (the Word in John 1:1) was the agent of God's creative work. The biblical account of creation is often neglected or rejected today, but it is an essential ingredient in the New Testament message.

3:10 - MIGHT BE MADE KNOWN. The mystery was made known to Paul (3:30) and he wants it made known to all. Apparently the references to principalities and powers has to do angel. In the New Testament angels are revealed to have an interest in the redemptive work of God in Christ (I Peter 1:12). Paul seems to be saying that the wisdom of God cannot be understood even by angels apart from the fulfillment of the evangelistic and missionary purpose which He has for His church.

THROUGH THE CHURCH. The body of Christ (chapter 2). The church must never lose sight of its responsibility in evangelism. The church has the responsibility for proclaiming the Gospel so that lost people will be won to faith in Jesus Christ and saved people will grow in His grace and knowledge (II Peter 3:18). The church has left a lot of its ministry (as defined in the New Testament) to the government and to social and civic organizations. It is easy to depend on government programs, the United Way, or the Red Cross to provide for those in need. Often they are better funded and do a more effective job, so Christians contribute to these organizations rather than becoming personally involved. The needy person profits from this work, but God is not receiving the glory and the church is losing credibility in the community.

In vv. 9-10 we see a dual ministry: Paul was to make known the dispensation ("A fellowship," same word as v. 2) of the mystery to people in general; the church was to reveal the wisdom of God to angelic beings ("Principalities and powers," see 6:12). Angels are learning about God=s grace through the church! (See 1 Peter 1:10-12.) Satan knows the Scriptures; by keeping His program for the church hidden, God prevented Satan from hindering the plan. Satan took Christ to the cross, and by so doing sealed his own doom! It is tragic today when we see pastors and churches wandering about aimlessly in their ministries because they do not understand God=s

purpose for the church in this age. If they would move out of the message of Acts 1-6 and into that of Ephesians and Colossians, they would not be wasting time, talent, and money "Abuilding the kingdom" but instead would be building the church [23: QVL].

We need to understand what the church is and what it is not - what it's primary mission and what it is not. The following observations were found in the Bible Illustrator.

The church is not:

- * An ark for the saving of a select few.
- * A ferryboat to take effortless passengers to the shores of heaven.
- * A life insurance company, with no obligation on policy holders except the payment of a small annual premium.
- * A social set, welcoming certain people and excluding others from its fellowship.
- * A Sunday pleasure club for the providing of pleasant occupation on the day of rest.

The church is:

- * A lifeboat for the rescue of sin-wrecked and perishing souls.
- * A family, in which love and service are expected from each member to each member.
- * An organized community, with constant activities and continual growth and development.
- * A company of believers who have found the one way of life and obey the one Lord of life.
- * A union of those who love for the benefit of those who suffer.
- * A center of social worship, in which the spiritual life of each is helped by the spiritual life of his fellow.
- * The representative -- the "body" -- of Jesus Christ on the earth, reflecting his spirit and controlled by his will [19: #726].

3:11 - ACCORDING TO THE ETERNAL PURPOSE. God has a plan, a scheme, a deliberate purpose for His church and its members. God's purpose is eternal: "This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord." This was His plan "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

3:12 - BOLDNESS. The NNAS has, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him." "Boldness" is a great New Testament word. It described the attitude of what is often referred to as New Testament Christianity. Paul says that we have boldness in Christ Jesus. This is one of the blessings of a relationship with Him.

CONFIDENT ACCESS. Not only do we have boldness, we have "access" to God. This is not a new thought in Paul's epistles. In Romans 5:2 we see that when one is justified by faith he receives

permanent and eternal access to the throne of God. Tolbert says:

The object of ritual in religion is to set up patterns by which people can approach God, or gods, without fear of doing it wrong. For people who are in terror of God, the approach to Him is a minefield sowed with taboos [14: 72].

But in Christ we can go to our heavenly Father without fear (in confidence). The Greek word translated "boldness" actually carries with it the idea of freedom to speak. In Christ Jesus we have freedom to speak to the Father, faith in Christ gives the believer confidence in his approach to God.

3:13 - LOSE HEART. The KJV reads "That ye faint not." The meaning is that you do not give in to evil. Paul uses all his apostolic authority and the authority of the Holy Spirit in inspiration to persuade them not to give in to evil because of his tribulation for them. Paul's suffering and imprisonment must not lead to discouragement and frustration within the church. "We should not be disheartened because of trials that come to others (here) or in prayer (Luke 18:1) or in doing good (Gal. 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:13) or in serving (2 Cor. 4:1) or because of the burdens of life (2 Cor. 4:16)" [22: QV].

MY TRIBULATIONS. "Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory." This points, not the end-time Tribulation, but to Paul's multiple tribulations on behalf of the saints in Ephesus. The word translated "tribulation" (affliction, anguish, distress, persecution) is one of the most meaningful of Greek terms when it is given a Christian application. It is a word which referred to external pressure which would appear to crush and destroy the individual. But from a Christian standpoint, they do not crush, but shape and form one for more effective service. This is just one of many interesting paradoxes one discovers in a serious study of the Word of God.

The word was used for pressing grapes. The grapes were put into a large stone vat. On top of the grapes was placed a large flat stone. Men or animals would then walk on top of the stone, crushing the grapes to pulp. This was called "treading the wine press." The juice ran out of holes in the bottom of the winepress into containers.

Christians are often placed under pressure. That pressure does not crush the believer who is walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. It only molds, shapes and develops him. Some modern groups have revised the old notion that health, wealth and success are evidences of God's power and presence. This philosophy is occasionally broadcast by the electronic church. The health and wealth gospel preached over the years by some of the television ministers has been very popular with many people.

When the Pecanland Mall opened in Monroe, Louisiana, my older son, John, wanted to take me through the mall. Because of a severe foot injury, I had to use a wheel chair when I went through a facility of that size. As John pushed me through the mall, a very sincere man of about forty saw me and walked directly to us. He immediately said, "God can heal you." My church will pray for you and God will heal you." He was sincere and I agreed with him and then thanked him for his commitment to pray for me.

There was something particularly disturbing about our conversation. I knew what was bothering me, but it disturbed me more as my mind kept coming back to the incident throughout the day. First, this very sincere man expressed great concern for my physical condition, but he never asked me about my relationship with Jesus Christ. He was far more concerned about my physical well-being than my spiritual well-being. Secondly, his approach would have disturbed some people. Also, I kept wondering how many people there might have been in the mall that day with problems far more serious than mine. My problem was just more visible.

YOUR GLORY. The Greek word denotes one's opinion and is always used in a good sense in the N.T. (hence praise, honor, glory, glorious). Glory is an especially divine quality, the unspoken manifestation of God; the Shekinah glory (in Jewish theology, the divine presence). It involves honor, praise, glory, splendor, excellence.

G. Paul's Second Prayer for the Church (3:14-21).

3:14 - FOR THIS REASON. It seems that Paul may have begun this second prayer in 3:1, but at the mention of his imprisonment for them, began a lengthy parenthetical digression, Paul now resumes the thought begun in 3:1.

There is another, if less popular, view. If, in fact, he did not begin to pray in 3:1 and then returned to his prayer here, it is possible that "for this reason" refers to the revelation of this great mystery by which God has joined Jew and Gentile in one body is the occasion for a prayer of worship and adoration to God. In a sense, at this point Paul summarizes the major themes he has addressed in chs. 1-3" [18: QV].

I BOW MY KNEES. This is Paul's second prayer for the Ephesians.

You will recall that the two prayers in Ephesians (here and in 1:15-23) complement each other. The first is a prayer for enlightenment; the second is for enablement. Paul wants the Ephesians to learn all they have in Christ and then live what they have learned. He prays for God's family in heaven and earth, for that is where His family is; none are under the earth" (see Phil. 2:10) [23: QVL].

Paul now prays, whether he had intended to do so in 3:1 or not (and I believe he did). Both kneeling and standing are common attitudes of prayer. One's posture is not as significant as his heart. The prison prayers of Paul call for careful study. They tell us a lot about the spiritually minded Christian, and about this one Christian in particular. It is a special blessing for us that the Holy Spirit preserved those prayers for us.

As noted above, there are two prayers in Ephesians. The first prayer is for knowledge (enlightenment), the second is a petition for love. The first is a prayer for revelation, the second is

for realization; the first is for enlightenment, the second for enablement. It is not enough just to know; we must be. The fruit of divine knowledge is the expression of it.

3:15 - EVERY FAMILY. In the Old Testament days the word was commonly used of a group of persons united by common descent from a common ancestor or father (a tribe or a family). The word is used of a father or that which belongs to or springs from him. The "whole family" does not mean the entire human race. Jesus taught only His children (believers) to address God as Father. But more to the point here, he is referring to A... every family in heaven and on earth."

Some have translated this Aall families," but Acts 2:36 tends to support the translation here - Athe whole family" - in which both men and angels make up one family under God the Father through Christ (1:10; Phil. 2:10).

Angels, then, are called our brothers (Rev. 19:10), and Asons of God" (Job 38:7) by their natural creation, as we are by regeneration. The church is part of this great family which includes, besides men, the higher spiritual creation, where the archetypes that man now strives for are already perfectly known. The Lord=s Prayer includes the idea that this family is one universal community. Our sin, which separated us from God, also separated us from the higher spiritual world where his kingdom already exists. Thus, as Christ reconciles man to God and unites them (Jew and Gentile) together, so he also joins man to those beings who are already included in the perfect kingdom for which the church on earth hopes [NCWB].

3:16 - THAT HE WOULD GRANT YOU. AThat He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (NAS). There are five petitions in this prayer (possibly the greatest of all of Paul's prayers). Nowhere does Paul seem to reach such heights of spiritual passions as here. The whole prayer seems to be colored with the "riches of His glory."

STRENGTHENED WITH POWER THROUGH HIS SPIRIT. Paul prays that each believer will be strengthened with power through the Holy Spirit, who came on the Day of Pentecost for that very purpose. This is a primary Christian distinctive. It should be our daily prayer for ourselves and for others. It points to the only source of spiritual strength for daily living. This source of strength for daily living, and power over the world is available to all Christians, but to no lost person. Lost people are not strengthened by the might of His Spirit.

Fortunes are spent by many people in the psychologist's office in search of answers provided 3,000 years ago by Jehovah through Solomon. The Book of Proverbs is filled with wisdom from God which needs to be applied by His people every day. The spiritually minded psychologist is keenly aware of this, but the psychologist who rejects God in his own life is not likely to point others to the ultimate source of help.

Millions are seeking the help of analysts, astrologers, counselors and other professionals (and

amateurs). Others are turning to alcohol, drugs and various kinds of mental gymnastics (yoga, TM, etc.). They know they need strength and guidance but they are not receiving it "with the might of His Spirit." The current interest in the New Age movements and all the cults is indicative of man's search for strength. A major factor in Satanism is a desire for power, but their interest is not just in power for daily living. They are interested in power over other people.

It is different with Christians. God calls us out and demands that we be different from other people. Then He gives us His Spirit to enable us to be obedient to Him. This is the key to good mental and spiritual health.

IN THE INNER MAN. This points to the real person; the inner person as opposed to the outer person; whom we are, not what we appear to be. The Greeks associated reason, conscience and will with the inner man. AUnbelievers have the same worldly nature inside and out. In Christians, >the inner man is one=s inner regenerated being, in contrast to the old body." (See 1 Pet. 3:4.) [NCWB].

3:17 - THAT CHRIST MAY DWELL IN YOUR HEARTS BY FAITH. Caudill renders it, "That Christ, through faith, may permanently dwell in your hearts" [3: 37]. The word for "dwell" means to settle in, to be established in, (with the idea of permanency), to make one's home, to be completely at home. A contrast with "sojourners" is stressed. Remember that Paul is not praying for them to become Christians (to accept Christ as Savior). They had already done this, or they could not be properly called saints. If one is saved Christ dwells in his heart. If he walks with Christ, permit Christ to live and love through him, then the living presence of Christ is at home in his heart in a very significant and victorious sense.

He wants Christ to Afeel at home" (dwell, v. 17) in their hearts. Of course, Christ does dwell in the heart of every true believer, but not every heart is a comfortable home for Him. Christ loved to go to Bethany because his friends there loved Him, fed on His Word, and served Him. When Christ came to earth to talk to Abraham (Gen. 18), He sent two angels ahead to visit Lot (Gen. 19) because He did not feel at home in the house of a worldly believer. Does He feel at home in our hearts?

Christ feels at home in our hearts when He finds faith and love. ARooted" (v. 17) suggests a steady position, a habit of faith and love, like a tree rooted in the soil. Too many Christians want the fruits of the Spirit without being rooted in spiritual things [23: QVL].

3:18 - THAT YOU MAY HAVE THE STRENGTH TO COMPREHEND. In the King James, "may be able to comprehend." The word translated "comprehend" may be rendered "apprehend." It means to seize, to lay hold of, to grasp. Here it is used figuratively, meaning to grasp with the mind. It is sad that many Christians play down the importance of the mind. It is unfortunate that some believers have set the mind and the heart in opposition to each other.

Paul has already prayed that they might understand; now he prays that they might lay

their hands on these wonderful blessings and grasp them for themselves. By faith we lay hold of God's promises. Paul especially wants them to lay hold of God's immeasurable love, a love that fills all things. Far too many Christians think of God as an angry Judge or a stern Master instead of a loving Father [23: QVL].

Francis Shaeffer stressed the fact that it is not enough to believe something in your heart, as important as that is. The test for truth is not what you believe in your heart, but what you know God says in His Word. Salvation involves the whole person, mind, feelings and will (intellect, emotions and volition). The person who emphasizes either area to the neglect of the others lacks spiritual balance.

There are some things the believer must grasp with his mind. That does not mean that he has to be an intellectual or that he must have a theological degree. John McArthur has made a very good video tape presentation of some of the things the Christian should know under the title of "Spiritual Boot Camp." At one point he says, "I don't even understand Edith Shaeffer, let alone Francis Shaeffer." But he stresses that there are certain things the Christian should know. These things which every believer should know are elementary things most every believer can understand, yet deep enough to challenge any intellectual.

Baptists have for years been called the people of the Book. Unfortunately, Baptists are ignorant of the Book today. They are not alone. But there is no excuse for this. The reason so many church members are ignorant of the Word of God is not that the Scripture is too deep, but they are too lazy, or simply do not care enough to seek the answers. There are intellectuals who spend a life time studying just one section of the Bible and readily acknowledge the fact that they have never fathomed the depths of it.

There are also many people with little formal training who begin a study of God's Word and show an amazing grasp of its message for them. They may never teach it in a college or seminary, but they may be able to apply it in their daily life more effectively than some pastors and teachers of theology. There are some things God wants you to grasp with your mind, and those things you can grasp if you want to do so. If you do not it is because you choose not to do it.

Paul prays that they "may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth" of the love of Jesus Christ. "The love of Christ includes all, extends from eternity to eternity, seats us in the heavenlies, and reaches down to our alienated position" [22: QV].

WITH ALL THE SAINTS. This not an isolated privilege. The fellowship is open to all believers. Paul gives a four dimensional measure of love; breadth, length, height and depth. The number four is the universal number (north, south east and west; the four corners of the earth; the four winds). This is all-inclusive. We need to grasp with our minds all we can of the love of Christ. The Christian commitment involves the total person; intellect, emotions and volition (mind, feelings and will). Grace, mercy, humility and faith do not excuse mental growth. They demand it!

3:19 - TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST. This is the urgent need of every child of God. Every child of God is loved by Jesus Christ, but too few seem to fully grasp the significance of it. The writer read some where that in an interview the late William Barclay was asked the greatest thought he had ever had and he thoughtfully responded, "Jesus loves me."

The low standards adopted by many believers may result from a failure to comprehend the love of Christ. It is not easy to understand why some professing Christians are so "turned on" by hell fire and brimstone condemnation of drunkenness and immorality, and so turned off by a sermon of the love of Christ. In the King James Version of the Bible the word hell appears 54 times; love 310 times; heaven 582 times; grace 120 times; faith 247 times; hope 120 times; salvation 164 times. If the preacher preaches hell ten times as much as he preaches love, his people are going to have a warped view of God and that view is going to determine how they live and witness.

The preacher must preach on hell and judgment without compromise, but he must not neglect the love of God. He is not free to preach what the people want to hear, or what they compliment him most for preaching. He must preach the total Gospel and that means that he must keep the love of Jesus Christ before the people. That will also answer a lot of the questions a pastor is asked: Is it a sin to drink? Should I go to Joe's place? What's wrong with dancing? What's wrong with rock music?

Many people who profess to have the Kingdom of God in their heart refuse to live in the heart of the Kingdom. They spend their time searching for the borderlines. Many spend so much time on the borderline that they take on the appearance of the people on the other side. They not only look like the people on the other side, they talk like them and sometimes they smell like them. The love of Christ will keep the believer in the heart of the Kingdom.

The love of God may be known by man. One may know Him intimately. Yet, there is a sense in which the love of Christ is beyond finite knowledge. The remarkable thing is that the longer we walk with Him and more closely we follow Him, the more we can know the love of Christ.

THAT YE MAY BE FILLED WITH ALL FULLNESS OF GOD. This is a great thought and a worthy goal. It is in harmony with the injunction in Matthew 5:48 to be perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect. It expresses a desire that they experience all those blessings mentioned in Romans 8:29.

Filled with all the fullness of God" (v. 19): this is God's ultimate purpose for our lives. Read carefully John 1:16 and Col. 2:9-10. "You are complete in Him" states Col. 2:10, NKJV. Why live like paupers when God has given us His fullness? An empty life is disappointing and dangerous; if the Spirit of God does not fill us, then the spirit of disobedience (2:2) goes to work and we fall into sin [23: QVL].

3:20-21 - Another Doxology.

3:20 - UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO DO FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY. He is able! The Greek word (*dunamai*) is interesting - it is the word from which we get the word dynamite. It means to be able, or to have power. The NKJV has "exceeding abundantly." A doubly compounded word meaning super-superabundantly (used here and in 1 Thess. 3:10 and 5:13 only). "the power that works within us. I.e., the Holy Spirit" [22: QV].

Paul is inspired to think and write in superlatives. He is fully aware of the magnitude of the blessings he requests for them, but the doxology ascribes to God the power to provide them for us.

BEYOND ALL. Literally, beyond and above all (see NKJV). The revelation of the all-sufficiency of our Lord continues. He is more than adequate; and His grace is sufficient for all our needs. What a marvelous doxology this is! What praise! What faith! "Unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think..." We really need no commentary on this doxology. We just need to believe it and try it. "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:10). No spiritual aspiration of the saint is beyond the power of God to bestow.

3:21 - UNTO HIM BE GLORY. "To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (NAS). We may say this with Paul in our daily prayer, but do we seek His glory and His alone with our lives each day? Do all who go around saying "Praise the Lord" really praise Him with worship, Bible study, prayer, tithes and offerings and with their witness to other people? It is not enough to praise Him with your tongue. You must praise Him with your life.

IN THE CHURCH. This is the general church, the body of Christ. When Isaiah saw the vision of the Lord, he exclaimed, "His train filled all the temple" (Is. 6). In other words, His presence and glory filled all the temple. The presence and glory of Jesus Christ fills His church today. Unfortunately, the local church at times shows far too little appreciation for His glory.

IN JESUS CHRIST. He is the Head of the church. The church is the body of Christ. "In Christ Jesus" is also the key which unlocks the mystery Paul has mentioned and the key to our understanding this epistle. If we are not in Christ, any effort to apply chapters 4-6 to our daily lives will be futile and frustrating.

Wiersbe observes that verses 20-21

declare a thrilling benediction, closing this first section of the letter. God works in us! God works through us! God is glorified in us! What a wonderful salvation we have! This power works in us as we open our hearts to Christ, cultivate this abiding fellowship, pray, and submit to the Word. There is no reason for us believers to be "down in the dumps" when we are seated with Christ (2:6) and filled with God's fullness.

As we close this first section, it would be helpful to note Paul=s Aspiritual postures,” for they give us the secret of God=s blessing. Paul is seated with Christ (2:6), built upon Christ (2:20), and is bowing his knees to the Father (3:14). This is what makes it possible for him to walk (4:1), grow up (4:15), and stand against Satan (6:14ff). Our spiritual position in Christ makes possible our victorious walk on earth [23: QVL].

II. THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD (CHAPTERS 4 - 6).

A. A Call to Unity, 4:1-6.

We now begin the second half of the letter, which emphasizes the Christian=s behavior (Christian walk - 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15). In 4:1-6:24 Paul deals with practical theology. Here, in vs. 1, Paul begins an exhortation for believers Ato promote the unity of the church through godly living (vv. 1-6) and, through a diversity of gifts, to contribute to the common welfare (vv. 7-16)” [22: QV].

4:1 - THEREFORE. ATherefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” Remember that the Atherefores” of Paul are significant. Here it stands as a signboard to tell us that there is no divorcement of Christian doctrine from Christian duty. "Therefore" bridges the gap between chapters 1-3 and 4-6.

THE PRISONER OF THE LORD. See 3:1. He is a prisoner of Rome because of his commitment to Jesus Christ. Paul was imprisoned a number of times in his ministry. One may well wonder what the modern Pastor Search Committee would do with Paul=s resume=! He may have been in a Roman prison, but he belonged to Jesus. He had been arrested and thrown into prison for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. ALord” is the title Paul uses throughout the thirteen epistles for Jesus.

I IMPLORE YOU. Or, "I beseech you" (KJV). This expression was often used by the Greeks as an admonition (to encourage, urge, or beg). We must exhort lost people to come to Jesus Christ for salvation, and we must also exhort believers to live in a manner that will bring glory and honor to the Lord, to His kingdom, to the church - the church universal and the local church.

WALK WORTHILY. In the Bible to walk means to live a certain kind of life. Worthy means suitable, in a manner worthy of. For a list of virtues see Colossians 3:12. Paul adds love to the list here. We have been saved and called to one body, so we must seek to walk in unity. Walking in unity is walking worthy of the calling (vocation) we have from God. Paul has described this high calling in chapters 1-3; now he will exhort us to live up to these blessings.

We do not live for Christ to get something; we live for Christ because He has already done so much for us! Note that Paul does not tell us to manufacture unity, but to maintain the unity already existing in the body. This is not organizational uniformity, a Asuper church”; this is organic, living union and unity. Note John 17:20-23 [23: QVL].

4:2 - HUMILITY. The Authorized Version has "lowliness." Modesty or lowliness in mind is the idea here. Humility is a very important virtue, one of the most rare of the gems of the spirit, even if one of the most rare. Andrew Murray wrote a book under that title (*Humility*) and like most of his books, it will be a blessing to those who read it. Unfortunately, many Christian writers today seem more interested in self esteem than in humility. This may explain why the church seems so powerless today, especially in light of the fact that God promises to hear the humble, but resist the proud. I do not know the author of the following illustration, but what he, or she, wrote is worth our consideration.

Several years ago I read the story of Sammy Morris, a devoted Christian from Africa who came to America to go to school. Although his pathway to service for Christ was not easy, his difficulties never deterred him. Perhaps this was because he had learned genuine humility. One incident that showed this occurred when he arrived at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. He was asked by the school's president what

room he wanted. Sammy replied, "If there is a room nobody wants, give it to me." Later the president commented, "I turned away, for my eyes were full of tears. I was asking myself whether I was willing to take what nobody else wanted" [19: #1714].

I became Shelby Ainsworth's pastor when he was in the tenth grade. He made a favorable impression on me the first time I met him. The day he left for college, he stopped by my house and asked me to pray for him. Two or three years later he talked with me about an assignment he was given in one of his classes. He was supposed to write a letter in which he was applying for a position with some company. I thought the letter was excellent, but his teacher gave him a disappointing B for his effort. Her only comment - it was too humble! If I were an employer looking for a good employee, I think my response would be, "Lord, give me more humility and less arrogance!"

MEEKNESS. The word means mild, meek or gentle. It was used by Greeks for an animal completely domesticated, trained and under control. "A meek man is one whose life is completely subject to the disciplines of Christ and God the Father" [3: 39] The word which Paul used was a very strong and positive word. It meant surrendered power, obedient power. A good example is a wild horse that is captured and broken so that one can ride it or work with it. The horse is as powerful as ever, but the power is now under control of its master.

One of the meekest men in history was John the Baptist. He was such a powerful figure that Josephus, the great Jewish historian, reports many years later when John's name was mentioned people still trembled at the thought of him. Jesus' eulogy of John was that he was "greater than any man born of woman." Yet when he saw the Christ, instead of giving a speech about his own great accomplishments, he sent his disciples to Jesus telling them, "He must increase but I must decrease." When asked who he was, he simply said, "I am nobody. I am to be heard, not to be seen. I am just a voice." Did you ever notice that David never describes his victory of Goliath in all of the psalms? We live in a time of superlatives -- the greatest evangelist, the greatest preacher, the greatest theologian, the greatest actor -- we desire dignity, position. We want some title and to be addressed properly. No wonder Christ cannot be seen. Paul called himself "the least of all the apostles." Where is our pride? Where is our meekness? [19: #2270].

Psychology has become something of a secular religion to some people today, especially those caught up in what may be termed "pop-psychology." Their mantra for half-a-century has been self-esteem. When I was studying the "social sciences" there was a lot of talk about an inferiority complex. Now it is low self-esteem. Make no mistake, whatever you would call it, it is a serious problem for some people. However, the high self-esteem, self-worth, self-love gospel of Humanism stands in absolute antithesis to Christian meekness. The world honors high self-esteem and loathes meekness. If Jesus had only had the advantage of pop-psychology, just think what could have done with the Beatitudes!

Robert McGee, founder of Rapha, a Christian counseling ministry, has written (*Search for Significance*) that he had a serious problem with low self-esteem. He was shy and self-conscious,

always wondering what others were thinking of him. His solution - focus on a high Christ-esteem and that will take care of your self esteem. He is right, of course. If you please Jesus Christ you do not have to worry about what others think of you.

PATIENCE. The KJV has "Longsuffering." We often use the word "patience" in a different sense today. We think in terms of being impatient when someone is late for an appointment, or possibly becoming irritated when another person's behavior rubs us the wrong way." The New Testament idea is to bear long with the infirmities or the weaknesses of another, or under certain circumstances, their insults and injuries. In general, it describes one who would bear up under some offence a long time without striking back in revenge for personal injury or wrong. It is the opposite of the attitude expressed by some: "I don't get mad, I get even." The person who is long-suffering is behaving in a manner consistent with his Lord, for this describes one of His great attributes.

Most any one of us can think of examples of those who have been long suffering with family members - a wife who has prayed for years for a wayward husband; parents who are repeatedly bailing a son or daughter out of one kind of problem or another. But here we are being exhorted to be long-suffering (bear long with) the infirmities, even the aggravations, of people to whom we have no natural obligation.

First Century saints were called upon to bear up under trials and tribulations, which often included persecution for their faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus addressed the first of the Seven Letters to the Churches of Asia Minor to this very church:

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: **>I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance**, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them *to be* false; and **you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary**. >But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love (Rev. 2:1-4, bold italics added for emphasis).

Jesus commended them for their perseverance (patience in KJV), condemned them for leaving their first love (vs. 4), and commanded them to repent and do the deeds you did at first" (vs. 5).

SHOWING TOLERANCE. The NAS has, "Showing tolerance for one another in love." The Greek word means to hold up, bear with, endure, sustain, support. "In love" points to a Christian distinctive. Christians not only love Christ, they love one another. Tolerance and moderation are two of the "mantras" of New Agers today. Ascribing to situation ethics, they go into orbit if some "right-wing Christian fundamentalist" condemns homosexuality, abortion, extra-marital sex, or "R" rated movies.

The greatest sin to them is not immorality but the condemnation of it! Needless to say, this is not what the word used here means. In His letter to the church at Ephesus - this same church - Jesus

said, "Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" (Rev. 2:1-7). The Nicolaitans apparently advocated sexual freedom in the church. We are never to tolerate sin, but we must show tolerance in love those who need it.

4:3 - BEING DILIGENT. Paul continues, "Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The word means to strive, to be zealous. The word may be translated speedy or eager. It speaks of the burning eagerness or the blazing zeal by which one would carry out some proposed activity. Here, that activity is the keeping of the unity, or oneness which the Holy Spirit produces. The word for "peace" means to seek an end to strife or friction. It denotes active rather than passive activity. Christian peace seeks the highest good for others. Every Christian should be a peace maker, especially in the church fellowship. He should avoid creating friction and strife in the fellowship and when strife exists, he should seek to bring it to an end that there will be peace in the church family.

4:4-6 - The grounds for unity in the church are listed in vs. 4-6. There are seven separate "ones" in this passage. The central item in this list is "Aone Lord."

4:4 - THERE IS. A better translation is, "Because there is," for this shows the connection between 4:3 and 4:4. "We should keep the unity of the Spirit because there is one body, one Spirit, etc." [NCWB].

ONE BODY. This is the one mystical body of Christ; the spiritual church, the kingdom of God. This "one body" is made up of all the redeemed, the fact that there is "Aone body" does not minimize the importance of the local bodies of believers.

You will notice that Paul is dealing here with spiritual truths relating to the whole program of God. When we read his other epistles (such as Corinthians and the letters to Timothy and Titus) we see the practical outworking of these truths. The major emphasis in the NT is on the local assembly; but the administration of the local assembly must be based on what Paul teaches about the "Aone body" [23: QVL].

ONE SPIRIT. One Holy Spirit. The one Spirit Who gives life to this one body is the Holy Spirit. By His work people are born again and added to the body. The Person and work of the Holy Spirit needs careful attention. The Holy Spirit came upon believers at Pentecost in a dramatic way with phenomenal manifestations. He came to indwell each believer and give him strength for daily living, power for victorious living. For further study on the work of the Holy Spirit see John 16:5-14.

The work of the Holy Spirit is hindered in three specific ways. First, sin grieves the Holy Spirit. He indwells the believer to give him power and to guide him, but He does not force His will on the Christian. Second, one may quench the work of the Holy Spirit in his life by neglecting Him. This is why so many Church members who do all the right things and attend all the right functions, and even avoid most of the wrong things, are still almost totally powerless in prayer, Bible study and

witnessing. Third, Many people misunderstand the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. They focus their attention on the Third Person of the Trinity to the neglect of the Father and Son. Any theology of the Holy Spirit that draws attention from the Second Person to the Third Person is unscriptural. Jesus said of the Spirit, "He shall glorify Me" (John 16:14a).

If there is nothing supernatural happening in the life of any church member, he is either unsaved, or he is a Christian who is either grieving the Holy Spirit or quenching the work of the Spirit in his life. It would be interesting to know what percentage of the work of the average church is done in the power of human will, mind and energy. This writer has often wondered what would happen in the average service if the Father simply recalled the Holy Spirit. Is it reasonable to conclude that many worshipers would go through the service and return to their homes and never know that the Holy Spirit had been recalled? This is especially true of those who go to church to hear a sermon about God, and not to meet God in the power and majesty and glory of worship.

When I became pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church, Nederland, Texas, I discovered that the former pastor, George Clarke, who had resigned to become editor of "The Church Administration" magazine (Southern Baptist Sunday School Board), used an appropriate quotation on the church's letterhead. I have used it ever since. It reads, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord..." (Zech. 4:6).

ONE HOPE. In 1:18, it is "the hope of His calling." Here it is "one hope of your calling." The believer's calling is high, holy, and heavenly. The ultimate hope of such a calling is our final glorification when we shall be like the Lord and be forever with Him. There is but one hope and it is the same for both Jews and Gentiles. That one hope is redemption in Jesus Christ. Universalism is not taught in the Bible - all are not going to be saved. Apart from Jesus Christ there is no hope for anyone. This is not a hope which springs from the human heart or will. It is not something the individual can generate through meditation or accomplish through mental gymnastics. It is a hope set before the believer by God Himself. Human hope often fails, for as often as not, it just wishful thinking. But the hope God holds out for His children is sure and certain. This kind of hope is a Christian distinctive. Paganism cannot possibly produce anything to compare with it.

4:5 - ONE LORD. Jesus Christ, and He alone, is the one (and only) Lord. Paul may have been thinking about God the Father here, but he often refers to the Second Person of the Trinity as "Lord." In some places he will refer to the Father, the Lord and the Spirit. He is not leaving Christ out of the Trinity, but identifying Him as "Lord." We do not worship three Gods, but the great three in one God Who is revealed as One in essence, yet manifested as three in personality.

Whether Paul refers to the Father or to the Son the meaning is the same. Jesus said, "I and My Father are one." There can be but one Lord. The word used [kurios] carries the idea of absolute lordship as it passes from one language to another. The Greek title "kurios" appears in Latin as "Caesar;" in German as "Kaiser;" and in Russian as "Czar." In the New Testament the word holds God to be the one supreme Lord and master. Jesus Christ is our Savior, but He is more: He is our Lord. It is the recognition of His lordship that preserves our "one hope," motivates us to obey Him.

One must not be deceived by pagan claims. Many are misled by the Islamic claim that we all worship the same God: Moslems through their prophet Mohammed, and Christians through our prophet, Jesus. There is but one Savior, one Messiah, one Anointed One. And His name is Jesus. His title is Christ. It is at the mention of His name that every knee will someday bow. "There is none other name given among men, whereby ye must be saved" (Acts 4:12). He is the only begotten of the Father.

ONE FAITH. There is one faith, one saving trust, with Jesus Christ as its object (see 2:15). There is one way to be saved, for Jews and Gentiles, and that is an act or trust in Jesus Christ. This means a commitment in faith. This is "the faith" which was once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3; Gal. 1:23). God is the source of this faith and Christ is the object. "One may possess the right attitude of faith, but the wrong object of faith" [12: 172].

ONE BAPTISM. *Baptismos* refers to the act of baptism. But here *Ahen baptisma* is used, pointing to the result of baptizing. There is only one act of baptism for all who confess Christ by this symbol. They are not made disciples by this act, but merely profess Him. Symbolically, the believer puts on Christ publicly by this ordinance.

In the New Testament baptism refers to an immersion, a dipping. It means to take beneath the surface and to bring forth again. Baptism is one of the two ordinances of most Baptist churches. The other is the Lord's Supper. We are not baptized in order that we might be saved, but because we have been saved. Baptism is a burial. You do not bury living persons so that they might die; you only bury dead persons. To those who are dead to sin, baptism has great significance - to those who are alive in Jesus Christ, baptism also has great significance.

Baptism (specifically, believer's baptism) is an outward manifestation of an inner experience and the only mode of baptism which adequately conveys this is immersion. Paul wrote to the Roman church, "We are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

This is not baptism in the Holy Spirit. Baptism in the Spirit (the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) takes place when one believes in Jesus Christ. Water baptism is intended here. It is that ordinance which, according to the New Testament, should follow one's acceptance of the "one faith" and one's embracing of the "one Lord."

ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL. There is not a separate God for each nation, race, or religion, as many ancients believed. We see the work of the Trinity throughout this passage. The Trinity is actively involved in forming this unity we read about in Ephesians. The triune God is sovereign in heaven and He must be recognized as sovereign in the church. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

WHO IS ABOVE ALL. He is all encompassing (above, through, in). By these three prepositions Paul stresses the universal sweep and power of Almighty God in the lives of Christians.

B. There Is a Diversity of Gifts (4:7-16).

We recognize the emphasis on both unity and diversity, with emphasis on unity in diversity. Unity is important to the fellowship and ministry of the church. In this passage our attention is drawn to the gifts the ascended Lord has bestowed upon the members of His body. Each gift is a gift of grace, each from the same divine source, and each is given in proportion as the Lord Himself decides. There is a difference of gifts (Romans 12:6) as well as a difference in the administration of them. But each member functions to preserve unity in the body (the church) and the ministry of the Spirit within the body. In 1 Cor. 12:7-11 Paul attributes the giving of spiritual gifts to the Spirit, but here to the ascended Christ.

The gifts for unity in the church are given in vv. 7-11. When Christ ascended, He gave gifts to His people through the coming of the Holy Spirit. He also gave these gifted people to the local assemblies. While vv. 1-6 deal with the one body and its unity, vv. 7-11 deal with the many local bodies and the diversities of gifts [23: QVL].

4:7 - ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF THE GIFTS OF CHRIST. Each person receives the gift Christ has chosen to bestow upon him. At the time of salvation each believer receives a gift, or gifts. These gifts are given by the Lord, according to His purpose for each individual. Each person should concentrate on his own gifts, seek to develop them for the glory of the Lord and praise Him for them. No believer should be envious of the gifts of another. Each is accountable for what he does with his own gifts. For more on these gifts, see I Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:4-6.

GRACE. In this instance the idea is not saving grace: "But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift." Grace here is the expression of God's love in giving gifts to His children so that they can be useful to His purpose for His church, and to bring glory to Him. We begin in grace (Justification) we grow in grace (Sanctification), we are blessed with grace (gifts), and our life in Christ culminates in grace (Glorification).

Though the church is one body - the body of Christ - each member is blessed with spiritual gifts which should be used for the edification of all members. No one is overlooked in these gifts, and every member is important to ministry of, and the edification of the community of faith (See also Rom. 12:3, 6). "According to the measure of the gift of Christ" shows that each member receives a certain measure of grace in accordance with Christ's apportionment" [NCWB].

4:8 - IT SAYS. "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men." There is no subject in the Greek (either God or Scripture is assumed to be the subject). The quotation here is from Psalm 68:18, a Messianic psalm of victory which Paul adapts and interprets for Christ's triumph over death.

WHEN HE ASCENDED. From "*ana*" meaning up and "*baino*" which means up (*anabaino*). A lot of emphasis is placed on the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The ascension is often passed over with little emphasis. But without the ascension the victory would not be complete, and there would be no hope for the fulfillment of the promises associated with the Second Coming if He had not ascended. He ascended to the Father with the blood of perfect sacrifice to sprinkle upon the mercy seat of heaven and today sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession of us. See Acts 1 and Hebrews 9.

HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE. This expression is used only here and in Romans 13:10 in the New Testament. Paul recalls Psalm 68:18. Apparently David is writing of an historic incident during his own reign as king over Israel, possibly the conquest of his enemies when he led as captives those who had attacked his people. Or, possibly Paul uses this illustration from Ps. 68:18 in a little different sense - Athe triumphant warrior is elevated when he returns with hosts of prisoners, receiving gifts from the conquered people and distributing gifts to his followers. Christ conquered Satan and all that had conquered us." [22: QV]. AThe point for us to observe is that Paul saw in this Old Testament Scripture our Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of the story in His incarnation, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension" [12: 174].

4:9 - HE ALSO DESCENDED. From "*kata*" (down) and "*baino*" (to go or come). If the word meaning "to go up" refers to the Ascension, then the word meaning "to come down" would refer to the Incarnation. Verse 10 supports this interpretation. Otherwise, one must think of the death of Christ when he descended into Hades (the place on the departed spirits or the realm of the dead, not hell) mentioned in Acts 2:31.

Ryrie points out that verses 9-10 are Aa parenthetical aside, to comment on "He ascended" (v. 8) and to prove that only Christ fits the description." Commenting on 4:9, Alower parts of the earth," he says this could mean Athat Christ descended into Hades between His death and resurrection. Or, more likely, "of the earth" is better understood as an appositional phrase, meaning that Christ descended (at His incarnation) into the lower parts (of the universe), namely, the earth" [22: QV].

4:10 - IS THE SAME ALSO. The One Who came down from Heaven is the One Who ascended back into Heaven.

ABOVE ALL HEAVENS. We cannot tell whether or not Paul has in mind the Jewish idea of graded heavens, as the third heaven mentioned in II Corinthians 12:2, or the idea of seven heavens. Preeminence and sovereignty may be more to the point that structure.

THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS. In verses 9 and 10 we have a parenthetical comment (as noted above) about the Ascension and the Incarnation, the purpose of which is to prove that Jesus fits the description of the Messiah, the Christ. He perfectly filled (fulfilled) all prophecy.

4:11 - AND HE GAVE. (See I Cor. 12:29; Rom. 12:6-8). Jesus said the good shepherd lays

down his life for the sheep (John 10:11) and proceeded to call Himself the Good Shepherd (see I Peter 2:25). Only here are preachers termed shepherds in the New Testament. But the verb meaning to shepherd is used by Jesus to Peter (John 21:16) and by others.

APOSTLES. The word means "ones sent out." God not only gave some the name or office of apostle; He endowed them with the gift and enabled them to discharge the duties of the office. While we do not have the office of Apostle in the church today, we do have ones who are "sent out" with the Gospel - we call them missionaries. But we must never conclude that the modern missionary has the same apostolic authority the Lord gave Peter, John, or Paul.

PROPHETS. A prophet is "a man endowed to tell forth the will of God in speech whether or present or future" [3: 41]. Sometimes a prophet was a fore-teller of future events (predictive prophecy). At other times he was a forth-teller of a divinely revealed truth. Samuel, for example, spent many times more time teaching people the Word of God than predicting future events.

EVANGELISTS. The evangelists (*euangelistas*, Gk., lit. "one who preaches good news") in the N.T. were men

supernaturally gifted with (1) a unique ability to present the gospel effectively to unbelievers, and (2) a unique ability to train other believers in evangelism, thus making it possible for all Christians to be a part of the implementation of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) [18: QV].

An evangelist is one who proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Paul wrote to Timothy encouraging him to do the work of an evangelist (II Tim. 4:5).

When Dr. Leonard Sanderson was Director of Evangelism for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, I asked him to be the evangelist for revival services in the church I served as pastor. Every sermon was a clear presentation of salvation in Jesus Christ. At the end of the week I commented to my wife, "Dr. Sanderson is like an obstetrician. The focus of his ministry is on getting people born again. I must be the pediatrician and the general practitioner who will seek to feed them and make some contribution to their growth and development." There is a place for both the vocational evangelist and for the pastor. Their work should compliment each other and not conflict with each other.

Problems may develop if the evangelist is more concerned about himself (numbers and offering) than about the condition of the church when he leaves. Some evangelists make a genuine contribution to the bond between the church and the pastor. Others leave both a little uncomfortable. On the other side, a pastor may refuse to invite a vocational evangelist to preach in revival services because the evangelist is not in a position to return the favor by asking the pastor to preach in revival services at a later date. The average pastor may never let anything like that cross his mind. But if such a thing does happen, is he not putting himself in a position of refusing to use a man God has called specifically for the work of evangelism?

PASTORS AND TEACHERS. "Pastors" and "teachers" are combined in the Greek text and

may be read "pastor-teachers." Paul groups the two together. He does not separate them (some pastors and some teachers), but reveals a combined office of pastor-teacher. The gift is divinely bestowed, therefore no college or seminary teacher can make a man a pastor-teacher. God calls him and gives him the gift. That gift is polished and honed in seminary classes, but the gift is from God. And some people are critical of pastors who teach! The pastor should be the most effective Bible teacher in the church and he should never be offended when someone refers to him as a good teacher.

One can be both an effective preacher of the Word and an effective teacher of the Word. If the pastor preaches a lot of expository sermons, he will combine his preaching and teaching responsibilities. Members may not be as much aware of his gift of teaching as his gift of preaching, but he will be utilizing his gift to the greatest advantage for the most people. Someone has pointed out that Jesus never taught anyone how to preach, but He did teach His followers to pray. In seminaries, classes are offered to teach ministers how to preach, but they have no classes to teach them how to pray. There may be no need for such a class. The disciples did not ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. They asked Him to teach them to pray. Most people know a lot more about how to pray than they apply. Jesus taught them to pray and He instructed them to preach and to teach His Gospel to others (Matt. 28:19-20).

The work of God has never been static. As new servants and services were needed, God led the people in the establishing of these offices and functions: pastor, minister of music, minister of youth, evangelist, medical missionary, agricultural missionary. This diversity of services comes from the One Who is Himself the Head of the body. All of these gifts may be found in one person, but not always.

4:12 - FOR THE PERFECTING. Wiersbe translates verse 12, "For the maturing of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the body of Christ" [23: QVL]. As used here the meaning is for the mending, repair or edification of the saints. All the functional services point to one purpose, and that is the equipping of the saints for the work of Christ's service. Again we see unity in diversity, various gifts and various offices serving one Lord for one purpose.

The goal of the church is described in vv. 12-16. The pastor-teacher is to nourish the saints with the Word of God and equip them for service; the saints, in turn, perform the work of the ministry. As each saint grows and wins others, the entire body grows in Christ [23: QVL].

SAINTS. Saints are separated ones; believers, Christians. No one has to wait to be canonized to become a saint. The word means to be set apart and in the Christian context it means that when one trusts Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, God sets him apart for His possession, His glory, and His service.

FOR A WORK OF MINISTRY. All the saints (the whole body of Christ) are to be ministering servants, in whatever capacity and in whatever measure God equips them for His service, to the end that all of the body of Christ may be edified.

FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. Or, "for the building up of the body of Christ." This is the ultimate goal in all these varied gifts. One must not use his office, or his gift, to serve himself, but for the building up of the body of Christ, the church. It is interesting that discord, disunity and friction are often related to these gifts which are given for the purpose of unity, harmony and peace in the church. When that happens, someone has taken his eyes off the Lord and focused them on himself. James S. Hewett (*Illustrations Unlimited*, Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988, p. 230) illustrates the point:

You have your gifts not so much for your own sake as for the sake of others. You are like an apple tree that produces fruit not for its own consumption but for the consumption of others. Your gifts are given so you can bless others by ministering to them. If you have the gift of teaching, you have it so others in the body will be taught. If you have the gift of hospitality, it is because others need the gracious welcome they receive from you. If even one gifted person fails to function, the body of Christ is deprived of a ministry it needs to function well [19: #4016].

4:13 - TILL WE ALL COME IN THE UNITY OF FAITH. "All" is all believers. The idea expressed in the words "till we all come" is to come to the goal, or to reach the goal. Strauss is right:

When Christ returns to take us home to heaven, we shall see the full expression of unity and possess complete knowledge of Him. There will be no need for the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the teacher, the pastor, because we will have attained perfection in unity and knowledge [12: 176].

"Unity of faith" in Christ is the goal, but unity was being disturbed by the Gnostics, as it often is by some today. If unity in the body of Christ is the goal and a member of that body constantly sows discord and friction, that individual may profess Christ as Savior in every service, but that individual is denying Christ as Lord in his, or her, life. When believers stand before the Lord to be judged according to their works, some may be shocked to discover that it is not enough to abstain from immorality and violence in the Christian life.

One may preach, sing, teach and tithe and still be a major cause of disunity in the church. You can point out the sin of the drunk, the addict, or the thief, but no one can point out anything to this kind of person, because he knows more than any one else. His way is always right and all who disagree with him are not only wrong, but often become the target of his attacks.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD. This carries the force of oneness of full knowledge of the Son of God in opposition to the Gnostic heresy. This is needed in the church today. Emotionalism is neither an adequate defense, nor a weapon of the Spirit against New Age Movements and the various cults that are spreading rapidly across America today.

God has a message for those who are caught up in a cult and for those targeted by the cults. But lazy, ignorant and indifferent Christians do not have the answer. The believer needs to be

thoroughly grounded in the Word of God and filled with the Holy Spirit to counter the cults, and to witness to people in what may be termed Post-Christian America. We live in a society that has been deeply impacted by modernistic (humanism) and post-modernistic (New Age spiritual) thinking, and people who subscribe to these philosophies are asking some answers that demand a knowledge of the God we serve. It is the observation of many ministers today that most members are shamefully ignorant of the Word of God. They may be very knowledgeable in the things of this world, but they are ignorant of the Scripture. The people of the Book have forgotten the Book.

A PERFECT MAN. The word "perfect" (*teleios*) can also be translated "perfectly mature= or >whole,= i.e., attaining the end for which we have been created. The Greek word *telos* meant >end,= >conclusion,= or >termination.= The derived adjective *teleios* connotes a maturity which reflects that ultimate goal for which we have been created by our Creator" [18: QV].

THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULNESS OF CHRIST. As in Luke 2:52, this is not just age or size. Boys are thrilled by reaching the height of a man. We had a certain door molding where we measured our sons and some of the marks are hardly an inch apart. Growth was important to them and the tape was the standard by which they measured their growth. But Paul uses "the fulness of Christ" here as he uses "the fulness of God" in 3:19, "And yet some actually profess to be perfect with a standard like this to measure by! No pastor has finished his work when the sheep fall so far short of the goal" [11: 538].

4:14 - THAT WE BE NO LONGER CHILDREN. Too many Christians are quite content to remain babes in Christ and never cut their eye teeth. They are easy prey to every charlatan who comes along with some new gimmick or philosophy. The various cults have had a lot of success these spiritual infants. The purpose of all these gifts is to bring people to maturity so that they will no longer be spiritual infants, tossed about by every doctrinal wind that blows their way.

TOSSED HERE AND THERE. The unstable, immature believer is tossed "to and fro" (KJVS) by the winds of false doctrines, as in James 1:6 ("By every wind"). All those who are not anchored by full knowledge of Christ are at the mercy of these squalls that assail every individual in life's voyage. Today those winds are increasing in force, as Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and others focus their attention on church members. Humanism, which claims to be secular, but attacks Christianity with religious fervor, has had a tremendous impact on our society. As much as any other force in the last century, Humanism has helped move America into the post-Christian age. Evolution, the gospel of Humanism, is taught as fact, when the real fact is that it is a theory that has taken a beating at the hands of its own subscribers in recent years. The New Age Movement is spreading its ungodly tentacles in every direction and church members, like the unredeemed, are being tossed to and from on a sea of confusion and deception.

BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN. Unfortunately, there are some Christians who are still babies (children) who are unstable and easily led astray (see 1 Cor. 3:1ff). There is more than a philosophy at work in their deception - there is a personality. Satan and his ministers (see 2 Cor. 11:14-15) are

waiting to tear down the church with their lies.

The word translated trickery denotes deceit, and was associated with the throw of the dice (from *kubos*, cube). The word is sometimes used of cheating. Magician Danny Korem, in a book he co-authored with Paul Meier (*The Fakers*), explains how easily people, even highly educated people, may be deceived by sleight of hand as well as mental tricks. Many things which have long been held to be supernatural have either a physical or psychological explanation. But there is no need for the mature Christian to be deceived, either by this kind of trickery, or by actual supernatural demonstrations by those in the occult.

CUNNING CRAFTINESS. The idea is cleverness, trickery, or deliberate deception. Satan is the master of both overt and covert evil, the master of deceit. As such he knows how to endow his followers with "Acunning craftiness" so that they can deceive others. The world is, in computer terms, "user friendly" to such people. That explains why they may well experience a measure of success for a period of time.

DECEITFUL SCHEMING. The word (*Methodia*) means to follow after, to practice deceit. "Planets" (wandering, like the planets) adds to the evil idea in the word. Paul has covered all the ground in this picture of Gnostic error.

4:15 - MAY GROW INTO HIM. The same metaphor is used in verse 13 (the full grown man). We are the body and Christ is the head. We are to grow up to His stature. What a standard! It is inconceivable that some claim to live perfect lives when Jesus Christ is our standard. How do you measure up? "As each member looks to the Head, he finds there are no giftless and useless parts, but that each part is a gifted and useful member in a revelation of interdependence to every other part" [12: 178].

4:16 - FROM WHOM. Literally, it is "out from Whom," denoting Christ, as the source. He is the source of energy, unity, and direction.

FITLY JOINED AND HELD TOGETHER. This term is the basis for the English word "harmony." The term was used of a house or the parts of a musical score.

IN DUE MEASURE. Each part of the body functions properly in its own sphere, or its own role. Every part of the body has its own role and that role is important to the whole body, if it is to function as it should. Every function is important and should never be neglected.

UNTO THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE. To edify is to build up. Modern knowledge of anatomy strengthens Paul's metaphor. The body will grow in grace and love through the cooperation of the members of the body under the control of the Lord.

The church is edified (built up) through the Word of God (Acts 20:32 and 1 Cor. 14:4). Churches are not built up and strengthened through man-made programs,

entertainment, recreation, or Adrives.” The church is a body and must have spiritual food; this food is the Word of God. When the body is completed, Christ will return and take His body (of which He is the Head, 1:22-23) home to glory [23: QVL].

C. The Christian walk (4:17-5:21).

1. The old man and the new man (4:17-24).

Here the Apostle Paul begins a lengthy discussion (4:17 - 6:9) in which he draws the logical conclusions, in terms of life and moral principles, that follow are associated with membership in the body of Christ. The first part of this chapter has to do with the believer=s relationship to the church.

In this section Paul deals with the believer=s relationship to the world. As Christians, we are both *in Christ* and in the world, and in the world there is temptation and sin. The Bible teaches that we are in the world, but we must not be a part of the world - we must not allow the world to defile us.

4:17. WALK NOT AS OTHER GENTILES. This carries the force of an indirect command, not an indirect assertion. The Gentile converts were to cease to walk as other Gentiles. When people are saved, they are to cease to walk as they did when they were lost. The evil in the life of the Gentile world (pagan world), was due to a false conception of the meaning of life. The true meaning of life is in Jesus Christ.

Paul begins this section with the negative command - do not walk the way the unsaved Gentiles walk. He goes on to explain the reasons for their godless walk:

(1) their minds are darkened because they believe lies and have not received the truth; (2) they are spiritually dead; (3) they have surrendered themselves to do all kinds of sin. Compare this description with 2:1-3 and 2 Cor. 4. We might summarize their plight by saying they were walking in the wrong way because they did not know the truth and had never received the life. Only the Christ of John 14:6 could meet their spiritual needs [23: QVL].

Redemption in Christ means deliverance from the penalty and power of sin. We are saved for eternal fellowship with God and, of course that means we will go to Heaven. But there is more. We are also saved from the controlling power of sin in this world here and now. We have been delivered from the penalty of sin. We are being delivered from the power of sin. We shall be delivered from the presence of sin. In Christ you can have your cake and eat it, too!

Summers says:

If the religious experience with Christ professed by the individual does not correct the evil that was once in his life, either there is something wrong with the profession that the individual makes or there is something wrong with his own application of life and purpose to that profession [13: 90].

IN THE VANITY OF THEIR MIND. Vanity means emptiness, the absence of any real content. The very thinking process of the Gentile world spoke of emptiness and nothingness. When one listens to views expressed by many groups and individuals today he becomes aware of the emptiness or vanity of the minds behind those views. A thorough study of Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses and the other cults, along with the New Age Movements (post-modernism) will reveal just how empty and void of truth people can become in this enlightened age.

4:18 - HAVING THE UNDERSTANDING DARKENED. The same idea is expressed in Romans 1:22-32. In Romans 1:22 Paul wrote, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." They not only became fools, Satan was making fools of them. The same applies in this case. Robertson says this probably included the emotions as well as the intellect. There is not one spark of divine life in the unsaved man. He is natural and as such he cannot understand, or discern, spiritual truth (I. Cor. 2:14).

HARDNESS. This is from a medical term meaning a callous hardening. The only other New Testament examples are Mark 3:5 and Romans 11:25. The unsaved are spiritually dead (alienated from the life of God). Mental darkness and spiritual death leave the sinner in a state of awful degradation. Society is filled with people who have willfully hardened their hearts over a period of many years and willfully blinded themselves to the truth so long that they are spiritually blind. They have eyes but they do not see. That is a sad condition, and it is the condition of a growing number of people in America today.

4:19 - THEY, HAVING BECOME CALLOUS. The KJV renders it, "Being past feeling." The meaning is to cease to feel pain, or to cease to care. When I was a teenager, I listened to my mother try to persuade a relative to trust Jesus Christ for His salvation. She loved him and earnestly pleaded with him. He joked and laughed about it. At one point he told her he knew he was going to hell. As she tried to reason with him, a very disturbing feeling came over me. I had the distinct impression that he was right. He had said no to God often enough to convince himself that he did not need God.

After spending many hours and driving a long distance to help a family minister to a daughter, I went to visit the family and told them that I wanted to talk with the young lady. She told her family she did not believe in God. She was not anxious to talk with me, but I told her that after all I had been through in her behalf, I felt that she owed me the opportunity to talk with her about the Lord. She did not object, so I continued. After a few minutes tears began to flow. As tactfully as possible, I said, "You had better thank God for those tears, because when the tears no longer come, it may be too late for you."

LASCIVIOUSNESS. The NAS renders it, "Have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness." This means unbridled lust, as in I Corinthians 12:21 and Galatians 5:19. This refers to shocking conduct. There is an absence of moral restraint. The moral and social conditions of that day were unbelievably vile. Archaeologists today, in digging out the ruins of some of those buried cities of Paul's day, have had to cover the ruins after

they uncovered them because that which is depicted might corrupt the workers who were doing the digging.

This word describes the indecency that has taken over Hollywood and invaded millions of homes through television and radio. While there is much that is good, it is becoming progressively worse with the passing of each season. Donald Wildmon and American Family Association document this monthly. It is a sad fact that that which once shocked us, in time became accepted as a way of life for many, and then it became their entertainment.

A consistent walk in righteousness is the only outward evidence that one has been born again. God sent Paul to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:17- 18).

TO WORK ALL UNCLEANNESS. The NAS has, "Afor the practice of every kind of impurity." Immorality of all forms is probably the meaning. This might refer to prostitution (work, or trade in uncleanness), and homosexuality, both of which were common then as now. This expression, "to work all uncleanness," seem to be particularly appropriate in a time when fortunes are being made by pornographers, indecent movies, suggestive songs, topless bars and vulgar language.

One might wonder what Paul's reaction would have been to the way many people dress (or fail to dress). It is doubtful that the temple prostitutes at Corinth ever walked down the street with as little on as many church members wear every day. That includes the girls and their mothers. If you want to stir up a hornet's nest, just try to tell your girls they must dress modestly on a youth trip. Their mothers get more upset than the girls! When I was young preachers condemned the strapless bathing suit. Now it's the suitless bathing strap!

One does not have to subscribe to *Playboy* Magazine to get pornography today. Just subscribe to "Sports Illustrated," and according to their advertisement, one of your bonuses will be the special swim wear edition. Young ladies should be taught that any boy whose attention can only be attracted by such "sexy" clothing is abnormal and should be avoided.

WITH GREEDINESS. This is from a word which means one who always wants more, whether money, or sexual indulgence as here. Other vices are often connected to this one. This sin, whether in attitude or action, completely disregards the rights of others. Millions today are slaves to money or the things it buys, but while money may be a good servant, it is a poor master. These people hardly realize that the bars that keep them of the kingdom of heaven are not forged of iron, but silver and gold.

4:20 - BUT YOU DID NOT SO LEARN CHRIST. There is a sharp contrast between the Christian life and the pagan life. There is a marked contrast between the Christian life and the life of the lost person today. These people had been pagans before they were redeemed and these sins (verses 17-19) were commonly practiced. Now that they are in Christ these things have no place in their life. They are dead to these things and alive in Christ. The same principle is in effect today. The Christian life is a changed life, a holy life.

4:21 - IF SO BE. Assumed to be true. They had heard Him and been taught by Him. They had not seen Him and heard Him in the flesh, but they had received Christ as Savior and Lord and had been taught His Gospel.

AS THE TRUTH IS IN JESUS. Truth in Jesus is in direct opposition to the heathen manner of life. Paul is possibly dealing with Gnosticism, a pagan philosophy new Gentile converts were bringing with them into the church. It was a heresy that the church would have to deal with then and in the days ahead. God inspired both Paul and John to write Scripture to help His church counter this heresy. The church will find the answer to the cults and false religions today in the Word of God. If all Christians were well grounded in the Scripture, the cults would be short lived, for they prey on members of our churches.

The truth is in Jesus. He is the standard by which all information is to be tested. It is never enough to say that God said it because it is true. It is true because God says it. Many people say what they believe to be true but cannot determine what is true. God determines the truth. He is the ultimate reality. To be in Christ means that the believer is a new creation (II Cor. 5:17). He is in a new order and has a new standard for living. That standard is Jesus. His standard is a Person, and not just something said about that person. This is what is meant by laying aside the old ways and putting on the new.

Jesus Himself is the living standard for every believer. The Bible is a true and authoritative guide for the believer in Christ, and there will never be a conflict between God and the Word of God. Your feelings ("I believe it in my heart") may fail you, but the Word of God will never fail.

4:22 - LAY ASIDE. The NAS reads, "Athat, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit." The KJV has "Athat ye put off." This is a familiar metaphor with Paul, The metaphor of putting off old clothes and putting on new clothes. It is a picture of one putting off the old life-style and putting on the new life-style (off with the old and on with the new). That is what one does when he accepts Jesus Christ as Savior. There is a difference between the old life and the new life. The change in conduct may not be dramatic in a child, but in an adult it may be radical. However, it is not uncommon to see a significant change in attitude in children when they are saved. Ryrie is right:

The laying aside and putting on are statements of facts that they had learned to be true, but the renewing (v. 23) is something to be done continually. the old self . . . the new self. The old is what we were before we were saved, and the new is the new life we have in Christ (see 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20) [22: QV].

The writer observed a child who was loud, rough, and at times obnoxious. He was born again when he was about twelve years of age and there was a dramatic change in his attitude. You could see it in his eyes and hear it in his voice. He was a new person; in accepting Christ he had put off the old and put on the new. He was an absolute pleasure to be around and one really looked forward to seeing him.

THE OLD SELF. The KJV reads, Aconversation; The NASV, "manner of life.". A literal translation is behavior. The reference is to one's daily life, his lifestyle. Paul is writing to Gentile believers who had in their former life (heathen life) lived in moral corruption.

WHICH IS BEING CORRUPTED. What one sees in the life of these Gentiles before their conversion was a continuous process of corruption. That has not changed. Man at his best can only produce a righteousness which is compared to filthy rags by the Lord. At his worst, he becomes progressively more corrupt. Francis Shaeffer had a prolific letter writing ministry and in a number of his letters he reminded individuals that "We live in a fallen world, and thus things are abnormal" (*Letters of Francis A. Shaeffer*, Ed. by Lane T. Dennis, Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 1985) [4: 106]. For further study of the lifestyle of the Gentiles, see the first chapter of Romans. The principle is in effect today.

Sinful desires are deceitful lusts; they promise men happiness, but render them more miserable; and bring them to destruction, if not subdued and mortified. These therefore must be put off, as an old garment, a filthy garment; they must be subdued and mortified. But it is not enough to shake off corrupt principles; we must have gracious ones. By the new man, is meant the new nature, the new creature, directed by a new principle, even regenerating grace, enabling a man to lead a new life of righteousness and holiness. This is created, or brought forth by God's almighty power [21: QV].

4:23 - BE RENEWED. Paul continues, "and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (NAS). The idea is to make new again. The emphasis upon the new man in Christ is continued. One is born again in a once for all experience, but every believer is in need of daily renewal in his relationship with the Lord.

IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND. This is not the Holy spirit here, but the human spirit. "Mind" points to the organ of mental perception, apprehension and conscious life.

4:24 - PUT ON. See Colossians 3:10. Again, the metaphor is of one putting on an article of clothing. We are commanded to take action.

THE NEW SELF. The believer is a brand new man, who has put on a brand new manner of life, a new lifestyle. It is new in essential quality and character. In contrast to putting off "the old man," we are urged to put on "the new man," which "after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Righteousness expresses the right behavior of the Christian before men. Holiness expresses one's behavior before God. The former is an outward attitude expressed in words and deeds; the latter is the attitude of the heart and mind toward God. The holy person is a righteous person, and the righteous person is both holy and righteous, not by his own works, but by the grace of God.

2. The Christian conversion (4:25-32).

Verses 17-24 set before us fundamental principle of right living. Verses 25-32 lay down a detailed application of this fundamental principle. Wiersbe says:

We must Aput away” (once-for-all) certain sins, and he names these in v. 25ff. Note how Paul ties each commandment to a spiritual truth: we are members of each other (v. 25); we are sealed until the day of redemption (v. 30); God has forgiven us (v. 32). Doctrine and duty are twin blessings in the Bible, both the Christian=s wealth and his walk in Christ [23: QVL].

4:25 - THEREFORE. That is, because of our laying aside the old man and putting on the new man. Paul will now discuss some of the things with which we should Aadorn our Christian profession” [QV: MH]. This passage relates to 1 Thes. 4:11 and 2 Thes. 3:6-12. AThe unsaved thief used to rob to please himself; now that he is saved, he should work to be able to give to others. This is the wonderful change grace makes in the heart of a person” [22: QV].

LAYING ASIDE. The NKJV has, Aputting away.” The dominating principle in the life of the Christian is to be truth (honesty), in contrast to the dishonesty which once marked his life. This should be true of every Christian. There are some Christians who placed great value on truth even before their conversion and would have a problem understanding this. The fact is, everything in his unregenerate life was based on the ultimate lie; that God did not exist, or that he did not need God. The central thing that was missing was the TRUTH (Jesus, John 14:6).

FALSEHOOD. The NKJV follows the Authorized Version, Alying.” The direct opposite of the truth in Jesus (4:21; see also, Rev. 21:8). Lying is to be put off once for all. A lie is an abomination to God, an offence to His nature and character and the person who persists in lying can never be molded into the image of His Son. God's people need to obey this command today. How many parents can truthfully say that they never told their children a lie? How many church members can say they have never misled another person? Matthew Henry wrote, ATake heed of every thing contrary to truth. No longer flatter or deceive others. God's people are children who will not lie, who dare not lie, who hate and abhor lying” [21: QV].

When I was pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church, Nederland, Texas, one of our deacons, Bob Moore, shared with me a number of illustrations he had observed on honesty. He was interested in these stories because personal honesty was important to him. There are people who are honest with money who are not always honest with their opinion. If you asked Mr. Moore what he thought he might say, "Well, if you had not asked me, I would not have said anything, but since you asked me, I am going to tell you the truth." One reason I appreciated this is that it reminded me of my father. It was almost impossible to misunderstand my father when you asked his opinion. He was not like the person who says, "I'll tell you the truth, no matter who it hurts;" or, "I'll tell you the truth and I don't care what anybody thinks." These men cared, but they still told you the truth. The Bible teaches that we should tell the truth in love, not in spite.

4:26 - BE ANGRY, AND YET DO NOT SIN. This is a permissive imperative, not a command to be angry (a prohibition against sinning which is the danger in anger). There is a righteous anger that is not sinful, sometimes referred to as righteous indignation. Matthew Henry cautioned:

Take heed of anger and ungoverned passions. If there is just occasion to express displeasure at what is wrong, and to reprove, see that it be without sin. We give place to the devil, when the first motions of sin are not grievous to our souls; when we consent to them; and when we repeat an evil deed. This teaches that as sin, if yielded unto, lets in the devil upon us, we are to resist it, keeping from all appearance of evil [21: QV].

Today many Christians are angry about Roe vs Wade and the easy abortion privileges in America. Their anger deepened when President Clinton vetoed the bill that would have prohibited partial birth abortions. Some of those who are angry strike out in violent acts and is so doing they sin. Others are just as angry about a law which permits termination of life one and one-half million times each year in America (the American Holocaust!). But they seek godly means to try to change this law.

The Christian will have an opportunity almost every day to apply this principle in the home, at work, or at play. Many people who can keep their anger under control at work, lose control at home. Some do not even seem to try to control their anger at home, thus inflicting the greatest damage on those who love them most. Some who can control their anger at work and at home, completely "blow it" at the little league park. One's witness as a Christian can be placed in jeopardy every time he becomes angry.

Countless Scripture passages, proverbs, and anecdotes warn us about the danger of anger. One must be alert to the dangers at all times in order to be prepared for the temptations that may (and do) come without warning. An angry person is an unpleasant person. The following anecdotes are from Edythe Draper (*Draper's Book of Quotations for the Christian World*, Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992).

A man who can't control his temper is like a city without defenses (Jewish Proverb).

An angry man opens his mouth and shuts his eyes (Cato The Elder, 234B149 B.C.)

Anger can be an expensive luxury (Italian Proverb).

Anger is a weed; hate is the tree (Saint Augustine of Hippo (354B430)).

Anger is quieted by a gentle word just as fire is quenched by water (Jean Pierre Camus, 1584B1652) [20: #368B372].

Clifton Fadiman (Little Brown Book of Anecdotes, Boston, 1985, p. 15) writes that when Ethan Allen's first wife,

notorious for her sourness and bad temper, died, a local man offered to help transport the coffin to the church. "You could call on any of the neighbors," he said to the widower. "There's not a man in town wouldn't be glad to help out" [19: #3955].

DO NOT LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON YOUR WRATH. There is danger in anger (D-anger). Wrath is indignation, exasperation, provocation. Satan works through the heart that harbors anger. Anger is a fire that needs to be extinguished, not fed or fanned. If every person made it a point to extinguish that flame before sundown, he would never start a new day with the seed of hatred and yes, even murder, in his heart. An application of the principles set forth in the Sermon on the Mount will help one to bring this under control, but the victory will only be won in the power of the indwelling Spirit of God, Who will deliver the believer from this sin and its consequences.

4:27 - DO NOT GIVE THE DEVIL AN OPPORTUNITY. Imperative in prohibition. Don't do it! If you are doing it, stop it! The devil is the enemy of every human being because that person is created in the image of God. He cannot destroy the soul of the Christian because the One Who indwells him is greater than Satan. But the devil can destroy the life, the work, the talent, the home, and the sanity of any believer who gives him a place in his life.

4:28 - STEAL NO LONGER. Those who steal must cease stealing. He uses no "if" in dealing with this. There is no evidence of situation ethics in Paul's letters. These Christians, for the most part, were new converts from a heathenism that practiced such sins. There are many forms of stealing and Americans are well acquainted with all of them. Every day, men devise new methods of stealing. The newspapers are filled with stories of armed robbery, burglary, forgery and fraud. Now computers are being used in sophisticated schemes to steal money, or in some cases other things of value.

When I was a student at Mississippi College, I served as pastor of the Dockery Baptist Church, Cleveland, Mississippi. The state penitentiary was located at Parchman, a short distance away. I preached at Parchman every Sunday morning and during the time I visited at the prison I heard some interesting stories. The chaplain's clerk told me about a man who was sentenced to two years for a theft. He was illiterate when he arrived but he enrolled in an educational program and when he left he could read and write a little. The man was returned to Parchman one year after his release - this time for forgery!

In a committee meeting at a former church someone turned to a man and asked if he could get a certain product which was manufactured by the company for which he worked. The man replied, "Yeah, I suppose I could steal some." Then looking at their shocked expression, he added, "That's what it is, isn't it?" There are many ways to steal, and Christians are commanded avoid all of them. Matthew Henry's observations are more applicable today than when he wrote them:

Idleness makes thieves. Those who will not work, expose themselves to temptations

to steal. Men ought to be industrious, that they may do some good, and that they may be kept from temptation. They must labour, not only that they may live honestly, but that they may have to give to the wants of others. What then must we think of those called Christians, who grow rich by fraud, oppression, and deceitful practices! Alms, to be accepted of God, must not be gained by unrighteousness and robbery, but by honesty and industry. God hates robbery for burnt-offerings [21: QV].

Stealing is such a way of life to many that none of us is safe from thieves. According to Paul Harvey news bulletin(9-21-89), CBS sent a camera crew to Ft. Worth, Texas to do a special story on big city crime. As the crew was unloading its equipment, their \$30,000 camera was stolen. Paul Harvey said, "That sounds like a good introduction for their story" [19: #3447]. The Baltimore Sun reports on a husband who drove home in his brand new car and ran into the house, inviting his wife to see his brand new car. She, anticipating his delight said she had a gift for him, something to do with his brand new car, and she presented him with The Club, the device that attaches to the car steering wheel to protect it from thieves. And the grateful husband said, "that's great honey, thank you so much for your thoughtfulness." And then with The Club in hand, they went outside together to where his brand new car had been stolen (Associated Press, 3-31-94).

WHAT IS GOOD. In contrast to stealing (and giving place to the devil), the Christian is challenged to do that which is good. It is not enough that we engage in honest labor merely to satisfy our own needs and wants, but we are to toil diligently so that we might render a service to others. Jesus came not to be ministered to, but to minister. He taught by word and example that He expects no less of every one of His followers. Ironside understood this:

I could live up to the righteousness that is in the Law if I refrain from taking what is others' but I cannot live up to the holiness of grace except I share with others what God in His kindness gives to me [7: (Ironside)].

4:29 - NO UNWHOLESOME WORD. The NRSV has, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths." The NKJV follows the KJV, "Corrupt." The word means rotten, putrid-like fruit (Matt. 7:17ff); fish (Matt. 13:48). The meaning here is the opposite of good. We must guard against unholy speech and unholy thinking. We should pray with David, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

Isaiah, having seen his vision in the temple, exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Is. 6:5). When I was first called to preach the Gospel I had genuine hopes of a spiritual awakening in America that would be reflected in every area of society, including our speech. As a younger youth I had often lamented the profane and obscene speech I heard, both at school and in my community. I remember that I was saddened by a news report that according to some study America had become a more profane society - and that it would get worse.

Well, that report understated it. We do live among a people of unclean lips. My wife, Becky, has helped me in more ways than she probably realizes in understanding this downward

spiral into a verbal cesspool. Society is mirrored in the speech of our children at school. As grammatical skills decline, filthy language increases. This should never characterize the child of God. In this post-Christian age a Christian should be distinguished by clean speech. And, if we do not use profane or obscene speech in our home, we should not permit Hollywood to pipe it into our home via the television.

FOR EDIFICATION. Edification is building up, improvement, the act of building. It is the responsibility of every believer to build up his, or her, church and to build up the Kingdom of God. This verse teaches that every Christian should supply help when there is a need. In the spirit of Christian love and in the power of the Holy Spirit, every church member must seek to build up the Lord's Church.

4:30 - GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT. ADo not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (NAS). Or, do not have the habit of grieving the Holy Spirit.

Because the Holy Spirit is a Person, He may be grieved by the behavior of Christians. This state is always especially unfortunate since the Holy Spirit is the One who seals believers "for the day of redemption." Some of the actions and attitudes which grieve the Holy Spirit are noted in 4:25-29, 31; 5:3-6. In these same verses are also listed attitudes and actions which are pleasing to the Spirit of God [18: QV].

Who among the saints has never grieved the Holy Spirit? Grieving the Holy Spirit is synonymous with backsliding. Strauss says, "Perhaps there is no passage so worthy of being lifted out of its context than this" [12: 187].

At the time of the new birth, the Holy Spirit enters the heart of the believing sinner to take up permanent residence. After the new birth the Spirit's work is to create a new nature within. His full title is the Holy Spirit and His divine nature grieves when any wrong thought, word, or deed occupies the mind or body of the believer. He abhors the sins mentioned here: lying, excessive anger, stealing and evil speech.

The efforts of the Holy Spirit to bring the believer to spiritual maturity are hindered in two specific ways, as we have already seen. The Holy Spirit is grieved when we sin and His is quenched when we do not follow His leadership. The Holy Spirit is quenched by our lack of faith, and He grieved by our unfaithfulness.

IN WHOM. It is never "in which." The Holy Spirit is a Person and not some "force." We should always refer to Him as He and not it.

BY WHOM YOU WERE SEALED. See 1:13f. We are sealed against the day of our final redemption. Christ's death was the payment for our redemption. His finished work at Calvary paid in full the penalty for our sins. But the believer's final redemption will not be fully realized until

Christ comes back for His church. We are waiting...for the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:22,23).

4:31 - LET ALL BITTERNESS. ALet all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice” (NAS). In Colossians 3:8, Paul writes, "...Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth." Bitterness is the exact opposite of the qualities God would produce in the life of a believer. Bitterness, like the other sins listed here, is a sin of the spirit or a sin of the disposition. Corrupt speech, stealing, and lying may be expressions of the sins of the flesh. Bitterness, excessive anger, clamor, reviling, and malice are sins of attitude, disposition, of sins of the spirit.

People seem to think it takes more courage to condemn the sins of the flesh than the sins of the spirit. But in some cases it takes more courage and a lot more tact to deal with the sins of the spirit than drunkenness, murder, and immorality. In the average worship service in an evangelical church there are not too many murders and drug dealers and users (except for beverage alcohol), and most of those who are immoral think no one else knows about it. The people want to hear the preacher condemn those sins. They may say "Amen" when he condemns the sins of the people who are not there. The pastor who "steps on their toes" may be praised by his people.

The pastor who deals with the sins of jealousy, envy, blasphemy, anger, and pride had better be very careful. He is condemning the sins of the people sitting in front of him; or some who are sitting behind him in the choir. There are reports of people who will not sit near others in a service, choir members who seldom speak a kind word to another choir member, and members who question the motives of others when they make a motion during the monthly business meeting. In every church there are relationship problems and these problems are usually, if not always, caused by the sins of the spirit. These sins of the spirit (bitterness, malice, anger, prejudice, strife, jealousy) are divisive and no church will have a strong fellowship until these sins are put away.

The sins of the spirit will find expression in other sins. The person who envies another person is tempted to speak against that person. The person who is jealous of another is tempted to say something to cause others to think less of that person. A bitter person is going to find some way to express that bitterness. The old expression, "If a look could kill," might remind us of some church member who has been crossed.

A denominational worker had observed a certain church for years. Once when the pastor of that church mentioned one of the deacons to the denominational worker, the older minister had some disturbing advice for him. He said, "That man is just like a rattlesnake. If you don't cross the rattlesnake's path he won't bother you, but if you cross his path, he's going to strike. And if you don't ever cross that deacon's path you won't have any trouble with him. But if you ever cross his path, he's going to strike out at you." It would be interesting to know how many people there might be who, if they heard that warning, would think the old sage was talking about their church and one of their deacons.

WRATH, AND ANGER. Wrath (*thumos*) is to be distinguished from anger (*orge*). Wrath

indicates a more agitated condition of feelings; an outburst of wrath from inward indignation, while anger suggests a more settled or abiding condition of mind frequently with a view to taking revenge (Vine). Here wrath points to the more passionate and at the same time the more temporary character of anger. Wrath is the outburst of anger [26: 1698].

CLAMOR. A shout, a cry, outcry. Anger finds expression as one clamors against another, or cries out against another. In this verse it denotes "the tumult of controversy" [15: 194].

BLASPHEMY. The King James Version has "evil speaking" and that is exactly what blasphemy is. It simply means to speak evil against another. Blasphemy grows out of envy, jealousy, strife and anger. It may be premeditated and calculated (in anger) or it may be impulsive (wrath).

PUT AWAY FROM YOU. Only God can really remove these things. He will do so when the individual repents. These sins have no place in the hearts of Christian people, but they are the sins most flagrantly demonstrated by many members. If one is conscious of any of these sins, he should repent immediately. This is the age of psychology and counselors are trying to help people try to deal with these "emotions," but God will remove them when we confess our sins (I John 1:9).

MALICE. The word translated malice (*kakia*) denotes wickedness, "as an evil habit of the mind, while '*poneria*', outcoming of the same" [26: 1700].

Wiersbe makes a summary statement that seems appropriate here:

Our lips should speak that which builds up (Col. 4:6; Ps. 141:3). Corruption from the lips only means that there is corruption in the heart. The Spirit has sealed us (1:13-14); we should not grieve Him by allowing these sins of action and attitude to be in our lives. In Scripture, the Spirit is pictured as a dove (John 1:32), and a dove is a clean bird that loves peace. Anger and clamor should be done away with by means of forgiveness and Christian love [23: QVL].

Malice is no respecter of persons as the following illustration shows.

D.L. Moody's first great evangelistic campaign in the British Isles was followed by more of the rumors and criticism that dogged him and Ira Sankey. Moody was scorched for his motives and even his English. Because the Moody-Sankey hymnbook was selling well in Britain and America, rumors arose that the two were growing rich off the royalties. In truth, every dollar was put back into the work; neither man made one penny of personal profit. Some even alleged that Moody was being backed by circus showman P.T. Barnum! No wonder Mr. Moody said, "A lie will get half round the world before the truth gets its boots on!" [19: #2003].

An Associated Press release (11-5-90) provides some insight into the way malice works.

In 1989, before a convention of Arab lawyers, the assembled were told, "An Arab

country does not have the right to occupy another Arab country. And if God forbid Iraq should deviate from the right path, other Arab nations must send their armies to put things right. If Iraq should become intoxicated by its power and should move to overwhelm another Arab state, Arabs would be right to deploy their armies to stop it" [19: #2003].

The speaker before that convention of Arab attorneys was Iraq's Saddam Hussein, the evil genius whose invasion of Kuwait precipitated Desert Storm, a brief war in which President Bush coordinated and prosecuted one of the most dramatic military victories in history.

4:32 - BE YE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER. Literally, keep on being kind to one another. The NRSV renders it, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you." Kindness and compassion find expression in forgiveness. If you are a loving, compassionate person, you will want to forgive others "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Every believer needs forgiveness and every believer needs to be forgiving.

In a day when professional athletes engage in trash talking," entertainers shock people with crude language and gross stories, and politicians attack everyone in sight, the world needs kindness. If they do not find it in Christians, they are not going to find it any where else.

A church usher was instructing a young successor in the details of his office. "And remember, my boy," he concluded, "that we have nothing but good kind Christians in this church until you try to seat someone else in their pew." Kindness is not an artificial shallow niceness or unreal feeling or weakness. Kindness is that spiritual grace which flows from spiritual strength and maturity. David in Second Samuel 22:36 KJV, in speaking of God says, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." Only the strong can be gentle. God is great enough to be gentle. How about you? [19: #1998].

There is a very practical side of kindness.

A Yale University President some years ago gave this advice to a former president of Ohio State, "Always be kind to your A and B students. Someday one of them will return to your campus as a good professor. And also be kind to your C students. Someday one of them will return and build a two-million dollar science laboratory" [19: #1998].

TENDER-HEARTED. Merciful. Bitterness and malice are to be put away. Instead of being marked by such attitude and conduct, believers are to become kind in their relationship to one another. My mother was one of the most forgiving Christians I have ever known. She was tender-hearted and kind in her dealings with others. She could never hold a grudge, but always stood ready to forgive any offence. There were times when I saw people take advantage of her generosity and her forgiving spirit and at one time it bothered me that some took advantage of her. I wondered if they thought she was naive. As time passed I came to appreciate her more and more.

I lost sight of those few who took advantage of her when I considered all those who expressed their appreciation for her. Then I knew that I had much rather she be the victim of some injustice than the perpetrator. I remembered that lesson when one of my sons came in from school upset over something someone had said about him. I said, "Son, I am sorry that this person you consider your friend would say something like that about you, but it would bother me a lot more if I thought you would say anything like that to him."

I like the sage advice of that great American icon, George Washington Carver:

How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these [19: #1998].

3. Imitating the Father (5:1-21).

We may outline 5:1 - 6:9 as follows:

- I. Walk in Love, 5:1-6.
- II. Walk in Light, 5:7-14.
- III. Walk in Vigilance, 5:15-17.
- IV. Walk in Harmony, 5:18:6:9.

5:1 - BE IMITATORS OF GOD. He is our example, our pattern for Christian living. We might paraphrase this, become mimics of God. Just as children naturally imitate their parents in this world, we should imitate our Father in everything we do. As God is love, and we should walk in love. The example of Christ's love should inspire us. See John 15:9 and 12 and 1 John 3:16-18. Here Paul pictures Christ as the sweet-savor offering, bringing joy to the heart of God as He gives Himself for sinners" [23: QVL].

A small child often consciously mimics a parent. When I was a small child my mother and father received a letter from my grandmother. Folded in the letter was a clipping from a newspaper in which there was a picture of a man looking back at a small child who was stretching his legs as far as they would go in an effort to try to place his feet in tracks left by his father. The caption under the picture read, "I am trying to walk in your steps, Daddy."

Parents should always be careful where they go, or how they walk, because children have a way of mimicking their parents. Many children have been led astray by ungodly parents. As a matter of fact, most children who follow a life of sin begin by following their parents. On the other hand it is refreshing to hear the testimony of a godly man or woman who praise God for the influence of godly parents who taught them the Word and lived a godly life before them.

As children of our heavenly Father, we have the perfect example, an infallible pattern, for

life. He is our supreme example in word, thought and deed. The object of both law and grace is to make like God.

Because God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you, therefore be ye followers of God, imitators of God. Resemble him especially in his love and pardoning goodness, as becomes those beloved by their heavenly Father. In Christ's sacrifice his love triumphs, and we are to consider it fully [21: QV].

5:2 - WALK IN LOVE. AAnd walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” AThe **and** should be translated >that is= in order to convey the idea that Ephesians 5:2 explains how a believer is to imitate God: by walking in **love**” [BKC]. Walk refers to daily living. We are to walk: in love (5:2); we are to walk in light (5:8); and we are to walk circumspectly (5:15). One's walk refers to his daily life.

Love is the atmosphere in which the believer lives his life. The Christian must walk in godly love (agape). The first two commandments require the believer to love the Lord with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. The bitter, egotistical, selfish, arrogant, backbiting trouble-maker is hard pressed to justify any claim of Christ in his heart. Imitators of God must walk in godly love. The Scripture is clear on this subject:

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (I John 3:14). And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment (I John 4:23). Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love (I John 4:7, KJV).

AN OFFERING AND A SACRIFICE TO GOD. AAlthough Aoffering” and Asacrifice” are really synonymous, the first word generally indicates a gift and the second always designates a slain sacrifice” [NCWB]. The death of Jesus Christ was an offering in our behalf. While His death was a ransom for our sins, it is important to understand that his death was not an offering to Satan. He did not ransom us from the devil, but His death was both an offering and a sacrifice to God. As Jesus himself said in Matthew 20:28, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." His vicarious suffering and death are clearly stressed in this verse.

A FRAGRANT AROMA. Or, a sweet-smelling aroma. God was well-pleased with the sacrifice made by His Son (see also, 1:6; Matt. 3:17; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19; Heb. 10:6-17). The same words are used in Philippians 4:18. The background is found in the Old Testament sacrificial system (see Lev. 4:31). The Bible presents Christ's death as propitiatory. In I John 2:2 we read, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for (the sins of) the whole world." Paul stresses the same thing in Romans 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the

forbearance of God." Children of God should imitate God by loving others, even to the point of death if necessary (1 John 3:16).

5:3 - BUT. Contrast is often seen in the Pauline Epistles. Here it denotes the sharp contrast between the way the Lord wants His children to live and the way He wants them to avoid. If we are to walk in love, if we are to be imitators of God, there are things that must not be a part of our life in any way. There is a strong contradiction between the profession of faith in Jesus Christ and the sins mentioned here.

Just as there are things the Christian must love, there are things the believer must hate. With all his heart he will detest immorality and ungodliness of all kinds. He shares God's opinion of those things.

IMMORALITY. The NRSV renders it, "But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints." Sex outside marriage is strictly and forcefully prohibited in the Scripture. Habitual immorality (consorting with prostitutes) is suggested here, but individual acts of immorality are certainly included. A young person tried to convince the writer that she was moral because she was selective in sexual encounters, and not like some she knew who were not selective. All sexual activity outside marriage, whether heterosexual or homosexual, is condemned.

In post-Christian America children and young people have been taught for several decades that man is the product of an evolutionary process, not created by God in His Own image as the Bible teaches. If the individual had no Creator, and if there is no life after death, and if he will never stand before the judgement seat of God, he will accept no divine standards or rules. To many today, morality is determined by the majority of citizens. Laws are based on a majority vote, and not the Word of God.

Each generation since the Stokes trial in 1925 has moved more and more away from the Bible as a standard for conduct. Today more young people profess a belief in God, but it is having less impact on their moral values. One poll showed teenagers to be both more religious and more sexually active than those of the last generation. Many evolutionists are not concerned about sexual immorality. What concerns them is the population. To them, population growth should be controlled by birth control measures, sex-education, and yes, even abortion.

Since there is no evidence of fossilization going on anywhere in the world today, many evolutionists have become primarily concerned with maintaining that which exists today. Birth control is much more important to these New Age evolutionists than morality. The emphasis is on "safe sex" and not sex within the will of Jesus Christ. Homosexuality is actually justified by some on the grounds that it will not contribute to the population explosion. We cannot look to evolutionists and New Age thinkers to bring about a revival of moral values. If there is a return to Scriptural morality it is going to come through a revival among God's people. It must begin with a commitment to godly living and continue without teaching our children the Word of the Lord.

ANY IMPURITY. This word covers all impurities in speech, thought, and deed. This points to the opposite of that which is clean and pure and in the moral sense denotes any form of lewdness or spiritual pollution, whether carried out by oneself (Gal. 5:19; Col. 3:5), or with another person (Rom. 1:24-27). It includes any form of sexual sin not specifically covered by the "fornication" (above). This covers not only traditional expressions of moral filth, but also includes all the pornography and indecency one might find on the Internet, video tapes, and AX" rated movies.

Paul lived in a society filled with fornication and all forms of unnatural sexual sins. Homosexuality was common in the pagan world of his day, and far too common among those who professed knowledge of the one true God. This message was needed in the early Christian community, and it is needed in America and the world today. Filthy words and filthy deeds bring dishonor to God and to His church. Society is so filled with filthy language, and practices that many Americans have made it an essential part of their entertainment.

Church members, rather than condemning this filth, join the world at the theaters and before the television sets. They support the people who profit from the spread of this kind of sin by going to their movies, buying their tapes, and purchasing products sold by sponsors of filth on television. Profanity and obscene language is on the increase in almost every area of society. Walk across a high school campus, visit a health club, stop by a place where college students hang out. Listen to the language and remember that their mothers and fathers, and certainly their grandparents, never talked like that in public or in mixed company. But their parents, and in many cases their grandparents, let television personalities bring that language into the living room or den, and often the bedroom while these young people were growing up.

At times there are reports of Communist leaders and leaders of other religions from around the world who visit the United States and express shock at the low moral standards of this land which they associate with Christianity. Some pagans have told us that they like our Christ but they do not like our Christianity. Unfortunately, our young people have not been warned of the severe consequences of the lifestyle of filth and moral pollution.

There is something disturbing about a society which pays entertainers to pollute the minds and souls of our citizens, and then makes heroes of them when they oppose the pollution of air and water. Celebration of "Earth Day" bears this out. Often those whose speak the loudest and receive the most media coverage for their efforts to halt pollution of lakes and forests, are getting rich polluting the air waves with filth and filling the minds of our children and young people with uncleanness.

Fornication and uncleanness seem to be comprehensive in their reference to moral purity. They might be common practices among the heathen (or the unsaved) but they must have no place in the life of the child of God. Homosexuality is certainly included here. We should also be warned against the Adirty joke." For years the writer has worked out in health clubs. This has given him an opportunity to cultivate meaningful friendships and to witness with many individuals.

It has also given him an opportunity to observe the filthy mind at work. There are people

who walk into a room and say, "Did you hear about..." And you know what follows will be filthy. Imagine the degeneracy of one who thinks he must engage in filthy, foolish talk and jesting in order to get a laugh. This attitude is bad enough among the unsaved, but it is more disturbing when Christians practice it, or encourage others in it. Sadly, many professing Christians keep their minds in the gutter and their tongues in the sewer.

There is a time to laugh. Ironside said, "A God meant man to laugh. That is the one thing that distinguishes him from all other creatures. Until scientists can find a monkey who can laugh, they will never find the missing link" [7: (Ironside)]. Christians should be the happiest people in the world, but their joy should never be found in uncleanness.

GREED. Or covetousness. This points to the sin of greediness, with complete disregard for the rights of others. For more on this sin, see study by this writer on Romans, Ch. 1. The word used here points to the kind of greed which one has when he yearns for that which is not rightly his. When one has this kind of attitude toward something which belongs to another, the next step might well be an attempt to take it - one way or another. But even if one does not try to take it, covetousness is still evil and it is always destructive to the individual who harbors it.

Greed manifests itself in many ways in society. Perhaps nothing illustrates the malignant spread of greed more than the phenomenal spread of gambling in post-Christian America. While the Bible does not explicitly condemn gambling, but gambling does violate several major themes in Scripture:

- * Gambling encourages greed (Luke 12:15, Hebrews 13:5 and 1 Timothy 6:10).
- * Gambling encourages materialism and discontent (1 Timothy 6:6-9, Psalm 62:10).
- * Gambling discourages honest labor (Proverbs 28:19, 13:11).
- * Gambling encourages "get rich quick" thinking (Proverbs 28:20).
- * Gambling encourages reckless investment of God-given resources (Matthew 25:14-30).

-- Used by permission of Berean League of Minnesota [19: # 2131].

There is special note of interest for us in this verse. The Greek for "uncleanness" is so close to the word for "greediness" that they are sometimes used interchangeably. The basic motivation in both cases is the desire to satisfy oneself materially in a way that excludes God" [BKC].

AS IS PROPER AMONG SAINTS. It is unbecoming of a saint to be immoral or covetous. It is unbecoming of a saint to speak, dress, or, act in any way which suggests sensuality. The word "saint" was used to denote one who is set apart from the things of the world by the Lord (and for the Lord). Another word for saint is "Christian."

5:4 - FILTHINESS. Paul continues, "And there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse

jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.” Paul wrote to the Colossians:

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, *which amounts to idolatry*. or it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and *in them you also once walked*, when you were living in them. *But now you also, put them all aside*: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth (Col. 3:5-8, emphasis added).

Filth by any other name is still filth, and there is no better name for it. This degrading sinfulness is totally unbecoming of a Christian. The word denotes that which is shameful, or obscene. Society is filled with shamefully obscene things. Turn on the television, browse through a book store, or turn on the radio in your automobile and you will find abundant evidence of this. Private conversations, bumper, stickers and tee-shirts often reflect the increase in filth in our society.

Don Wildmon, a Methodist minister from Tupelo, Miss. is Executive Director of The American Family Association. Each month the AFA Journal in which movies and television programs are rated with reference to profanity, obscenity, violence and anti-Christian material. Another target of the AFA is pornography. In the April, 1990 issue there is a report on efforts by People for the American Way (PAW) to promote continued taxpayer support for the National Endowment for the Arts. Examples of the "works of Art" Paw and founder, Norman Lear, want funded include "Andres Serrano's 'P-- Christ' photo which showed Christ on a cross submerged in Serrano's own urine" and other works which portray homosexuality, bestiality, and the photo of Christ as a dope addict [25: 9]. Each month the Journal highlights movies, songs and TV programs which come under the heading of filthiness.

SILLY TALKING. There must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks (NAS). This does not discourage humor, but denotes silly, off-color talk. Some people can take almost anything one says and give it some off-color meaning or application. A Baptist deacon expressed his disapproval of this practice to the author. It seems that he had worn a new tie to work. He really liked the tie, but the first time he wore it, another man pointed to the design of the tie and told him that it reminded him of some sexual act. The man said that he could not see what the man was talking about, but decided that he would not wear the tie to work again if there was any possibility that it suggested anything immoral.

Christians should be grave, serious, reverent. Foolish talk is potentially dangerous. It may stifle intellectual, social, and moral growth. It often causes embarrassment, pain, and strained relationships.

COURSE JESTING. The word denotes witticism of a vulgar type, comments that may be veiled in innuendo or double meaning. Here again we see a picture of those who are always telling off-color stories or dirty jokes. Some thrive on innuendo and double meanings. It includes the person to whom almost anything you mention is a reminder of something sensual. A This use of language usually stems from a desire to remain inconspicuous by sounding like the people who

surround oneself. Principle is sacrificed to the convenience of the particular occasion. Implied is a frivolous playful style of treating any subject, for which Ephesus was famous" [NCWB].

The behavior described in this passage is characteristic of those who have no place in the Kingdom of God. Paul is not objecting to humor, but to unsuitable and unclean jesting. Certainly no Christian should use his or her lips to spread questionable stories. We should never have to say, "Take this with a grain of salt" because our speech should always be seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6) [23: QVL].

NOT FITTING. The KJV has "not convenient." The behavior mentioned in this verse is not fitting for the Christian. Some things are simply not proper for the child of God. These include filthiness, foolish talk and jesting that is off-color or obscene. It must also be remembered that certain terms are used freely in some homes that are carefully avoided in other homes, even in the same community. In some cases it is not the subject matter so much as the terms used or the context in which they are used. This is especially true in reference to terms used for certain parts of the anatomy. Young people and young adults today use terms in mixed groups that may be scrupulously avoided by median and senior adults.

Every Christian should be very careful when the subject is sex. I was shocked many times in my early ministry by people who would blurt out things in a group that would have gotten me into a lot of trouble if I had said them when I was a child or teenager. I was not shocked in counseling sessions when people discussed sexual problems. But I found it uncomfortable in a social setting when someone, whether seriously or jokingly, began discussing sexual matters in such a way that caused embarrassment to others.

I was horrified once to discover that a lady thought I had gotten "off-color" with a joke I had told years before. I remembered the incident after someone repeated the story to me, but was surprised to think anyone could have interpreted what I had said as an "off-color" joke. The point to me was not sexual at all; but I had used the term "newly-weds." The lady had been a newly-wed at the time and possibly anticipated being teased in a manner that would embarrass her.

People who know me know that I neither use off-color language (unless it is through ignorance) nor tell "dirty" jokes. I try to be especially careful in my choice of words from the pulpit and in private conversations because I know that someone may be offended. Because of the problems of immorality in general, and AIDS, homosexuality, and abortion in particular; the pastor must address sexual problems openly today in a way that he might have used only in private counseling sessions a generation ago. The situation demands it. But care must be exercised in dealing with the subject.

The pastor must not become so accustomed to discussing sexual issues and using certain words that he forgets that his witness may be jeopardized by discussing the same issues or using the same words in jest. He must remind himself that just because he is not embarrassed by certain words or subjects, he should not conclude that everyone else feels the same way. Certain things are simply not fitting for the Christian and to disregard this warning is to risk compromising one's

testimony for the Lord.

BUT RATHER GIVING THANKS. A sharp contrast is seen between those who walk with God in love and purity and those who follow impurity, indecency, and greed. Giving thanks is consistent with the former, but inconsistent with, and in contrast to the latter.

5:5 - THIS YOU KNOW WITH CERTAINTY. AFor this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” If there is anything we can know with absolute certainty in world, it is that there is no place in the Kingdom of God for covetousness, immorality, and idolatry.

Greed and idol worship are both forms of worshiping the creation of God rather than God as the Creator. Material things are not themselves evil, but are put to evil use when man regards them as objects of worship in place of God (1 Sam. 15:3; Matt. 6:24; Phil. 3:19; 1 John 2:15). Paul had given up worshiping and seeking material things (2 Cor. 6:10; 11:27) [NCWB].

A sociologist announced to his class that Sociology is an "indefinite science." His lectures, often his tests, were laced with words like "possibly," "perhaps," and "maybe." A seminary representative, commenting on the curriculum, said, "There is a certain amount of ambiguity built into this schedule in order to allow some flexibility in scheduling and in assignments." Dr. R. R. Pearce taught Sociology at Mississippi College for many years. It was an interesting, often unsettling, experience the first time a student heard him ask his class, "What do you know for sure?" It was also interesting to see how many times Dr. Pearce demonstrated that the student really did not know what he claimed to know: he just assumed it!

One of the remarkable things about Christianity is that there are so many things one can know for sure. We see in the Gospel According to John that God wants us to know that Jesus is the Son of God, Savior and Lord. In the First Epistle of John we See that God not only wants us to know His Son; He wants us to know that we know Him. Paul stresses that we can know for certain what God approves of and what He does not. It is not a matter of speculation. That does not mean that all answers are going to be easy or that all believers are going to agree on every issue. But there are certain basics that are known - and known with certainty.

NO IMMORAL OR IMPURE PERSON. When we study the attributes of God we see that we cannot be sure that we ever list them all, and even if we could list them all, we know that we can never fully understand all of them. Yet, in any study of God, or the attributes of God, one attribute is almost always listed neat the top. That is His holiness. Any study of the Scripture reveals that God expects us to be holy, as He is holy. Any immorality is totally inconsistent with His will and purpose for us.

It is especially important to understand what Paul is saying in this verse in this day when so many have divorced morality from their faith in God. Newspapers carried the results of a survey by a major pollster. One paper printed the results under the headline, "Young people believe in God

and Sex." The point was that more young people professed faith in God, but did not see that their faith in God made moral demands on their lives.

One teenaged girl revealed this attitude in talking with her pastor. She said, I am not like a lot of girls. I won't get into bed with just anybody." Is it possible that in this age of psychology we have focused so much time and energy into getting rid of guilt feelings that we have forgotten about real guilt? Or is it possible that Young people and children are so brainwashed by movies, television, and music today that they have lost the ability to make moral distinctions?

Another possibility is that we have a second and third generation of people who have been so indoctrinated by the gospel of evolution that they are blinded to spiritual reality. If you do not recognize God as the divine source of your life; if you do not acknowledge Him as your Creator; if you do not believe you were created in His image; and if you do not believe in the Fall through sin; you are not going to accept Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Lord in your life. If you reject Genesis 3 why accept John 3? If you believe in evolution you must reject a divine source for your life. If there is no divine source, why would anyone really believe he has an appointment to stand before the judgment bar of God? If you are not accountable to God, then to whom are you accountable? Yourself? Your government? If you use the former answer, then you determine your own morality. If you say the latter, morality is determined by a majority vote. In order to arrive at either conclusion one must first reject God and His standard for His people.

COVETOUS MAN...IDOLATER. Here Paul equates covetousness with idolatry. Technically, an idolater was a worshiper of an image. But whatever a person wants to the extent that it comes to have first place in his heart, a place which belongs only to God, that becomes his god. He gives to it the devotion which is due God and God alone. We should not be too smug about our righteousness because we do not bow down before some graven image as long as there is anything we place, or permit to come, between ourselves and God. A covetous, or greedy person is an idolater for the simple reason that he puts things before God. Paul Eldridge has it right (quoted by James S. Hewett (*Illustrations Unlimited*, Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988, p. 455):

What we have not poisons what we have--. Our urge to acquire things is due less to the passion to possess them than to the vanity of feeling superior to those who envy our possession of them--. Envy transmutes other people's base metals into gold--. Our envy is the yeast that swells the fortune of others--. No form of hatred is as keen as envy. It magnifies the importance of our enemy--and belittles our own [19: # 2129].

INHERITANCE. Those who follow immorality and impurity have no "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (NAS). The Bible is clear with regard to the children of God: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:17). The Bible portrays our inheritance in glowing terms. The beauty is beyond human comprehension. In contrast, the ungodly person, the idolater, has no place in God's inheritance. The Bible makes a clear distinction, as Paul stresses in II Timothy 2:19: ANevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them

that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND GOD. Paul used one article in the Greek for both Christ and God. The purpose may have been to stress the deity of Christ, which would have been appropriate in light of the Gnostic problem. But there may have been another reason. We worship one God, not two (or three). We worship the great Three-in-One-God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As already noted, God is revealed to us in the Bible as one in essence, but three in personality. The use of one article stresses the oneness of the Father and Son.

5:6-14

In these verses Paul contrasts the believer's past with his present. In 2:1 the contrast was between death and life. Here the contrast is between darkness and light. There are two mighty kingdoms (one with limited power, one with unlimited power) and every person is a citizen of one or the other. The kingdom of Satan is the kingdom of darkness and every lost person is a part of that kingdom. Every Christian was at one time a citizen of the kingdom of darkness. But the Light of the world (John 8:12) has delivered us from the power of darkness unto the kingdom of light.

LET NO ONE DECEIVE YOU WITH EMPTY WORDS. The child of God has the truth before him in the Word of God, the inspired, holy, infallible Scripture. If he is deceived, or led astray, it can only be with words that are empty (vain, foolish, worthless, pretentious). This possibly refers to the Gnostic heresy, but it is just as possible that it refers to the defense of the conduct mentioned in verses 3-5. Those who are guilty of such conduct always try to justify their behavior.

False teachers may say that you can be a Christian and live in habitual, deliberate sin; but Paul calls these teachings empty [vain] words.” Compare vv. 5-6 with Gal. 5:21ff and 1 Cor. 6:9-10. We were children of disobedience” (2:1-3); now we are children of God, and we ought to walk in love [23: QVL].

There are many who are trying to deceive believers today - and many who are being deceived because they have not followed the instructions from Scripture.

5:7 - PARTAKERS WITH THEM. The NRSV has, “Therefore do not be associated with them.” Do not be partners with them; literally, sharers with them. The believer is to live a separate life before God and man. It is not enough to place a high value on righteousness, we must practice it before the world and we must avoid compromising our testimony as children of God by associations that identify us with the prince of this world rather than the King of Kings. Wiersbe makes the point that:

The word translated “partakers” (v. 7) implies having in common; it is often translated “fellowship” or “partnership.” Christians are partakers of: (1) the divine nature, 2 Peter 1:4; (2) God's promises, Eph. 3:6; (3) Christ's sufferings, 1 Peter 4:13; (4) holiness, Heb. 12:10; (5) the heavenly calling, Heb. 3:1 and (6) God's

glory, 1 Peter 5:1. Since we have this wonderful partnership with God, how could we ever become partners with that which belongs to sin and darkness? [23: QVL].

"Therefore" holds the conduct mentioned in verses 3-5 before us, and then focuses on the wrath that is coming on those who practice evil. The word "wrath" occurs 198 times in 193 verses in the Bible. For example, in Exodus 32:10, God says to Moses, "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." Fear of the wrath of a holy God may not be as noble a reason as the love of God for avoiding those sins, but is a sufficient reason.

5:8 - YOU WERE FORMERLY DARKNESS. AFor once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light..." The Gentile believers in Ephesus were formerly pagans, as were all Gentiles. They worshiped false gods and lived their lives in darkness. Immorality of every kind was a part of their former lives.

BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT. There should be a marked contrast between the way they lived when they were in the darkness of paganism and the life they now experience as servants of the Light of the World. As servants of God the believer takes on the character of his Lord. Jesus called His disciples the light of the world (Matt. 5:14).

5:9 - THE FRUIT OF THE LIGHT. The fruit of darkness is immorality, idolatry, greed, and covetousness. But the fruit of light "consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth." The life of one who walks in the light of God stands in sharp contrast to the one who walks in darkness. The fruit reveals whether one is in the light or in darkness.

We are children of light and ought to walk in the light. Darkness produces sin and lies; the fruit of the light (a better translation of v. 9) is goodness, righteousness, and truth. The light cannot compromise with the darkness; it can only expose it. Note John 3:19-21 and 1 John 1:5-10 [23: QVL].

5:10 - TRYING TO LEARN. The KJV has AProving what is acceptable unto the Lord." The word means to test, examine, approve by testing. AChristian must learn what will please God (5:8; Rom. 12:1, 2) by conscious and accurate study, and by practical attempts to put his knowledge into daily use" [NCWB].

WHAT IS PLEASING TO THE LORD. The NAS renders this "trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord." The idea is to test by experience that which is pleasing to the Lord. Note that this verse does not teach that the approval of other people should be our goal. It is easy for one to become more concerned with what others think than what God thinks about our behavior.

Christians cease bearing fruit in their lives and their witness is destroyed when they seek the minimum standards. It is though they ask, "How far can I go and still be considered a good Christian?" Many Christians have spent so much time on the borderline of the kingdom of light that you can hardly tell them from those who are citizens of the kingdom of darkness. They talk like

them, dress like them, and act like them.

The Bible is very clear about the life that is acceptable to God. Some may protest that the Bible is difficult to understand, or claim they have trouble making an application of the commandments. In truth, they may be having more of a problem with what they do understand of the Word of God. In Micah 6:8 we find what is acceptable unto the Lord: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

DO NOT PARTICIPATE. Or, Have no fellowship with (stop having fellowship with them). It means stop having anything to do with those who walk in darkness. The NASV has, "do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness." Many professing Christians have far too much in common with ungodly people. They seem to enjoy the company of the lost to that of the redeemed.

If the Christian continually associates with ungodly people, he will soon be identified with them by the world. He may protest, "How can I reach them if I do not associate with them?" The Scripture does not say that we should not have contact with them, but that we should not participate in their unfruitful deeds. The psalmist is right of target in Psalms 1:1: "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." Those who violate this principle should expect the consequences to be severe.

UNFRUITFUL DEEDS OF DARKNESS. Instead of participating in unfruitful deeds of darkness, we should expose them, or reprove them." "By walking in the light the believers are to rebuke these works of darkness and expose them for what they really are" [13: 111]. But how? Believers may expose the sins of other believers through church discipline. The Christian also reproveth evil by turning light on the darkness of sin.

5:12 - IN SECRET. He says that it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret." Shameless, unspeakable things are usually done in secret. Sin loves darkness for obvious reasons. The burglar, for example, can hide in the dark and watch a house, break in when it seems that no one is home and then escape in the darkness of night. As we find in John 3:19, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

5:13 - EXPOSED BY THE LIGHT. "Everything," he says, "exposed by the light becomes visible." It takes both faith and courage to turn the light on the private sins of men and women, or on those of a community. But, the child of God will do just that. First, he turns the light of the Gospel on the sins of others by living a godly life in their presence. Secondly, Christians must take a stand for righteousness and a stand against sin. The believer must rebuke sin. Paul wrote, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear," (I Tim. 5:20). He also wrote to Titus, "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (1:13); and again, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" (2:15).

Christians should focus the light of the Gospel on moral and spiritual darkness. However, if they fail in their responsibility to God and others, the sinner will not prevail in the end. The Bible is very clear at this point: "behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). The holiness of God leads Him to pour out His wrath on sin: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5). God will see that things done in darkness will be exposed by the light.

5:14 - FOR THIS REASON. On the basis of the argument just made, he now challenges:

AAwake, sleeper,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ will shine on you" (NASV).

This is a paraphrase of Isaiah 60:1 (see Is. 26:19) where Israel was called to awake from its state of darkness and death (Isa. 59:10; 60:2). Paul is saying that believer in the church is called to vigilance. Now, Christians are commanded to awake out of sleep - non-Christians must awake from the dead (cf. Matt. 25:5; Rom. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:6).

Those who are dead in sin are called upon to arise from their sleep, to stand up from their dead position, and to experience the full light of Christ. Those who have new life are to walk in new light. Death is a common metaphor for those who are lost in sin. But it may be a little surprising to find sleep used in the same sense. However, it may be helpful to find both terms used here. The unsaved person is spiritually dead, but unlike the person who is physically dead, one can still communicate with the spiritually dead. So God calls upon that person to awaken him to the fact that he is spiritually dead. Until he is awakened to that fact, he will not trust Jesus Christ for new life.

5:15 - BE CAREFUL HOW YOU WALK. Be extremely careful! Make a habit of watching carefully how you walk. The light of Christ is focused on the way He would have you walk. That way is well lighted, having been clearly pointed out by Jesus in His earthly teachings, and having been illuminated by the Holy Spirit Who inspired the writing of the Scripture. It is further highlighted by the Holy Spirit today as He illuminates the heart of the believer as he studies the Word of God. The way may be straight and narrow, but it is well lighted. The way of sin and death is broad and inviting, but it is in darkness. In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus said:

AEnter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (KJV).

Unfortunately, many who profess to be Christians are not very careful about their walk. Most of us will agree with Keith Miller:

It has never ceased to amaze me that we Christians have developed a kind of selective vision which allows us to be deeply and sincerely involved in worship and

church activities and yet almost totally pagan in the day in, day out guts of our business lives and never realize it [19: # 3763].

NOT AS UNWISE MEN BUT AS WISE. It would be difficult to find a person who would choose to be unwise rather than wise. In a day when such a premium is placed on education, you would hardly expect to find a person who would prefer to be a fool than to be a wise person. But there is a problem here that requires serious thought. There is a wisdom that is of God and there is a wisdom that is of this world. They are not the same.

If you study any of the popular cults you quickly become aware of the fact that their leaders proclaim a superior wisdom or knowledge. Proselytes of that cult were often attracted by promise of some special knowledge, or a wisdom others lack. Humanism and New Age adherents place great value on knowledge. The same applies to the Satanists, and others who are involved in the occult. In fact, most of those groups feel so enlightened that they think Christians are fools. They laugh at believers and mock their ministers. The Christian is often dismissed by the media or some psychologist as a "fundamentalist." A psychologist was interviewed on television in a report on corporal punishment in schools. He made it clear that, in his view, spanking causes severe emotional damage to children and did no good. He stated that states allow spanking in schools are states where there are a lot of evangelical fundamentalists. The implication was that you could hardly expect more of them.

The wisdom of God is not understood by the world, because it begins with the fear of the Lord. There is no genuine wisdom that does not begin with the fear of God, and the person who rejects God does not fear Him. When one is born-again he comes to know the Lord in a personal relationship. The more he grows in the grace and knowledge of God, the more he grows in godly wisdom. In that great wisdom chapter of Job, the patriarch is led to see the basis for true wisdom:

Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding (Job 28:20, 28).

The word translated wise is constructed to mean the ability to make the right choice. When one is faced with multiple choices, it is important to make the right choice. Those decisions are spiritually discerned. Often, the spiritually minded believer will make the same decision the lost person or the believer who is walking in the flesh will make. But there are other times when the world simply will not understand why the Christian makes a certain decision. He may say, "I don't see the difference between my way and your way." And he really does not see the difference, because he lacks spiritual discernment and he has no desire to glorify God with this decision.

The believer must decide whether he will participate in activities in his community or not. For example, if the local school is trying to raise money by holding a bingo game or selling raffle tickets, he may rationalize that he is simply making a donation and go on and participate because it is for a worthy cause. But then when he opposes a state lottery or casino gambling, others call him a hypocrite. Other decisions may involve how he observes the Lord's Day, dancing, movies, music and television programs.

5:16 - REDEEMING THE TIME. The word translated "redeeming" was a term used in the market place for being alert to seize an opportunity to buy something at a bargain. The word is also used in reference to our salvation. But here the emphasis is on the fact that the believer must be alert in these evil days to seize the opportunity to make the right choice. We are to take advantage of every opportunity and avail ourselves of every means to spread the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In May, 1990 my son, John, and I attended a Bible conference in the beautiful new sanctuary of Bellevue Baptist Church, now located in Cordova, a suburb of Memphis, Tennessee. There were a number of outstanding preachers, including Stephen Olford. John mentioned some of the sermons that really meant a lot to him. I shared my convictions with him. I said, "These men preached what we all wanted them to preach; they said what we wanted them to say; and they said it the way we wanted them to say it, and we were glad they did. But what Stephen Olford said we probably did not want to hear, but we needed it."

Dr. Olford dealt with this subject and related it to the preacher and his schedule. He shared with us studies made at Encounter Ministries about the way preachers use their time. He charged many preachers with laziness and many more with being undisciplined in the use of their time. In one conference most pastors confessed failure in terms of time given to prayer, Bible study and sermon preparation. Is this the "besetting sin" of the average preacher? If so, it would be interesting to hear from the layperson. We must redeem the time, or seize the opportunity we have to study, pray, witness, serve and worship the Lord.

THE DAYS ARE EVIL. The true child of God is keenly aware of the fact that he lives in an evil age, an ungodly world, a crooked and perverse generation. Peter was very much aware of the kind of the condition of the world in which he lived. The Scripture tells us that on the Day of Pentecost he preached to the multitude that they should repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40).

Before his death Francis Shaeffer began to use the term "Post-Christian America," with emphasis on the fact that we had lost the Christian consensus. Shaeffer was aware of the threat of Humanism, Communism, liberalism, but there may be more danger in post-modernism (New Age spirituality) today than in either of those threats. The New Age movement embraces many of the older philosophies and goes on to make room for certain cults, the occult and adds new qualities to humanistic principles. If Christians do not seize every opportunity to try to bring about a revival in America, they may soon observe more than passive resistance from some of these New Agers. Some have declared war on Christianity.

This can be illustrated in many ways, but one story will be sufficient at this point. In the spring of 1990 Bill Honig (Superintendent of Public Instruction for California) took action which would deny a license to the Institute for Creation Research Graduate School. It is apparently his conviction that only evolution should be taught in his state, even in a private institution such as ICR. The following quote is from a letter written to Mr. Honig by one of the most distinguished young

scientists in the former Soviet Union. The quote is from "Acts and Facts," a publication of ICR, El Cajon, CA., Vol. 19, No. 3, March, 1990 [27: 5].

Dear Mr. Honig:

Please realize that I am shocked by your decision to close the ICR Graduate School due to your belief that a majority of scientists in our world do not agree with the ICR's scientific platform.

In a time of perestroika, the academic freedom in Moscow and Leningrad looks better than in California. We have a real opportunity to carry out biological research in the creationist field, to organize public debates, scientific meetings, publications, lectures, and even to teach creationism as a scientific subject in newly formed colleges supported by churches and independent Christian associations. If you wish, I am ready to document each of these statements listed above. For instance, my old friend and opponent Dr. Kirill L. Gladilin, a Head of Laboratory of Evolutional Biochemistry of the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of Biochemistry (Moscow, USSR) usually supports my efforts in organizing debates between creationists and evolutionists at his Institute, which is the most famous evolutionist institute in the world. At least this means that prominent evolutionists in the USSR consider creationists scientific opponents...

...during all the long history of mankind, during all history of science, the Truth was never found by a democratic procedure and by a majority vote... Being part of a majority is not enough for being right.

Sincerely,

Dmitri A Kuznetsov, M.D., Ph.D., D.Sc.

John McArthur, speaking in a Bible conference, made a disturbing statement. He said, "What we are witnessing is the death of everything America once stood for." Any one who has followed the New Age Movement is keenly aware of the fact that we are living in an evil time. Jimmy Furr, of the Southern Baptist Interfaith Witness Department, leads conferences on cults and the occult. Special attention is given to New Age Movements and Satanism. His reports on the increase in the activities and the growing influence these movements on the lives of people in America and throughout the world confirm that "the days are evil." As Paul wrote, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

5:17 - BE YE NOT FOOLISH. Literally, stop becoming foolish. Those who are deceived by evil, those who are caught up in the philosophy of the "evil days" in which we live are seen as foolish, senseless, stupid. This thought is prominent in the Old Testament as seen in Psalms 53:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable

iniquity: there is none that doeth good" (KJV). In Romans 1:22 Paul writes of those who reject God and pursue evil, "Professing them- selves to be wise, they became fools."

Those who are the most dangerous are those who lead others into sin while boasting of their enlightenment, their wisdom, their special knowledge. For example, actress Shirley McLaine's book in which she proclaims the false gospel of reincarnation attracted a lot of attention and won a lot of converts. When she appeared on talk shows her facial expression and the tone of her voice conveyed her conviction that she had special knowledge and was prepared to enlighten any one who would listen.

It is the same with the young adult who attracts young people with his tid-bits of wisdom on sex, drugs, beer, their parents, and authority in general. Naive young people follow them and quote them without any knowledge of the fact that the same kind of thinking has destroyed millions of young people in every generation that preceded them. Every Monday young adults all across America head to the health club and get in the sauna and steam room. They proudly boast that they are there to sweat out the beer they drank over the week-end. They can only see themselves repeating the parties every week-end for years to come. They can never identify with the alcoholic, the problem drinker, the broken home, the DWI, the lost job, or the diseases associated with drinking. Many will some day look back and see how foolish they were.

UNDERSTAND WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS. The idea expressed by this word is to bring together, or to join together in the mind. Through the Word of God, prayer, the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and through instruction from others and our own experience we may come to understand what the will of God is for our life. By walking with God in wisdom we come to understand His will and purpose. We must be wise in the things of God, not the things of the world. Many see themselves as sophisticated, wise in the ways of the world, and do not know how foolish they are. In the words of Christ in Revelation 3:17, they see themselves as those of Laodecea who said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." They do not know that they are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

The Scripture has something for us on this subject. In I Corinthians 3:19, we read, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." In James 3:15, we see that "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (KJV). By contrast, James says in verse 17, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

5:18 - BE NOT DRUNK WITH WINE. Drunkenness is forbidden as a practice, or habit. One should not get drunk with wine. If he is guilty, he must stop it. Throughout the ages Christians have been accused of being narrow and negative. But the fact is that are many prohibitions in the Bible that are there to prevent one from adopting a negative life-style. Drinking alcoholic beverages leads of many problems, among them is "excess" (dissipation, NASV). The idea behind the word translated 'excess' is extravagant squandering.

Often those who drink alcoholic beverages are viewed as generous and free-hearted when, in fact, they may be recklessly squandering money their family needs. One man talked with his pastor about his addiction to beer. He said, "I drink a six-pack as soon as I get off work. When I get home I drink another six-pack while I am working around the house or in the yard. Then, after supper I will drink another one before I go to bed." He went on to say that he spend about one- fourth of his take-home pay on beer. In order to get off the beer he needed professional help and had to spend some time in an institution that dealt with substance abuse.

The believer must avoid all forms of intoxication. Today, millions are struggling with an addiction to drugs. There are, however, other forms of intoxication. We must avoid all the false intoxications of Satan. Many are intoxicated with strange philosophies; Humanism, the New Age philosophies, and the occult. Satan has his counterfeit in many of the Aso-called >holiness= movements" today [12: 204]. Man is going to fill his mind and heart with something and there is a much better choice than being filled with wine.

BUT BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT. In contrast to a state of intoxication with wine, the child of God should be filled with the Holy Spirit. The command to be filled with the Spirit does not mean that we are to pray for the baptism of the Spirit in some "second blessing." Every true believer has been baptized by the Spirit and has been indwelt once for all time by the Third member of the Godhead. To be filled with the Spirit means that the indwelling Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, has complete control of our whole being.

One of my favorite writers for a number of years has been A. W. Tozer (1897B1963). The following quote will explain why.

Before we can be filled with the Spirit, the desire to be filled must be all-consuming. It must be for the time the biggest thing in the life, so acute, so intrusive as to crowd out everything else. The degree of fullness in any life accords perfectly with the intensity of true desire. We have as much of God as we actually want [20: #1601].

When a person is saved, he receives the Holy Spirit (he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit; he is baptized with the Holy Spirit). This is never repeated, nor does it have to be. It is a once-for-all experience. But the believer needs daily filling with the Holy Spirit. This means that the believer must yield to the Holy Spirit so that He can accomplish the will of the Father in the individual's heart. See John 14-16 for some of the things the Holy Spirit seeks to do for the believer who permits Him to fill his heart daily.

5:19 - SPEAKING TO YOURSELVES. One of the great blessings of being filled with the Holy Spirit is a heart overflowing with praise to the Lord. The song one carries in his heart is a reflection of his soul. Possibly because many people are more interested in the beat than lyrics, you do not hear people singing, humming, or whistling as they work or play the way they did a generation ago.

Today many people, especially younger people, have to have the most powerful sound

equipment they can afford in their car and drive with the volume turned up enough to rattle windows a block away. But there was a time when people traveled by buggy, horse back, or on foot. They had a lot of time to think and many sang the songs they knew. Before radio, television, and tape players those songs, for a lot of people, were the songs they heard at church.

I grew up on a cotton and soy bean farm in the Mississippi delta. We began choppin' cotton the latter part of May and tried to "lay-by" the middle of July. After that we cut fire wood (first with a cross-cut saw and later with a chain saw) for our own use and for those who lived on the place. Of course, we always took off time for Bible School and our summer revival. Around the last week in August we began pickin' cotton. As a child and as a youth I recall people, especially older people, singing or whistling while they worked. It was not unusual to hear someone singing a hymn or a gospel song. Some today sing praises to the Lord as the work or drive. Unfortunately, many people never take the time to sing those hymns. Others are not interested in them. They do not understand the blessing they are missing.

PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS. The child of God does have to have a lot of musical ability to have a song in his heart. The psalmist wrote, "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God... (Psalm 40:3).

Spiritual songs, in the context, refers to an ode or songs that praise the Lord. In Revelation 15:3 we read, "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true [are] thy ways, thou King of saints." There is a great potential for blessing here, but also some potential for problems. We should be sure our songs are doctrinally sound. They should always honor the Lord in that they reflect what is in the heart. Think how many people sing "I Surrender All" who have no intention of surrendering anything to God. They are singing a lie.

I once heard R. G. Lee tell about hearing a lady sing at a meeting in Memphis. When she announced that she needed a ride across town, he volunteered to drive her. As soon as they got into the car he asked her, "How can you sing such a lie?" The highly offended lady demanded to know what he meant. Dr. Lee said, "You don't love Jesus; you just love to sing." The startled soloist admitted that he was right. There may be times today when we hear someone sing and have the distinct impression that what we heard was simply a performance, not an offering to the Lord.

TO THE LORD. The reference here is to our Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3:16). The deity of Jesus Christ is stressed. Paul frequently refers to Christ as "the Lord," or "our Lord." We should praise Him in our public worship services and in private devotion time. But we never really praise Him unless we praise Him with our life every day. He receives sincere praise but rejects hypocrisy. The psalmist wrote in Psalms 33:1, "Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright." The word "praise" occurs 248 times in 216 verses in the KJV Bible. The Psalms are saturated with references to praise to the Lord (132 references). On the other hand, insincerity must avoided in praise. The Lord is very clear in His rejection of those songs of praise from the lips of ungodly men: "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols" (Amos 5:23).

GIVING THANKS ALWAYS. Thankfulness is consistent with the singing of hymns and spiritual songs. It is always an essential ingredient in spirituality and godly behavior. The Bible places special emphasis on giving thanks to the Lord: "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thes. 5:18; See also, Phil. 4:6; Heb. 13:15; Psalm 105:1; 106:1; 107:1).

William Law, in his *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* writes, "Would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice, but it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God willeth, who received everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it" [19: #1457].

IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. Jesus had instructed His disciples to pray in His name: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23f, KJV).

Jesus is the name above every name. Paul wrote, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Phil. 2:9f). His name is the "sweetest name on mortal tongue" but what is called for here is more than a ritualistic repetition of His name. Name stands for the person. We approach God in the Person, nature, and character of Christ. After all, the reason for our gratitude is what God has done for us through Jesus Christ.

A few years ago I had several conversations with a friend who had become involved with Ekkankar, which at the time advertised itself as the ancient science of total awareness. Later the movement had an ad on a billboard on highway 82 east of Greenville, Mississippi which announced that they were involved in soul travel. The influence of eastern mysticism was apparent from the first discussions, but my friend had been deceived by their use of the name "Jesus." He told me what a blessing it was to stop at a red light and instead of becoming impatient, just repeat the name, 'Jesus' over and over. He said, "I just close my eyes and say, 'Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus...' This kind of repetition is condemned: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matt. 6:7).

5:21 - SUBMITTING YOURSELVES TO ONE ANOTHER. Paul is using a military expression which means to line up under (the same term is used in Col. 3:18). This is a Christian distinctive which the world never has understood. It is the opposite of the Self Esteem, Self Worth, Self Love gospel proclaimed so freely by Robert Schuler and others. The Spirit-filled Christian is submissive. This is one of the keys to the power and magnetism of the early church. Mutual subjection, though often lacking among most members, is still Scriptural, and it is still essential for the growing church which wants to fulfill its mission in the world. When a person is really Spirit-controlled, one sees no dissension, no quarreling, no selfishness, no jealousy in his life. This is the ideal. Unfortunately, most of us have never witnessed the ideal for any significant period of

time.

Loving submission to our Lord will enable us to submit ourselves to others in the church. Much of the trouble in many churches today stems from our failure at this very point. Too few members are really controlled by the Spirit of God and only Spirit-filled believers will ever practice this mutual submission. This submission does not weaken the believer. It does not rob him of his individuality. The Spirit-filled Christian is: joyful (verse 19); thankful (verse 20); and submissive (verse 21).

The desire to dominate, control, and manipulate others does not come from leadership of the Holy Spirit. It does not come from the Scripture. But it does raise its ugly head in committee meetings and business meetings from time to time. Some people are so determined to have their own way that they will ride rough-shod over other members. Some interpret the submission of others as a weakness and force their will on them.

IN THE FEAR OF GOD. This means a reverential fear of God. This is the only appropriate response to the holiness of God. Failure to fear God opens the door to sin in the believer's life. Paul writes in Romans 3:18, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Again, he writes in II Corinthians 7:1, "Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Oswald Chambers (1874-1917) said, "The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else" [19: # 856].

D. The Christian Home, 5:22 - 6:9).

1. The Christian wife (5:22-24).

We are under siege. We cannot deny it any longer. Our families are facing a fierce and unprecedented challenge - one that may threaten their very existence. None of us are exempt from its ravages. None can avoid its consequences. None can afford to ignore it." With these words George Grant introduces his book, *The Family Under Siege* (Bethany House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1994) [6: 15]. He points out that we have watched in horror as divorce rates, domestic violence, and teen suicides have skyrocketed. He adds:

Meanwhile, those institutions that traditionally provided stability, strength, and solace to families in times of crisis - churches, private associations, and community organizations - have been systematically undermined. Their values have been attacked, their methods have been challenged, and their reputations have been distorted - more often than not at the hands of our own government and the social engineers under its aegis.

Amazingly, this assault was initiated under the pretense of helping us, not hurting us. Not only has it hurt us, we have paid for the injury ourselves. Social

spending by the government has increased five-fold in the last thirty years. Inflation adjusted spending for the vast plethora of social service programs has increased 630 percent while spending for its sundry educational programs has increased 225 percent. Sad to say, virtually every dollar poured into those programs has only made matters worse.

In fact, the cure has turned out to be much worse than the disease.

Though the grandiose failure of the modern government-sponsored social engineers has been glaringly obvious for more than a decade - fully documented with reams of empirical data - their desire to utterly supplant and succeed the family remains undeterred. In fact, they are more powerful, more influential, and more determined than ever before... "The corridors of power have always been open to us," says Pamela Maraldo, President of Planned Parenthood. "But there is a new sense of energy and a courageous willingness to completely reinvent our society. It's a whole new ball game" [6: 16].

Following up on this startling claim, Grant identifies some of the social engineers and some of the enemies of the traditional family (from the NEA to the ACLU to the courts, and the welfare system). He says

There is a force at work in our land - a force that has begun to invade the most private areas of the home and family. Undoubtedly you have felt its effects. This force is a part of a greater purpose. It is a part of a plan. Not so much a grand conspiracy, but rather the practical outworking of social engineers who are, even at this moment, hard at work, having gained access to the highest offices of power in this land. Thus a whole system is being constructed that is at work against you and your best purposes for your family. The irony of it is that this insidious plan is being financed by you and me [6: 23].

Maggie Gallagher agrees with Grant: "The overthrow of the marriage and its replacement by a postmarital culture is the driving force behind almost all of the gravest problems facing America - crime, poverty, welfare dependence, homelessness, educational stagnation, even child abuse [5: 4]. She points out that almost one-third of all American children (and two-thirds of African American children) are now born out of wedlock, and that up to 65 percent of all new marriages now fail. This means that "about half of today's young children will spend some time in a single-parent family" [5: 5]. She continues:

The suddenness with which marriage has been overthrown is breathtaking. Just 14 percent of the white women who married in the forties eventually divorced. A single generation later, almost 50 percent of those married in the late sixties and early seventies have already divorced. This explosion in divorce was followed in quick succession by an unprecedented surge in out-of-wedlock births. Between 1970 and 1992, the proportion of babies born outside of marriage leaped from 11 percent

to 30 percent.

Even since 1970, marriage rate has fallen almost 30 percent, while the divorce rate has jumped nearly another 40 percent. Cohabitation, the great historic competitor of marriage, increased sixfold. By 1994, 40 percent of never-married women in their thirties had had an illegitimate child= [5: 5].

These very serious problems and their effect on the family should motivate us to take a serious look at the major factors contributing to the destruction of the traditional American family. It would be interesting to relate the issues Gallagher and Grant mention to the proliferation of the teaching of atheistic, and pantheistic evolution in the classroom, our slip into the post-Christian period in America, development of social engineers and how they gained power, and the modern welfare system. It seems that the more the government spends on social and welfare programs the more problem we have with poverty, crime and illegitimacy.

This is one reason the study of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians is so crucial today. Individual, families, and nations fail when they substitute man=s programs for God=s way. I used to hear R. G. Lee say, "You cannot substitute the >Thus reasoneth the mind of man= for the >Thus saith the Word of the Lord." But that is exactly what we have done in America in this postmodern, post-Christian era. The only hope for the nation and for the family is in a spiritual awakening.

The effects of redemption in Christ do not stop with the individual. They carry over into every phase of life: home, church, business, school. It may be in the home that Christianity meets its most severe test. Ideally this should not be true, but in practice it is often the case. Paul had a good background for writing about the home (Phil. 3:4-6; II Cor. 11:22).

There is no more noble view of marriage and the home than that which appears in this passage in Ephesians. The solution to the disintegration of the family in America is also found here. Unfortunately, many families have already rejected God and a lot of so-called experts on the home have dismissed the Scripture as too simplistic.

Some women today, particularly the more militant feminists, decry this Scriptural as chauvinistic. They insist it discriminates against women. But to the woman and child of Paul's day it was a declaration of freedom and hope, a bold new venture in Christian living.

History paints an ugly picture of discrimination against women both in ancient civilizations and modern society. As evidence of this, Paul found God-fearing (or God-seeking) Gentile women at the synagogue in various cities he visited on his missionary journeys. They possibly found in Judaism a refreshing escape from the inhumane treatment to which women were subjected in pagan religions, especially the fertility cults.

Christianity recognizes worth and dignity in women not found in other religions. Rather than enslaving women, true Christianity (and that is really the only kind there is) offers women freedom, privileges, and opportunities not found in other religions. Some of the exceptions suggested are

either questionable or bogus (cults, the occult). If that is true, why are so many women so critical of the church in this area? Two answers must be considered. First, men have failed to apply the great principles of Christ, as clearly set forth in the Bible, in the church, in the home, and in business. Second, many women misunderstand Scriptural principles while others reject the biblical role for women in reference to home and church.

5:22 - WIVES. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to apply the admonition of verse 21 (Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God) to personal relationships. Primary human relationships are those found within the home.

Paul begins where any Jewish teacher would naturally begin: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." Literally, it is, "wives subjecting themselves..." The Greek construction carries the force of an imperative. The verb to "be in subjection" is a military word and literally means to line up under. Some hold this to mean that every wife is subordinate to her husband in all things, regardless of circumstances. Others believe it is qualified by the phrase, "as unto the Lord."

Unfortunately, many modern women see the word "subject" and immediately label the Bible sexist and chauvinistic. This is especially true among some of the organized feminist organizations. At the time of the proliferation of some of these movements Dr. Harold M. Voth was on the faculty of the Menninger School of Psychiatry and the University of Kansas College of Health Sciences. In his book, *Families, the Future of America* (Regnery Gateway, Chicago, 1984, pp. 187), he observed:

The Women's Liberation movement is a complex development in modern society. There are many motivations within it; some are highly constructive and some are highly destructive....At issue is how individuals fulfill themselves, make meaningful and constructive contributions to society, and create new lives which will grow up to be emotionally healthy men and women who can, in turn, perpetuate life [16: 61].

Dr. Voth pointed out that there is no questioning the fact that women have been objects of discrimination. They had never had a spokesman or an organization to stand up for their rights.

In the free market it is inevitable that they would be exploited, that is, the effort would be made to get as much out of them for as little as possible. But this process is not unique to women. Men have exploited other men (and boys) for centuries....Social processes are at work which are correcting these inequities, injustices, and prejudices against women and much progress has been made [16: 62].

Progress has indeed been made and more is being made. This is the positive side of the movement. On the negative side, there are some very militant groups who are pushing for changes which create new problems instead of solving old ones. Pushing for changes beyond current laws which provide equal opportunity for women and those which guarantee rights and protection, they would do away with all distinctions between males and females in the home and the work place.

This has led to reverse discrimination in education, business and career choices. But perhaps the greatest danger is in the effect this can have on the home. The following statistics were reported in USA Today (8-15-93):

In 1992, more than 25% of households were people living alone.

Family households with a married couple dropped from 86.9% in 1970 to 78.1% in 1992.

In the same period, families with female single heads of household jumped from 10.7% to 17.4%.

More than 25% of all children live with only one parent: for black children, the rate is about 64%.

Voth stressed that "when a child is denied good parenting, he develops personality disturbances of one kind or another," and he will pass those psychological problems on to his children [16: 30]. Thus, each generation loses its vitality as each generation passes these problems on to the next. He points out that:

The most common circumstances which impair childhood development include maternal absence or separation from the infant and child, the absent father, personality disturbances of the parents, strained relationship between the parents and, of course the outright broken home [16: 30].

The problems here are intensely practical, not just theoretical.

The circumstance which renders the child most vulnerable to disturbed psychological development is the single parent home where that parent is a woman who for reasons of her own cannot live with a man in harmony. Very domineering and aggressive women and weak, passive, and irresponsible men are equally damaging to the developing child.

The most common consequence of the psychological disturbances which are the result of faulty childhood development is the diminished ability to form a durable heterosexual bond and within that bonding to carry out the parenting function [16: 30].

As evidence of that incapacity, consider the high (and increasing) illegitimacy rate, the high divorce rate, the number of people living together outside marriage, and the increasing number of homosexuals. There is such tremendous tension between the sexes today that a normal heterosexual relationship is a challenge even to Christians. Voth warns, "On balance the feminists are winning

and because they are, men are losing, the family is losing out, society is losing, and ultimately so are women” [16: 30].

God created both men and women and instituted marriage. He understands both men and women, and He knows the essential ingredients in a happy marriage. It is worth the time and effort to prayerfully study His Word on the subject. Women should not be repelled by the word subjection, but continue with the passage so as to see the whole picture.

In both verses 22 and 24 Paul stressed that wives are to submit themselves to their "own" husbands. Except for Jewish women, wives coming into the church were from paganism with all the depravity associated with it. Sadly, with the moral decline in America, it is still appropriate to make this emphasize.

Anyone who is aware of role wives play in making decisions in the average home (Who is responsible for what decisions around the home?) today would appreciate Paul=s listing wives first. A USA Today survey asked 4,500 men and women. The answers:

Women are responsible for:

- * Deciding what's for dinner and then preparing it
- * Managing the household budget
- * Raising the children

Men and women share the responsibilities for deciding:

- * Where to go on vacation
- * How much to spend on major purchases
- * How much insurance to carry and where to buy it

Men are responsible for:

- * Deciding what to watch on television.

"That's it? That's it. Virtually all other decisions are made jointly or made by the woman. Really" [19: #1626].

AS UNTO THE LORD. Why does one place himself, or herself, in subjection to the Lord? Is it not because He is worthy and deserving of trust and subordination? It is easier for a woman to subordinate herself to her husband if he proves himself worthy of that trust. This does not mean that women are inferior to men. In a particular marriage the wife may be blessed with a superior mind and enjoy better health than her husband. She may out produce him in every way. But if she wants a happy and rewarding happy and marriage she should follow the Lord's prescription.

5:23 - THE HUSBAND IS HEAD OF THE WIFE. Until recent times the woman's first line of defense was her husband (father before marriage, son if widowed). He was her provider and protector. In ancient times there were often a number of children, so the wife was often pregnant and watching after small children at the same time. Women and children were vulnerable in time of

war, thieves and robbers, and from the elements. This is still the case in some places in the world.

Circumstances may be different in America today, but God still holds the father accountable as head of the home. When the husband and father abdicates the whole family suffers. The husband must prove himself worthy if he expects his wife to subject herself to him. Dwight L. Moody said,

If I wanted to find out whether a man was a Christian, I wouldn't go to his minister. I would go and ask his wife. If a man doesn't treat his wife right, I don't want to hear him talk about Christianity. What is the use of his talking about salvation for the next life if he has no salvation for this? We want a Christianity that goes into our homes and everyday lives [19: #1626].

Unfortunately, the greatest threat to some wives will ever face is from their husband. This problem, however, has been grossly overstated by some groups. One feminist group reported that according to some study, thousands of men got up from watching the Super Bowl one January and beat their wives. The story was a blatant lie but a number of groups reported it as a fact without first checking the source. But, violence in the home is still a serious problem for those who are caught up in it. The greatest threat facing a vast number of children today is from the father figure in their home. Sometimes it is the father, often it is a step-father or the mother's "friend." When a father fails as head of the home the fruit of his abuse, neglected, or desertion will be produced, and reproduced, in the lives of generations yet unborn.

When the Bible names him the head of the home two things should be remembered. That title carries with it the awesome responsibility of protector, provider, and spiritual leader in the home. On the other hand it does not justify condescension, neglect, or abuse. He should be reminded that before the Lord "there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Failure in this area has led to some of the current problems the family is facing today.

AS CHRIST IS HEAD OF THE CHURCH. Here we have a comparison with a difference. Paul goes on to stress the fact that Jesus is the "Savior of the body." He means the church as the body over which Christ is Head and Savior. This shows what kind of head the husband is to be in the home. In I Corinthians 11:3 Paul wrote, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (KJV).

There are a lot of Christian women who would have no problem (even in this liberated age) submitting herself to a husband who loved her with the selfless, sacrificial love Jesus has for His church. Jesus laid down His life for His church and the Lord expects the husband to be willing to lay his life down for his family. One more point needs to be made. It is not enough for a father or husband to be willing to die to protect his family, he must give his life for them, and share it with them each day.

Peter urges husbands to dwell with their own wives with the knowledge that while the woman was the weaker vessel, she was man's equal on a spiritual level. Some believe both Paul and Peter would take a different position if they were writing today. But this view overlooks the fact that

Scripture is the product of the mind of God and not the product of the mind of man. Once again, man must never substitute "thus reasoneth the mind of man" for "thus saith the Word of God."

Christianity does not seek to suppress women - Christ is the key to freedom for every woman. Women did not have equality, even among Jewish people, until the principle of freedom was established by Christ.

Paul illustrated the relationship of husband as head of the wife by using Christ and His relationship to the church. Christ is the Head of the church, and after this pattern (and only after this pattern) is the husband to be head of the wife.

5:24 - AS THE CHURCH IS SUBJECT UNTO CHRIST. The wife is to subject herself to "her own husband" as the true New Testament church subjects itself to Christ. The principle of verse 22 applies here. The church subjects itself to Christ because it finds Him worthy. If the scriptural formula given here is applied and permitted to develop, both husband and wife will be blessed. It is in the best interest of both (and for their children) to obey the Word of God.

2. The Christian husband (5:25-33).

5:25 - HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES. The present imperative speaks of habitual or continuous action: "Husbands, make a habit of loving your wives." The love of the husband for the wife is to be continuous, abiding, habitual emotion. It is not to be interrupted by things, large or small, which might conceivably interrupt such attitude or emotion.

When a man marries a woman he takes a vow to love her, and that commitment is "until death do you part." That commitment is not until "the going gets rough," or as long as she is young and attractive. As the head of the home the husband must guard his love for his wife against all temptations and all obstacles. Love is a wonderful emotion, but emotions can be deceptive. For that reason it must be constantly nurtured, controlled, and protected with the mind. In other words, conscious decisions must be made to show one's spouse he, or she, is loved and appreciated.

The husband must also determine in his mind that he will never let any one or any thing come between him and his wife. That includes material possessions, financial problems, business opportunities, or family (including their children).

Couples often say they "fell in love." The problem with the expression is that it covers the whole gamut of emotions, from genuine love to infatuation, to lust. It does not stretch the imagination to think of someone falling out of infatuation, but if people genuinely love each other, can they suddenly fall out of love?

Marriages today may have been sabotaged by an ungodly gospel which has spread with religious fervor until it has permeated almost every area of society. That evil belief is evolution.

For over a century after Charles Darwin published his theory of the origin of the species, atheistic evolution (Humanism) spread like wildfire through the civilized world. It shaped education, political, economic, and social programs and agencies. Dr. Henry Morris, President of the Institute for Creation Research (El Cajon, CA), has observed that many scientists are now turning from post-Darwinian evolution to pre-darwinian pantheistic evolution. If true, this is a testimony to the influence of the New Age Movements on education, philosophy, and social and political world views.

The reason for their "conversion" is that these scientists have recognized the impossibility of life beginning by random chance. Evidence of design is so great that they recognize the need for a designer. Rather than embrace the God of the Bible as Creator they attribute creation to a "universal mind," or some "Force" that got things started and then backed off and left everything to the evolutionary process. If he accepts evolution, he either does not recognize God as Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer, or he subscribes to some form of theistic evolution. He If he does not believe in a God as Creator and Redeemer, it is reasonable to assume that he feels that he does not owe God anything. He does not feel accountable to God now and he does not believe he will stand before the judgment bar of God in the future. He rejects the Bible as the standard for his life.

This person sees himself simply as a more highly evolved form of animal. If a person buys into this lie, he has accepted a world view that cheapens human life to the point that may also accept abortion, euthanasia, sexual license, and even homosexuality as moral. Some have claimed that the sex act means no more than drinking a glass of water to quench one's thirst. Morality is determined, not by the Word of God, but by a majority of one.

If a man believes this lie, he may view his wife (and other women) as sex objects. In fact, many men do speak of women as though they were animals. This attitude will have a profound effect on a relationship. A man may speak to his wife in a way that strips her of the dignity a wife should have in a Christian home. He may also say things about his wife (sexual or otherwise) that cause others to place less value on her and less value on their relationship. True love edifies, but never degrades.

EVEN AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH. This is a great point which is not included in Colossians 3:19 ("Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them"). It lifts this discussion of the husband's love for his wife to the highest plane possible. How should a man love his wife? As Christ loved His church! Can you imagine Christ abandoning His church for a congregation of Muslims or Buddhists? Can you imagine the One sitting at the right hand of the Father neglecting or abusing His church?

GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT. Jesus did more than die for His church. He was born of the virgin Mary, lived a perfect life, prepared for His ministry, labored long, and agonized in prayer. He suffered as no man ever suffered and died a cruel death for His church. He was raised on the third day, made some eleven appearances to His disciples, and ascended in the presence of a large crowd of witnesses. He watches over His church today, and one day He is coming back for one institution - His church.

It is not enough for a man to say, "I would lay down my life for my wife if her life was ever threatened." A wife needs a Christian husband who will give his life to her, pour out his life for her every day.

A lot of couples are going to marriage retreats, attending conferences, watching tapes and reading books that are supposed to help them build a successful marriage. All of these can be very good, but for those who cannot, or choose not to, take advantage of the help that is available - prayer, Bible study, and some of common sense can make a lot of difference.

5:26 - THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY IT. This was the purpose of His death (verse 25). It was also what He prayed for in John 17:17-19: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (KJV).

In sanctifying His church means to set it apart for the glory of the Father (vs. 26). Sanctification is a gradual and continuous process accomplished by the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit who nurtures the believer. In sanctifying believers He seeks to purify them and develop them that they might be everything the Father wants them to be. An entry in *The Bible Illustrator* is fitting.

One day a young minister was being escorted through a coal mine. At the entrance of one of the dim passageways, he spied a beautiful white flower growing out of the black earth. "How can it blossom in such purity and radiance in this dirty mine?" the preacher asked. "Throw some coal dust on it and see for yourself," his guide replied. When he did, he was surprised that the fine, sooty particles slid right off the snowy petals, leaving the plant just as lovely and unstained as before. Its surface was so smooth that the grit and grime could not adhere to it.

Our hearts should have the same characteristic. Just as that flower could not control its habitat, so we cannot help it that we have to live in a world filled with evil. But God's grace can keep us so clean and unspotted that though we touch every side, it will not cling to us.

If we want the Lord's full blessing and approval, we must heed the admonition, "Keep thyself pure" (1 Tim 5:22). By the cleansing power of His Word and the sanctifying influence of His Holy Spirit, it is possible for the Christian to remain "clean in a dirty place" [19: # 3140].

HAVING CLEANSED. This is an aorist participle in Greek. It can be interpreted in either of two ways: (1) it may point to action prior to the sanctification process (in Justification), or (2) it may point to action concurrent with the sanctification process. Some prefer the first use because they believe the "cleansing of the water with the word" is an instantaneous cleansing which occurs in regeneration (cf. Titus 3:5) - and/or baptism. Others, however prefer the second interpretation because they see the cleansing as being the mode by which the bride is continually sanctified. This

is not baptismal regeneration for that would be contrary to Paul=s teaching in this book as well as all his other writings and the entire New Testament” [QV: BKC].

5:27 - THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT. AThat He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.” The picture here is of one presenting the bride to the bridegroom, as in II Cor. 11:2: AFor I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (KJV).

THE CHURCH IN ALL HER GLORY. Or, a glorious church. The word ("glorious" in KJV) is used for splendid clothing (gorgeous apparel) in Luke 7:25.

It was traditional for a bride to take a ritual bath just before her wedding as a symbol of her chastity. Similarly, the sacrament of baptism demonstrates the Christian=s desire that God should find him pure and faithful when Christ returns to claim his bride, the church [QV: NCWN].

SPOT. The idea is to defile, a moral blemish. Unfortunately, the church today cannot say that it is without spot. Ministers are terminated at an unprecedented rate; some refuse to take a stand on moral issues; denominations have voted to ordain homosexuals to the ministry; thousands of churches refuse to oppose abortion; and many churches tolerate gross immorality, and there is never a word about disciplining members who bring dishonor to the precious name by which we are called.

WRINKLE. This denotes the wrinkles that come with age. The Lord is not discriminating against age. What He is saying is that He will present the church to the Father as a Bride in the prime of life, with the strength, vigor, and vitality of youth.

HOLY. The word means separate, different, peculiar. That which is holy is different from other things. With God the word denotes moral separation, moral distinction. A holy Father is looking for a holy bride and that is what Jesus seeks to present to Him.

WITHOUT BLEMISH. The Passover lamb had to be without spot or blemish. Jesus is the Lamb of God without spot or blemish. The Bible paints a glorious picture of our Lord in I Peter 1:19: ABut with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

I Cor. 5:7 - Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us...

Rev. 13:8 - ...The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Jesus is the Lamb without spot or blemish and He is the Bridegroom Who is returning for His bride. He has every reason to expect to demand that His bride be without spot or blemish.

5:28 - HUSBANDS OUGHT TO LOVE THEIR OWN WIVES. Men ought to love their wives Aas their own bodies,” just as Christ loved the church (His body). Paul stresses that there

exists between the husband and his wife the same union that exists between Christ and the church (5:30, 32). This unity is expressed in terms of conjugal union, for as husband and wife become one flesh (one body) through marriage, so Christ and his church have become one body through spiritual union. As such, the church is Christ's very own body" [NCWB]. Without a doubt, this is the most noble picture of marriage ever drawn or painted. Certainly there is nothing to compare with it in all the religions and philosophies of the world.

Paul, contrary to what his critics claim, had a high view of marriage, as we see in his First letter to the Corinthians: "Each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband (1 Cor. 7:2-3). That is God's ideal - one man and one woman for life. This honors God, it saves grief in the home, and in this day it is the best solution to the AIDS problem. It is better for the church, the husband, the wife, and for children. That is not always possible, but it is the ideal. Why is it not always possible? Many today who would like to dedicate themselves and their homes to the Lord were divorced and remarried before they committed themselves to the Lord. They can, however commit their present marriage and their home to the Lord.

5:29 - NOURISHES. The comparison between husband/wife relationship and the Christ/church relationship continues: "For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church." The idea is to nourish to maturity - a process which demands time, effort, commitment, and all the talent and gifts at one's disposal. The relationship between the husband and wife requires daily nourishment and that never just happens." It does not happen by chance. Unfortunately, many couples nourish their relationship until they get married and then, even though they may cherish it, they neglect to nourish it. Jesus does not make that mistake with His church.

CHERISHES. The primary idea is to warm, then to foster with tender loving care. While "nourishes" denotes has to do with providing food and internal sustenance, "cherishes" has to do with providing clothing and external care (see Exod. 21:10).

It is normal for any person to cherish his own body. It is even more to be expected that the Christian will take care of his body. It is possible, however, to cherish one's body but not nourish it. That which is cherished should be nourished. Today, millions of Americans are caught up in diet and exercise programs. They spend a lot of time and money on their body because they cherish it. There are many who neglect their body, others abuse their body with alcohol, drugs, and food, but very few or torture their body. Such behavior would be irrational.

Sadly, at a time when more and more couples are going to marriage enrichment meetings, seeking marriage counseling, and attending couples retreats, far too few husband/wife relationships are being properly nourished. It makes more sense - and it is far more rewarding - to nourish the relationship while it is cherished, than to try to repair it after it has been neglected.

EVEN AS THE LORD. He is the Head of the church, and the church is the body of Christ. Because He cherishes His body, He sent the Holy Spirit to empower it and to nurture it. He is always seeking the edification of the church. He actively seeks to nourish and build up His church.

5:30 - WE ARE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ" (1 Cor. 2:12). The husband who cares for own wife actually cares for more than his own wife. In 5:28 Paul states that the man who loves his wife loves himself - they are, after all, one body. When a man loves his wife, he loves a member of the body of Christ - to which he also belongs (as do all believers).

5:31 - FOR THIS CAUSE. Paul quotes Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." With the word "therefore" Paul is saying, "On the basis of what I have just said, you must conclude that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." The bond between husband and wife is greater than that between parent and child.

5:32 - THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY. "The union of Christ with his church is beyond man's comprehension, and can best be understood by analogy to human marriages" [QV: CNWB]. The "mystery" in the marriage relationship is that the two become one flesh. But, as Paul says here, "This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." The comparison of marriage to the union of Christ and His church is a great mystery. For that matter, The entire area of thought relative to Christ and the church is a mystery - it is a matter which involves divine revelation.

It would be a mystery to many of Paul's readers that he would say that this kind of devotion should be extended by any man to his wife. In the Gentile world this concept was unheard of, and in the Jewish world it was rare. In the Gentile world the wife was the property of her husband. The Jewish wife had few rights, but was not subjected to the some of the indignities a Gentile wife might face. Here God is using Paul to introduce a distinctively Christian view of marriage. Paul is not a male chauvinist and the Bible is not a sexist Book!

5:33 - NEVERTHELESS. "Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband." Paul has presented a clear and compelling defense of Christian marriage. He has used the relationship that exists between Christ and His church to illustrate the love that should exist between a husband and wife. "The union of Christ with his church is beyond man's comprehension, and can best be understood by analogy to human marriages" [QV: NCWB]. Now, in summary, he writes, "...Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." The husband is to love his wife and the wife is to "reverence" her husband. The word does not mean awe in the sense of fear, but genuine respect.

What we see here is a mutually edifying union in which two really become one. Christian

marriage is lifted to a much higher plane than the ancient world knew. It is also on a higher plane than most modern marriages. What a difference it would make if all Christian husbands and wives applied these principles to their marriage!

Now, for a parting shot. In counseling with individuals concerning marriage, I point out that marriage is an institution whereby two become one. Too many couples spend a lot of time trying to find out which one! Occasional someone will say, "Marriage is a fifty-fifty proposition." I try to point out that this attitude opens the door for a lot of trouble. Marriage is not a fifty-fifty arrangement, it is a one hundred - one hundred situation. Each person must give one hundred per cent all the time. It begins with the kind of love expressed here.

3. Children in a Christian home (6:1-4).

6:1 - OBEY YOUR PARENTS. God's instructions for the Christian home is deeply rooted in the Old Testament Scripture. The Jewish background is unmistakable. Paul speaks first of the responsibility of the child to his parents. Literally, the message is, "keep on obeying your parents." Obedience to parents is (should be) the norm in the Christian family. In 6:1-9, Paul applies the same principles he has just applied to husbands and wives to children and to servants. Children are to obey their parents for three specific reasons: (1) it is right; (2) God commands it; (3) it brings blessings.

It is the duty of children is, to obey their parents. Matthew Henry's observations stress that this is an issue with which every generation must deal. Modern man has not progressed beyond his ancestors in these most important relationships. Henry wrote:

That obedience includes inward reverence, as well as outward acts, and in every age prosperity has attended those distinguished for obedience to parents. The duty of parents. Be not impatient; use no unreasonable severities. Deal prudently and wisely with children; convince their judgements and work upon their reason. Bring them up well; under proper and compassionate correction; and in the knowledge of the duty God requires. Often is this duty neglected, even among professors of the gospel. Many set their children against religion; but this does not excuse the children's disobedience, though it may be awfully occasion it. God alone can change the heart, yet he gives his blessing to the good lessons and examples of parents, and answers their prayers. But those, whose chief anxiety is that their children should be rich and accomplished, whatever becomes of their souls, must not look for the blessing of God [21: QV].

This is a very timely message for America at a time when relationships in the family are severely strained. Younger children are often disobedient, older children disrespectful, and youth frequently in a state of rebellion. Teachers report that the lack of discipline in the home is having a devastating effect on many children when they go to school. Parents are complaining that teachers are not teaching their children and teachers respond that in many cases they are having to try to cope with children whose discipline in the home has been sorely neglected.

Some practical advice is in order for parents of young children. All the experts are telling us

that abusive parents were abused children. If you abuse your children they will probably abuse their children. Let me add a word to that. If your children see you neglect your parents, they may well neglect you someday. If you put your elderly (or sick) parents in a nursing home and forget about them, your children may someday put you in a nursing home and forget about you. You may have to put them in a nursing home, but you do not have to neglect them.

You teach your children both by your word and by your example. If you show love and respect for your parents you are teaching your children about family relationships. If you demand obedience and respect from your children but do not show it to your parents you are sending them a mixed signal.

Richard Land is President of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. The Commission sends two regular publications, *ALight*," and *ASalt*" to churches, pastors, and others who are interested. In his president=s column, *APerspective*," in the November-December, 1996 issue Land wrote about the family under the title, *AlT Takes a Village of Families...*" His words are both timely and disturbing.

...Clearly, our children are demonstrating the symptoms of serious parental and societal neglect and while some of the problems have economic dimensions, root problems are moral and spiritual. In one generation, America has degenerated from a child-centered culture (the baby boom children) into a child-abusing one. The baby boomers (children between 1946 and 1964), doted upon as children, have not proven to be, on the average, very good parents. They have been far more prone to divorce, extra-marital sexual immorality, drug use, child neglect and abuse than were their own parents= generation. Far too often baby boomers viewed fathers as optional accessories in the rearing of children, a perspective which all evidence soundly rejects as false.

Our children, often fatherless, even more often neglected, exposed too often to destructive adult role models, have been cast adrift with insufficient moral and emotional foundation to function in healthy, life-affirming ways. Our children are a reflection of the immorality and weakness of the adults to whom they have been exposed. A profligate generations of American adults has sown the wind and now reaps the whirlwind. The only hope for our children and for our country is a nationwide spiritual awakening which leads to a renewal of our families as God-centered homes where parents once again raise their children Ain the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4) [28: 2].

IN THE LORD. This phrase does not mean that children are to obey their parents only if their parents are Ain the Lord." As Paul wrote in Colossians 3:20, a child=s obedience to his parents is pleasing in the Lord=s sight. It is God=s plan for an orderly society, and it is patterned after His relationship with His children.

AIn the Lord" clearly denotes the ideal relationship for parents and children. The healthy and

happy family is the family that is in the Lord." This phrase denotes the area of Christian responsibility. It is also the realm in which the Christian lives (should live) his, or her, life. The Spirit of the living God is the very environment in which the believer lives his life. Some hold that this means that children are to obey parents who are in the Lord. The ideal is for the parent and the child to be in the Lord, but the ideal does not exist in many homes. Some practical applications of Scripture should be made. For example, parents who are in the Lord must teach their children to be obedient, both to their parents and to the Lord. Children "in the Lord" should obey their parents. If their parents are not in the Lord, this may be the most effective way of leading them to the Lord.

THIS IS RIGHT. It is right, or just, in the sight of God to obey one's parents. In Colossians 3:20, Paul writes, "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Conversely, to disobey one's parents is not right, and therefore a sin.

In post-Christian (and post-modern) America, there is a lot of discussion about what is right and what is wrong. During the Christian period of America's history, right and wrong were more easily defined. Beginning in the middle of the Twentieth century, social scientists began exploring the "gray" areas of morality. By the end of the century right and wrong had become a matter to be determined by polls. Right is determined by a majority vote - or poll. Right is a majority of one. New Age ethics have replaced Christian ethics with the masses - even though many are not aware of it.

President Bill Clinton is an interesting case study. How a "sixties" rebel who has made a joke of Christian ethics, used and abused the law, and despised the military could end up in the White House defies the imagination. A draft dodger who loathed the military became Commander in Chief of the armed forces. He has trouble defining "sex," "alone," and even "is," but he knows how to read the polls. When it served his purpose he went to church, waved his Bible, and invited certain ministers to counsel with him, but when it came to applying the principles of the Bible he failed repeatedly. One can picture him at his best - biting his lower lip until a tear appears and then announcing, "I feel your pain." Over and over Americans heard the White House mantra, "for the children." Abortion on demand is for the children? Homosexuality is for the children? Socialism is for the children? Class envy is for the children?

With some notable exceptions, this morality has manifested itself in Congress - and on both sides of the aisles. People struggling to determine what is right, or trying to convince their constituents why they are right.

People will struggle with ethical principles as long as they are on this earth, but let us set this one principle down in granite - that which is right and that which is wrong are both determined by God. He reveals it to us in His Sacred and Holy Word, the Bible. That which pleases God is right and that which does not please God is wrong. Understanding what is pleasing to God and making an application of Scriptural principles require a life-long commitment to prayer, Bible study, and day-by-day experience in walking with the Lord. It is not always easy, but God is always there to guide us and to empower us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

6:2 - HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER. This is the "first commandment with promise." The Second Commandment has a general promise, but the Fifth Commandment alone has a specific promise. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Ex. 20:12, KJV). Failure to honor one's parents will bring a curse. "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother" (Deut. 27:16, KJV). When a child grows up and marries, his relationship with his parents changes, but he still has a responsibility to provide for his parents (I Timothy 5:4).

The word translated "Honor" means "to treat as precious." ASuch an attitude of reverence has a double promise attached to it. Those who act properly toward parents are promised well-being and longevity as a general principle (v. 3)" [18: QV].

6:3 - THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU. Paul actually combines Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16. Two promises are made to those who honor their parents: (1) Athat your days may be long upon the land" (NKJV), and (2) Athat it may be well with you" (NKJV). Paul combined these verses and adapted them in such a way as to take away Athe local and limited reference to the Jews in Canaan and applied it to the godly, everywhere. The promise is always fulfilled, either literally on this earth, or by substituting a higher, spiritual blessing (Job 5:26; Prov. 10:27). The essence and true meaning of the law is eternally valid and in force" [NCWB].

6:4 - FATHERS. Paul addresses only fathers here, but the same principle applies to mothers, and may be applied to others who have responsibility for children (grand parents, guardians). He may have only mentioned fathers here because God expects fathers to be involved in discipline in the home and because what he mentions is a fairly common problem with fathers.

DO NOT PROVOKE. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Children must obey their parents in the Lord, but parents must practice discipline in such a way as to motivate and train the child, as well as to encourage obedience.

The father who honors the Lord will have little trouble winning the love and respect of his children or the sincere love of his wife. Paul also warns fathers in v. 4 to refrain from provoking their children with undue demands. The Golden Rule applies to the home, and children must be treated like people and not things. Fathers are to discipline children (nurture) and counsel them (admonition) in the Lord 23: QVL].

Fathers should avoid provoking their children to wrath. The word translated wrath means to anger, irritate, or enrage. Two extremes must be avoided. First, Fathers must not neglect discipline. Then, Fathers must not be so overbearing that they provoke their children to wrath. James Dobson stresses the fact that parents must bend the will without breaking the spirit. Parents must continually bend the will in dealing with behavior. But they must avoid breaking the spirit by attacking the person.

When a parent says, "No, you may not go to the movie," or "I want you to clean up your room right now," they are dealing with the will. But parents shout, "You stupid idiot! I thought you had better sense than that," they are attacking the person and that breaks the spirit. Abuse is unconscionable, but discipline is essential to the well-being of a child. Dr. James Dobson reports the findings of an interesting study done on school children recently in his film series Focus on the Family.

A group of educators decided to remove the chain-like fences from around the school playgrounds. They believed the fences promoted feelings of confinement and restraint. The curious thing they noticed, however, that as soon as the fences were removed, the children huddled in the center of the playground to play. Conclusion: Children need boundaries [19: # 1643].

BUT BRING THEM UP. Paul states the responsibility of the father negatively, and then positively. Literally, he says, "Stop provoking your children to wrath," but "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This does not mean that the father should not discipline his children. In Hebrews 12:5-22, the Bible teaches that God deals with disobedient children the same way that a wise father deals with disobedient children.

DISCIPLINE AND INSTRUCTION. The NKJV has, "nurture and admonition of the Lord." We might paraphrase it, "bring them up in discipline and admonition of the Lord." The word "In" (en) denotes the sphere in which it all takes place. Discipline refers to the whole education and training of children - both with reference to the mind and morals (education, training, discipline). This verse is a warning to parents

not to direct their children toward the wrath of God. Rather, the parent is commanded to rear the child in the "training" (*paideia*, Gk.), i.e., the nurture, education, and "admonition" (*nouthesia*, Gk.), of the Lord. "Admonition" has the idea of "discipline" (lit., "to put in mind"), which is to remind the child of faults and duties by teaching him self-control [18: QV].

The word translated "admonition" is related to the word for "mind." It was the word for counsel, correction, chastisement, forewarning. It denotes training by words of encouragement as long as that is sufficient, but also by rebuke or reproof is necessary.

"Of the Lord" shows the discipline and counsel to have its source in the Lord. Three things are necessary:

- (1). A personal relationship with the Lord through faith in Jesus Christ.
- (2). A knowledge of the Word of God (commitment to study and obey Scripture).
- (3). The ministry of the Holy Spirit in making an application of God's Word in bringing up children.

4. Servants and masters (6:5-9).

Paul's emphasis on Christian relationships continues, with instructions for servants and masters. The Outline Study Bible rightly interprets the basic issues in life for the believer.

This passage points out in strong terms what the world's problem really is. It is not an economic problem. It is a spiritual problem. Hunger and economic relationships between individuals and nations can only be solved when men turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is Lord (29: 93).

Servants and masters, employers and employees are servants of the Lord. They are all accountable to Him. The first two great commandments and the Golden Rule should guide Christians in their relationship with others, regardless of the circumstances.

6:5 - SLAVES. A "Bondservants" in the NKJV. The word in the original denotes one who is in a state of permanent servitude to another person. The word refers a relationship of dependance to another as in subjugation or bondage. It may seem strange to some that Jesus did not condemn the institution of slavery during His earthly ministry. Paul did not lead demonstrations against this social evil. Rather than condemn slave owners, he instructs slaves to be obedient to their masters. Slavery was a fact of life in the first century and a revolt would have led to mass slaughter of slaves and those who supported them.

WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING. Fear and trembling point to the proper respect the servant should have for a master and recognition that failure to perform his duty would bring punishment. Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God" (Col 3:22, KJV). Fear and trembling are added in the letter to the Ephesians.

IN THE SINGLENESS OF YOUR HEART. This qualifies "obedience." Fear and trembling may be looked upon as a negative motivation. Singleness of heart is a positive motivation. The phrase denotes sincerity. This idea is extended with expression "as to Christ." This places obedience into the framework of Christian motivation.

This principle applies to employees today. How many employees really work for their employer the way a believer should work for Christ? How many Christian employees do this? Jesus taught, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31, KJV).

6:6 - NOT BY WAY OF EYESERVICE. A "Not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." Commentary here is superfluous for most people. Most adults with any experience in the work-place who can illustrate this attitude with story

after story from their observation.

There are those who seek to "curry the favor" of the boss. There are those who slow down when the boss is not looking and speed up when the boss is looking. They are guilty of seeking favor they do not deserve. Such standards rob labor of its dignity and bring ill repute to the name of Christ. When a man returns home from a day's work, there is only one question to ask: Does he merit the approval of his Lord (I Sam. 16:7) [29: 93].

BUT AS SERVANTS OF CHRIST. Paul calls himself the servant, or slave, of Christ as in Phil. 1:1. He belongs to Jesus Christ. He recognizes Christ as the Lord and Master of his life. Every believer, doctor, lawyer, teacher, farmer, or handyman should apply this principle in his daily life. This attitude would revolutionize the world. A good illustration of this attitude is found in the book, *House Without a Roof*, by Maurice Hindus. Chapter 7 is entitled "A Triumph of the Baptists." Hindus found that during some of the most oppressive days of the old Soviet Union Baptists were often received special consideration in some provinces. Managers of collective farms and plants did not report religious activities of Baptists because of their work ethic. They did not pretend to be sick in order to get out of work. They did not come to work on Monday morning "hung over." They were more productive than most other workers.

The manager, or commissar, did not report them because they helped the farm or plant reach its quota. If he failed to reach his quota he would have been punished. These Baptists were severely oppressed, and often persecuted for their faith by one of the most evil regimes in history. Yet they served as though they were working for Christ.

Christ is the final employer who will reward the work done (cp. Mt. 25:23; II Cor. 5:10; Col. 3:25). In this world some are masters and some are slaves; some are honest and some are dishonest; some are rich and some are poor. But in the next world, there will be no such distinction whatsoever. Because of this, a man works cheerfully and zestfully even for an unreasonable employer [29: 93].

DOING THE WILL OF GOD. Even while slaves of men! Social circumstances cannot rob us of an opportunity to express our devotion to God. Each person must do what he can to advance the kingdom of God, regardless of the circumstances.

6:7 - WITH GOOD WILL... AS TO THE LORD. "With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (NAS). This principle applies beyond slavery. We should perform our service as unto the Lord. A lawyer will be a better lawyer; a teacher will be a better teacher; a clerk will be a better clerk and a housewife will be a better housewife. This principle should govern every area of the Christian's life.

Social thinkers are stirring up the masses to force changes in their relationship to state and employers. Some changes are needed, but Christians must pay close attention to the Scripture in these matters. Both employers and employees have the same obligation to do whatever they do

"with good will as to the Lord." Bear in mind that the servants (or employees) and masters (employers) here are Christians, members of one body in which "there is there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11).

6:8 - WHATSOEVER GOOD THING EACH ONE DOES. A Knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. A more literal rendering is "each one if he do any good." The believer who obeys those in authority over him has the assurance that God keeps an accurate record of all faithful service and that no act of service done as unto the Lord will go unrewarded. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

WHETHER SLAVE OR FREE. The ground is level at the foot of the cross - only at the cross. A cynic might say that History is little more than a record of man's inhumanity to man. At any particular time or place there are those who victims of discrimination who target a particular group and blame them for all their difficulties.

Women have often been victims of injustice, but radical feminists target all men as their oppressors. They accused medical science of gross discrimination (and worse) against women, when in fact research and articles on medical problems were tilted heavily in favor of women. Minorities have often been victimized, but unfortunately many minorities spend their life on this earth blaming someone else for their failures.

When I shared with a Jewish friend an article on anti-Semitism he said, "It's a miracle that there is a Jew left alive today." He has a point. I showed the article to a Christian attorney and he said, "Isn't it amazing that many Jews see all of these attacks on Jews as anti-Semitism, when many of them in the Bible are called acts of judgment?" He has a point. Furthermore, many attacks on Jews are committed by other Semitic people.

There will be discrimination and injustice as long as fallen man inhabits the earth. And here is the point: since the Fall nothing has been normal. That is, nothing has been as God intended it to be. Until people understand that sin is the cause of injustice and Jesus Christ is the solution to the problem, there will never be an end to it. When is man going to realize that fact? Unfortunately, not until Jesus returns.

A Sociology professor asked, "What is the cause of the social problems in the world?" He continued, "Preachers say the problem is sin." The way he said it implied that you can dismiss that answer as too simplistic (to put it mildly). But the problem is a spiritual one. Why do some people discriminate against others? With some it is ignorance; with others, fear; with others it is the memory of past offenses. But people who deliberately discriminate against others in a cruel and calloused way are often motivated by something more basic to fallen human nature - greed. A person who is motivated by greed, envy or jealousy will take advantage of anyone who has what he wants, whether it is money, power, or recognition. He may target an individual or a group he sees as an easy mark. He usually does not discriminate - the only color he sees is green.

Does this mean that we are not to try to seek an end to discrimination? No, but it does mean that Christians should be careful to avoid fighting evil in an evil way, such as violence, dishonesty, or reverse discrimination. Christians should not discriminate against others in sinful way. They should also try to avoid becoming a victim of discrimination.

The Christian should also be grateful that he serves a God Who makes no distinction between the bond and the free. With God " There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

To summarize the responsibilities of slaves to their masters, Paul was inspired to write that they must serve with (1) respect (5:33), (2) fear (lit., trembling), (3) sincerity, (4) as a service rendered to Christ, (5) consistently (not only when their eye is on you, but all the time), (6) from your heart, and (7) wholeheartedly. The reason for this kind of service by slaves to their masters is that the Lord will reward them if they serve in a manner that pleases Him. God can accurately and impartially judge both their performance and motivation (see 1 Peter 1:17)

6:9 - MASTERS. God expects no less, and accept no less of masters than of slaves. Masters (bosses, supervisors, managers) should be just in all their dealings. Both masters and servants have the same heavenly Father. He is the heavenly Master Who looks on both masters and servants as His servants.

GIVE UP THREATENING. Christian masters should let up on threatening. Ungodly masters might make a practice of cursing and threatening servants, but the Christian master must always deal with servants in a manner that would honor Jesus. Some threats may be necessary and a Christian master (employer) should not make idle threats. He must deal with the servant (employee) who shirks his responsibility in a fair but decisive manner.

A lot of people today must work under a boss who is abusive and unfair. Unfortunately, some of those bosses are leaders in local churches and they bring that same attitude to church. They can be pleasant as long as people agree with them, but when they do not get their way they attack. A retired denominational worker had observed such a leader in a church in his area over a long period of time. He had seen pastor after pastor try to deal with the man. This man showed enthusiastic support for each pastor until the pastor said (or did) something he didn't like. Then he became offensive and abusive. The retired denominational worker said, "He is just like a rattlesnake. As long as you don't cross his path he's alright. But if you ever cross his path he will strike.

There are pastors who might do well to apply the principles set forth here by Paul in dealing with staff members. A strong leader can be a fair leader, always remembering the Golden Rule in dealing with those who serve under him.

THERE IS NO PARTIALITY WITH HIM. The master was reminded that there is strong motivation for treating his servant with respect: "knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." "Respect of persons" comes from two words meaning

"face" and "to receive." The Lord does not look upon people according to their facial appearance. He does not receive them according to their outward demeanor or looks. The apostles learned this soon after Pentecost when God saved Gentiles as well as Jews. Samuel learned it when God rejected his choice (Eliab, the tall handsome son of Jesse) in favor of his younger brother, David. "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (Sam. 16:7, KJV).

Both servants and masters must submit to the Lord and be grateful that His way is right.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:7-9).

E. Christian Warfare (6:10-20).

This final section (6:10-24) tells us how to live victoriously; how to win the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged. "It is a sad thing when believers do not know the provisions God has made for victory over Satan. Christ has completely overcome Satan and his hosts (Col. 2:13-15 and Eph. 1:19-23), and His victory is ours by faith" [23: QVL].

1. A charge to Christian soldiers (6:10-12).

In verse 10 we find an abrupt change. Prior to this Paul has been dealing with Christian relationships. Here he suddenly, almost shockingly, turns to a new subject - Christian warfare. Actually, he is not changing the subject as much as he is turning to another way of looking at the Christian life.

Satan is a strong enemy, so Paul exhorts us to be strong. Paul knows that the flesh is weak (Mark 14:38) and that we can overcome only in Christ's power. Note that before Paul tells us to stand in v. 11, he commands us in v. 10 to be strong. How do we receive this strength to stand? By realizing that we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies far above all of Satan's principalities and powers (1:19-23), and that the very power of God is available to us through the indwelling Spirit (3:14-21). We must sit before we can walk, and we must walk before we can stand. We must understand our spiritual position before we can have spiritual power [23: QVL].

The Christian's life is a spiritual battle-field. Several things should be noted.

1. The "brethren" are the ones who are charged to prepare for spiritual warfare (vs. 10a).

2. Christians are strengthened only in the Lord (10b).
3. Believers must put on the full armor of God (11:a).
4. The enemy is the devil, (11:b).
5. The battle is not against flesh and blood (12a).
6. Christian warfare is against Aspiritual forces of wickedness,” (12b).

As already mentioned, there is a sudden shift in verse 10. The first half of the epistle portrays vividly the wonders of God's saving grace. In 4:1-6:9 Paul deals with the practical application of the Gospel in every day life. Now in 6:10 there is a sudden change as Paul abruptly begins to warn believers of the Christian warfare he must expect.

Christian warfare is a subject sadly neglected in pulpits across America. AThe silence concerning conflict in the Christian life is responsible for a passive acceptance of the depressions and defeats which are so prevalent in the majority of professing believers” [12: 222].

In Acts 28:16, 30, Luke tells us that Paul spent two years as a prisoner in Rome, living in his own rented quarters, guarded by Roman soldiers. In Phil. 1:13 Paul reports that during this period of imprisonment he came to be acquainted with the entire praetorian guard, whose responsibility it was to guard prisoners of the emperor. He also became acquainted with their armor and the purpose for each piece.

6:10 - FINALLY, MY BRETHREN. Once again Paul addresses the recipients of the letter as "brethren." This is the way he sees his relationship to them. He has no desire to project himself as their superior. He is not writing out of a sense of superiority, but because he is inspired by the Holy Spirit. "Finally" suggests both a conclusion and a commencement. He is concluding his epistle but the message provides truth and guidance they will need in living the Christian life to its fullest.

BE STRONG IN THE LORD. The verb is passive - to receive power. ABe strong” is litterally, to Abe continually empowered.” AThe present, plural participle indicates continual empowering to the corporate Christian community. The following verses (all in the plural) are addressed to the church as a corporate warrior, who needs to put on the complete armor of God. Of course, this corporate effort calls for each member=s participation” [NCWB].

You are not the source of the power you need for spiritual warfare. You cannot empower yourself. God is the source of power and the believer receives that power when he receives the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). That power becomes a reality in the believer's life only when he is filled with the Holy Spirit. In 1:19 he writes, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."

POWER OF HIS MIGHT. Paul exhorted believers to be strong in the Lord and in the might.” The word for might (*kratei*) denotes the “power that overcomes resistance” as used in Christ’s miracles) of God’s inherent strength (*ischyos*; cf. the power [*kratous*] of His inherent strength” [*ischyos*] in 1:19). Hence believers can be strengthened not only by the person of the Lord but also by His resources (cf. Phil. 4:13)” [QV: BKC]. Or, in the power of His sufficiency.

No weakling can stand against Satan. There is no place for a wimp in spiritual warfare. But the victory is not dependent upon our strength, or we would fail. We must recognize our deficiency and His sufficiency. We are assured of victory because of the power of His might. John MacArthur has written a powerful book under the title, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*. He stresses the sufficiency of Jesus Christ to save and to keep those He saves [8: 18ff]. It should also be emphasized that His sufficiency covers the spiritual warfare. In His sufficiency, in His power, we not only survive, we are victorious (we conquer!).

6:11 - PUT ON. This is in the imperative in the Greek, denoting that we are commanded to do this. It is not optional, and it does not just happen, and it is not something that God does for us against our will or without our taking action. The image of the believer putting on something or taking off something is a familiar one in the Pauline Epistles (see Eph. 4:24; Rom. 13:12, 14; I Cor 15:53).

During the time that Paul was chained to soldiers he had an opportunity to observe every detail of his uniform and all his equipment. He knew that the soldier received his equipment from his commander-in-chief, but it was his responsibility to put it on, wear it, and use it correctly. The Christian receives his armor from His Commander-in Chief, but it is his responsibility to put it on and use it effectively. The believer who goes out to battle without the armor of God provides if foolish. He exposes himself to a powerful enemy and he must expect to suffer the consequences. The Lord has never lost a Christian soldier to the enemy, but he has seen a lot of His soldiers battered and bruised because they did not put on the armor He provides.

THE WHOLE ARMOR. The complete armor in this period included shield, sword, lance, helmet, breastplate, and other possibly other items. Paul omits the lance (spear) in this passage, but adds the girdle and shoes to the list. Paul was very familiar with the Roman soldier's armor, having been chained to one for many months. Matthew Henry comments on verses 10-18:

Spiritual strength and courage are needed for our spiritual warfare and suffering. Those who would prove themselves to have true grace, must aim at all grace; and put on the whole armour of God, which he prepares and bestows. The Christian armour is made to be worn; and there is no putting off our armour till we have done our warfare, and finished our course. The combat is not against human enemies, nor against our own corrupt nature only; we have to do with an enemy who has a thousand ways of beguiling unstable souls. The devils assault us in the things that belong to our souls, and labour to deface the heavenly image in our hearts. We must resolve by God's grace, not to yield to Satan. Resist him, and he will flee [21: QV].

Various parts of the armor of the well-armed soldier are listed. The Roman soldier was well trained in the use of the armor. There are defensive parts (helmet, shield) as well as offensive weapons (sword and lance, though not mentioned here). But there is no armor mentioned for the back- the Roman soldier was not expected to need any. He was trained to face the enemy, never turn his back to him. It is said that the first thing the Roman soldiers did when they invaded the British Isles was to burn their boats - right in sight of the ill-equipped defenders of the islands. This showed the attitude of the Roman soldier of the day - he would fight to the death; he knew no retreat. In our spiritual warfare, there is no armor to protect those who turn back on the Lord (or, to the enemy).

THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO STAND. Paul wrote to the Roman church that believers have standing with God through faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1ff). We have standing with God, we must stand up for Him, and we must stand "against" the enemies of God. When we stand with God we must stand against the devil. Satan does not leave you a choice - not does God for that matter. To be a friend of God is to be an enemy of the devil and the world. This passage stresses that Satan is the enemy of Christians and James reasons, "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL. The word (wiles in KJV) denotes cunning devices and relates to methods used by Satan in his warfare against believers. Thus, the Christian is to arm himself against the >methods= of the devil (*diabolou*, Gk., lit. >the one who casts through=)" [18: QV]. The ruler of this world (6:12) has organized the kingdom of darkness against the kingdom of light (Matt. 12:26)" [NCWB].

Satan is powerful and crafty - he knows our strengths and weaknesses - every chink in our armor. Wiles (cunning devices) points to the methods Satan uses to deceive believers. The devil whose very name (slanderer) indicates his character as one who uses every deceitful, cunning method to carry out his evil purpose. Wiersbe says, "We must beware of the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11) which means his strategy, devices (2 Cor. 2:11) and snares (1 Tim. 3:7). He is the ruler of darkness and uses darkness (ignorance and lies) to further his cause (2 Cor. 4:1ff; Luke 22:53)" [23: QVL]. He is right, for Satan is a master at using lies and ignorance to accomplish his purpose.

We are warned about Satan, so we cannot plead ignorance, or innocence. Paul warned, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (II Cor. 2:11). "Having no hope of salvation for themselves, Satan and his fallen angels seek to render man's redemption ineffective in individuals" [12: 223]. Where men are being saved, there Satan intensifies his warfare against believers. We must expect a furious onslaught against all true believers. Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10).

James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988) p. 180) attributes the following illustration to Frank S. Mead.

An ancient story recalls how Satan once summoned his top three aides to plan how to stop a group of dedicated Christians from effective missionary work.

One of the lieutenants, Rancor, said to Satan, "We should convince them that there is no God." Satan sneered at Rancor and replied, "That would never work. They know that there is a God."

Another of Satan's aides, Bitterness, spoke up. "We'll convince them that God does not really care about right or wrong." Satan toyed with the notion for a few moments, but rejected it because he knew that too many Christians know that God does care.

Malice, the third satanic helper, came up with his idea. "We'll let them go on thinking that there is a God and that He cares about right and wrong. But we will keep whispering that there is no hurry, there is no hurry."

Satan howled with glee. He advanced Malice higher in his malevolent organization. Satan knew that he would find this stratagem successful with many, many Christians [19: #3148].

6:12 - OUR STRUGGLE IS NOT. Older students of the Word of God are more familiar with the Authorized Version, "We wrestle not." The NAS renders it, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." Literally, "for us the wrestling is not against flesh and blood." The word points to hand to hand combat. This is serious business and every true Christian is involved, whether he realizes it or not. Some professing believers are no more aware of the attacks of Satan than they are of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Satan does not have to devote too much time to the carnal believer. The world and the flesh can usually keep him occupied. When one is filled with the Holy Spirit and begins to witness for Jesus Christ he will immediately attract the attention of Satan.

FLESH AND BLOOD. This was a term used by Jewish teachers to refer to man as a creature of frailty. There may be many struggles against other human beings, but the warfare intended here is in the spiritual realm, not the human realm.

RULERS. Satan and his demons are real and they are powerful - and make no mistake, they are the enemy of God and everyone and everything God loves. Our arch enemy has already been defeated as Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophesy of Genesis 3:15 when He died for our sins, was raised, and ascended back to Heaven. Today he is empowering and directing our spiritual warfare through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and He is coming again to consummate the victory. "Although Satan and his demons rule the world, they do not rule the universe; their stolen kingdom will be regained by Christ, the rightful ruler, when he appears" [NCWB] .

POWERS. The word is from *dunamis*, the word from which we get the word dynamite. There are two sources of supernatural power: one is God and the other is Satan. The former is unlimited, the

latter though supernatural is limited. Make no mistake about it, Satan=s powers are as real as they are evil; they are as subtle as they are destructive.

I have talked with my brother-in-law, Jimmy Furr, about this many times. He is a Regional Director for the Southern Baptist Interfaith Witness Department (North American Mission Board). He says that one reason many young people have given for leaving the church and experimenting with the occult is that they have seen power in the occult and they have not seen any power in church. Sadly, we have to admit that they may well witness supernatural power in the occult. But many do not learn until it is too late that satanic power is extremely dangerous.

It should also be pointed out to them that while there may well be powerless churches, just as there are powerless Christians, the power of God is not diminished. Furthermore, the only way we will ever overcome the power of the devil is in Jesus Christ, Whose power is without limit.

WORLD FORCES OF THIS DARKNESS. The NRSV reads, "Against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." Paul is saying that the enemy the believer faces is not a human enemy - a governor, prince, or king. The enemy he faces is a spiritual enemy - Satan and all his forces. These Ephesian believers had, in their past, been deeply involved with the "world forces of this darkness," having practiced magic and witchcraft (Acts 19:19). So, "Paul=s mention of evil spirits is quite appropriate. As the Bible explains the kingdom of light, the kingdom of darkness is exposed. Thus, nowhere does the kingdom of Satan come more clearly into view than in the Gospels that deal with Christ, the light" [NCWB].

There can be no doubt that the enemy Paul has in mind is a real personal devil. Satan thinks, talks and acts like a person. Summers is right, "If this brings about the idea of dualism, it must be noted that it is at the most, a limited dualism" [13: 142]. To deny the reality of the devil as a person would create a bigger problem in the area of sin and suffering than are created by granting the reality of such a person. In 4:27 he told Christians to stop giving place to the devil. In 6:11 he speaks of the cunning devices of the devil. In 6:16 he speaks of his fiery darts.

ADD R. G. LEE=S LETTER

WICKEDNESS IN HEAVENLY PLACES. Literally, in the heavenlies, denoting the heavenly sphere, or the sphere of spiritual activities. "Heavenlies" is used five times in Ephesians. It refers to that which is higher than (or beyond) the natural. Satan is the highest enemy of both God and the Christian soldiers. Wiersbe is right on target:

How foolish to fight flesh and blood when the real enemy is merely using that flesh and blood to obstruct the Lord=s work. This is the mistake Peter made in the Garden of Gethsemane when he tried to overcome the devil with the sword (see Matt. 26:51). Moses made the same mistake when he killed the Egyptian (Acts 7:23-29). The only

way to fight spiritual enemies is with spiritual weapons—the Word of God and prayer [23: QVL].

2. The Christian's armor, 6:13-20.

6:13 - TAKE UNTO YOU. Paul's use of this image was easily grasped by the Ephesians, whose mythical heroes were given armor by their gods" [NCWB]. God provides the armor, but the Christian soldier must take up (pick up) the armor. If the soldier does not take up the armor he might as well not have any. It is absolutely crucial that the Christian not give place to the devil" (4:27); that he never leaves any area unprotected and exposed to Satan, the enemy who always know how to take advantage of every opening. God provides the armor, but it will do the Christian soldier no good unless he takes it up and puts it on. The Christian soldier must take action.

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD. The Christian warrior must take up all the armor God makes available to him. In 6:14-20 the equipment listed includes both defensive and offensive weapons. Each piece is important and the wise Christian soldier will put on each piece and use it in the spiritual warfare in which he is engaged (whether or not he believes it, or chooses it). Paul used the metaphor of armor in Romans 13:12; II Cor. 6:4, 7.

IN THE EVIL DAY. The NAS renders it, "So that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." This may refer to the time when the forces of evil are at their peak of operation. There are times when Satan's attacks seem greater in intensity and duration. In Acts 2:40 Peter warned, "...Save yourselves from this ungodly generation," and we can only do that when we are armed with the full armor of God.

6:14 - STAND, THEREFORE. In verses 14-20 we find the eighth long sentence in this epistle. Others are 1:3-14, 15-23; 2:1-7; 3:1-13, 14-19; 4:1-7, 11-16. The imperative "stand" connotes urgency. Having put on the armor of God we are to stand (stand our ground). Never Retreat! When the believer puts on the whole armor of God he is then ready to take a stand against Satan and his forces - to stand in defense against, not to stand in final victory on the victory stand.

This view fits better with the context because immediately after this verse Paul described the armor to be put on. This would be unnatural if he were speaking (in v. 13) of standing in victory. Also, to say that verse 13 refers to standing in victory but that verses 11 and 14 refer to standing in defense is inconsistent. Too, the word **stand** in verse 13 is *antistenai*, "to withstand or stand against" (cf. James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9) [BKC].

The Christian must put on the whole armor of God before he takes his stand, He must know when to take a stand, and when he takes a stand he must stand his ground and engage the enemy in the power of the Lord. How many church members today can accurately identify the "schemes" of

the devil, or tell us how they are engaging the enemy in spiritual warfare? You are engaged in spiritual warfare whether you know it, chose it, or believer it. If you don=t knowing it, you are losing it!

HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH. girding oneself was a sign of alertness and readiness (see Exod. 12:11; cf. Isa. 5:27; 11:5; Luke 12:35). The belt (girdle) was an essential part of the Roman soldier's armor. The belt was a broad belt of leather and metal, or cloth and metal which served a three purposes: (1) It provided support for the back during combat. (2) It held his clothing next to his body so that it would not get in the way in battle. (3) It held his other equipment (sword, small shield) in place.

The phrase "having girded" (*perizosameno*i, Gk.) refers to the way a soldier or laborer in the first-century world would draw his long, loose-fitting undergarment up between his knees and tuck it into his belt so that he might run or work unhindered by the garment, which might otherwise cause him to stumble or be hurt. Living an honest, transparent life according to the truth plays a similar role in the Christian's walk and service [18: QV].

The Christian must put on the belt of truth. Ultimate "Truth" is the truth about God, the Gospel. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). The truth here is doctrinal truth, the truth about Jesus Christ, though some make the point that it refers to the integrity and faithfulness of the witness. Absolute truth, truth without any mixture of error, is the key to victory, but the faithfulness of the believer is also important. All theories, all philosophies, and all principles must be judge by the absolute truth (and in the end all will be). The Bible is essential to victory over Satan.

BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS... The breastplate protected the vital organs. The Christian's breastplate must protect the vital organs of his righteousness. The believer is subject to attack at any time and if he is not on guard, he is vulnerable to the assault of Satan. What is your best protection against slander? Answer - righteousness, righteousness imputed by Jesus Christ. Man's righteousness (the righteousness of the natural man is as filthy rags, Isaiah 64:6; see also, Phil. 3:8-9 and Romans 6:13). If we are not living righteously, we are easy targets for the enemy's darts.

Some hold that this refers to Justification. The Bible Knowledge Commentary states that it refers Anot to justification, obtained at conversion (Rom. 3:24; 4:5), but to the sanctifying righteousness of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30) practiced in a believer=s life. As a soldier=s breastplate protected his chest from an enemy=s attacks, so sanctifying, righteous living (Rom. 6:13; 14:17) guards a believer=s heart against the assaults of the devil (cf. Isa. 59:17; James 4:7)" [QV: BKC].

6:15 - FEET SHOD. Alt is fitting that gospel preaching is typified by the feet because in Greek the word for Agospel" was used in ancient times in connection with a runner (or messenger)

returning from the battle site with news of victory” [QV: NCWB]. See also, Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15. The word Paul used literally means, "to be bound under." Having bound under your feet in readiness of the gospel of peace is the idea. Preparation is a good word, but “readiness” seems to assume the preparation and also indicates alertness. Hobnailed sandals were worn by Roman soldiers so that in hand to hand combat, they would not lose their footing. AThe Gospel shoes not only provide for our security, but they also prepare us for active service as well” [12: 232]. All the specialized athletic shoes today emphasize the importance of the right shoe for the right job.

GOSPEL OF PEACE. The Christian soldier's feet must be shod "with the preparation of the gospel of peace." He must always be prepared for battle with Satan. It is not a matter of being prepared if - but when the devil attacks. Paradoxically, that which prepares the believer for battle with the most vicious, powerful, evil enemy in the universe is "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." In other words he must walk in the Gospel of peace.

Gospel means good news. The Christian Gospel is the good news that faith in Jesus Christ brings the peace that passes all understanding. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). Peace is not a negative term (you leave me alone and i will leave you alone). It is positive and active. It is the attitude that seeks the highest good for others. The believer, filled with the Holy Spirit and walking in fellowship with Jesus Christ, is prepared for spiritual warfare.

6:16 - IN ADDITION. The KJV has, "Above all." Sound the alarm! This is absolutely essential. There are other things to be considered, but Paul will now point out that which is most important. This battle cannot be won with the weapons of the flesh.

THE SHIELD OF FAITH. This is the large oblong shield (about 2.5 x 4 feet) made of alternating layers of bronze and ox hide carried by the Roman soldier. They protected him from arrows, including flaming arrows or darts. Their enemy would dip arrows in pitch and set them on fire and then shoot them at the soldiers. In the metaphorical language of the Bible, the shield generally represents the person of God in His protective care over His people. In other words, God Himself is the shield for His followers.

The shield is our sovereign God; faith is the human responsibility. It is not just what you believe, but also how you believe and in Whom you believe. God was Abraham's shield (Gen 14, 15). In Moses' hymn of praise (Deut. 33:27- 29) Moses reminded Israel that the Lord is "the shield of thy help." To the psalmist the Lord was:

1. Our help and our shield - Psalms 33:20.
2. Behold, O God our shield - Psalms 84:9.
3. For the LORD God is a sun and shield - Psalms 84:11.

God is our shield and we must take hold of Him by faith. Faith is the shield that protects the Christian from the fiery darts Satan shoots at him (Heb. 11:1ff).

6:17 - THE HELMET OF SALVATION. The Roman soldier knew how important it was to protect his head. The Christian's entire thought process must be guarded at all times. The helmet of salvation for the believer is the knowledge and assurance of salvation. The Gospel According to John was written "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." The First Epistle of John was written that we might "know that we know him" (2:3). To be saved and know it makes us "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

Salvation touches past, present, and future. We are saved (Eph. 2:8); we are being saved (II Cor. 1:10); and we shall be saved (Rom. 5:10). We have been saved from the penalty of sin; we are being saved from the power of sin; and we shall be saved from the presence of sin.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. This is the first offensive weapon mentioned (it was also used defensively). "Word" means "the thing said." The thing said is our single most important offensive weapon against the devil. Satan can quote Scripture, but when you quote it in faith, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, you will drive him away every time. James wrote, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (4:7-8).

When (and only when) the believer is walking with the Lord, he can use the Sword of the Spirit skillfully as an offensive weapon. Jesus used Scripture to defeat Satan. We must also use Scripture, but a word of warning is in order. You must never take Satan lightly. "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 1:9).

The Sword of the Spirit is the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. The Christian soldier is more concerned with the "thus saith the Word of the Lord" than he is with the "thus reasoneth the mind of man." He uses the Sword of the Spirit to instruct in righteousness and to rebuke evil, but the greatest use of the Sword is in witnessing for Jesus, both soul winning and in encouraging other believers.

WITH ALL PRAYER. In every generation, the conquering Christian has been a praying Christian. "The one necessity of every good soldier of Jesus Christ is to keep in constant touch with his Commander" [12: 240]. Weapons and armor are essential to spiritual warfare, but there is more:

there must be energy to do the job. Our energy comes from prayer. We use the sword of the Spirit, and we pray in the Spirit: the Holy Spirit empowers us to win the battle. Read again Eph. 3:14-21 and dare to believe it. The Word of God and prayer are the two resources God has given the church to overcome the enemy and gain territory for God's glory. Note Acts 20:32 and Acts 6:4; also 1 Sam. 12:23 [23: QVL].

Recall some of the great victories of the Old Testament. The Old Testament saints were often outnumbered and ill-equipped when compared with the enemy, but when they were of God's side and trusted Him, they were victorious. Think of Abraham, Gideon, Deborah, David, and Hezekiah.

SUPPLICATION. We must utilize every source, tap every resource at our disposal in the spiritual warfare. The Authorized version has, "with all prayer and supplication." There are many times and types of prayer: family, private, public, thanksgiving, emergency, intercession, supplication. We are invited to pray various kinds of prayers at any time, but we must always pray in the Spirit.

The opposite of praying in the Spirit is praying in the flesh, the latter being a form of prayer without power. The weapons of our warfare are spiritual, not physical. So, our prayers must be guided by the Spirit of God, "for we know not what we should pray as we ought" (Rom. 8:26).

PERSEVERANCE. The word appears only here in the Bible, but the attitude and commitment expressed by it are familiar to every student of the Word. Jacob is an early example (Gen. 32). The Canaanite woman in Matt. 15:22ff persevered in her appeal to Jesus to help her daughter. In Luke 18:1, Jesus "spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Paul wrote, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

6:19 - AND FOR ME. Paul requested prayer for himself and for his ministry. "Since the gospel is understood not by men's powers of reason and understanding, but by God's revelation, bold, plain speech is needed" [NCWB]. Paul did not depend upon his own gifts as an orator, or his powers of reason, but upon the Holy Spirit for words to be given to him. With this in mind, he asks for the prayers of his brothers that he might be given the words to preach and teach the mystery of the gospel (3:2-6).

To Paul recognized both the necessity of praying for others and his need for their prayer. E. N. Bounds and Andrew Murray wrote books that challenged generations of Christians to commit themselves to intercessory prayer. Andrew Murray's book, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, is one of the greatest books to found on prayer.

There is a pressing need for intercessory prayer today. There are vast numbers in need of prayer. There seems to be a very large percentage of church members whose prayer life needs attention. Intercessory prayer is one of the most demanding things a Christian can undertake, but he needs to pray and there are many people who need to be remembered in prayer. Following something I either said or did a friend jokingly said, "I'm going to be praying for you!" I shot back, "Thank you. I need the prayer, and you probably need the practice." While we were both joking, I recognize my need to pray and my need for prayer.

6:20 - AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS. Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ in their behalf. It was because of his ministry in their behalf that he was arrested in the first place. We may go back to the time he was "rescued" from the mob in Jerusalem by Claudius Lysias, transferred to Caesarea where he was held for two years and where he made many appearances before governors Felix and Festus, and finally, Herod Agrippa. He finally appealed to Caesar, exercising his Roman citizenship which carried with it this privilege.

Paul was sent to Rome during the off-season, suffered a ship wreck and a winter on a Mediterranean island before reaching Rome. In Rome he was permitted to stay in his own rented quarter under the Praetorian guard (who guarded prisoners of the emperor. He carried on an active ministry while a prisoner, writing letters and ministering to those who came to him."

We should not only pray for ourselves, but we should also pray for our fellow soldiers (6:19ff). Paul was never too proud to ask for prayer. He wanted to have the power to be able to share the mystery (see 3:1-12), the very message that had brought him to jail. "Ambassador in bonds" is a peculiar title, yet that is exactly what Paul was. Chained to a different Roman soldier every six hours, Paul had a wonderful opportunity to witness for Christ [23: QVL].

I MAY SPEAK BOLDLY. If anyone ever did speak boldly, it was Paul. He understated his true feelings when he proclaimed, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1: 16). According to the Bible those who walked with Jesus often spoke with boldness. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

CONCLUSION - 6:21-24.

6:21 - THAT YE MAY KNOW MY AFFAIRS. Paul is bringing this magnificent epistle to a close, and he wanted the believers understand his circumstances, as well as his opportunities, hopes and plans. They would want to know those things and he wanted them to pray for him. This is a good example for Christians today. There are those who care about us; those who are genuinely concerned for our welfare. They would pray for us, but they can only pray for us intelligently and effectively if they know our circumstances - our needs, opportunities, goals.

That is reason enough to keep people informed about your circumstances. But there are other reasons. Their love for us and our love for them are two strong reasons. It is the considerate thing for the saints to do. It is inconsiderate of others for us to fail to do it. Many young people leaving home for college, military, or a career forget how important it is for loved ones to know about their welfare. There may be grandparents, aunts and uncles, or friends who love them and pray for them. Those young people can enrich their lives by staying in touch with them, or hurt them by neglecting them.

Paul is not writing to sing his own praises, but to keep the saints at Ephesus informed - because they cared, and that placed him under an obligation to them. They would pray for him and both he and they would benefit from those prayers.

TYCHICUS. Who was Tychicus? He was "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things." This friend was the one who delivered the epistle to them. Tychicus also delivered the Epistle to the Colossians to that church. Paul sent him to the Ephesians church not only to deliver the letter, but "that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do. Paul depended upon the help of friends like Tychicus at times to carry out some of the responsibilities of his ministry.

The subject of my major writing project for the Doctor of Ministry degree was *Help for Long Term Semi-Disabled Persons*. In it I identify the problem and then show:

1. What the long term semi-disabled person can do to help himself.
2. What his family can do to help him.
3. What his church can do to help him.
4. What a fellow believer can do to help.

There are some things the semi-disabled person does not need. He does not need:

1. The care a totally disabled person needs.
2. Someone to do everything for him.
3. Friends to drop him because he can no longer participate in certain activities (hunt, fish, or golf).
4. To hear what you would do under his circumstances (You know what I would do? I'd sue that doctor!).
5. To be overlooked by the Nominating Committee (there are things he can do, but some things he cannot do).
6. Someone else to decide for him what he can do and what he cannot do.

And above all, he does not need some able-bodied person to say, "If you look around you will find a lot of people who are worse off than you," as though he didn't have enough sense to figure that out. He needs to recognize that fact, but it wears pretty thin when he hears it every time he turns around.

This person needs fellowship with other Christians. He needs respect. The arthritis that slows his pace has not made him a second class citizen in the Kingdom of God. It is important to the believer to make his contribution to his Lord and to His church. but he may need a little help with certain things.

6:22 - WHOM I SENT. Paul was a semi-disabled person. Without fear of contradiction, it can be stated that no one has ever come closer to living the Christian life to its fullest than the Apostle to the Gentiles. But he did need some assistance in order to be most effective in his ministry. This need was compounded at times by health problems, death threats, or imprisonment. As a long-term semi-disabled person, I have been fortunate to have a faithful wife, Becky; two sons, John and Mark; and friends who have helped me. The Lord provided fellow servants to help Paul. Among them were Luke, Silas, Timothy, John Mark, Titus, and Tychicus, who rendered a quintessential service

when it was so desperately needed.

If God did not call you to be a Paul, ask him if He wants you to be a Tychicus. Near the end of his life Charles Haddon Spurgeon needed help in climbing the steps to his pulpit because of gout in both feet. Think what a contribution those people made who assisted him to his pulpit. Over five thousand people packed that sanctuary to hear Spurgeon and they heard the man who has often been called the greatest preacher since Paul. Few of them knew the men who helped him - but God knew them and that is enough.

6:23 - PEACE. Shalom. Paul closes the epistle as he opened it. He wishes and prays for them to have the kind of peace only God provides. This is the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7). It cannot be diminished by circumstances and it always seeks the highest good for others. Of course the highest good any person can receive is to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

LOVE AND FAITH. Paul knows that this peace is available only to the "brethren," so he writes, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." He desires for them faith in Christ accompanied by love of the brotherhood as an expression of it. "From God, the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" denotes the only source of peace, love and faith.

6:24 - GRACE. (see notes on 1:2; 2:8). Paul began the epistle with the greeting, "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Now he closes with the benediction, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Only those who love Him in sincerity really love Him. They are the only ones who will ever really know the peace, faith and grace of God.

APPENDIX I

THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

The doctrine of election has been passionately, and often heatedly, debated for generations, often with a lot more heat thrown on the subject than light. And the argument is not going to go away. The doctrine is alternately referred to as the doctrine(s) of grace, or Calvinism. The doctrine is often summarized in the acrostic TULIP.

- T - Total depravity.
- U - Unconditional election.
- L - Limited atonement.
- I - Irresistible grace.

P - Perseverance of saints.

Those who uncompromisingly embrace all five points of the TULIP are often called Hyper-Calvinists. Many others accept three of the points, but reject unconditional election and Irresistible grace, finding this more consistent with the "Whosoever wills" of the New Testament: "And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17 NKJV).

The Founders Journal (Southern Baptist Convention) has carried a number of very helpful articles on election. I recently downloaded and printed sermons by Rev. Richard Fuller, DD on "Predestination," and "Notes of a sermon" by Rev. Basil Manley, DD, dated, April 8, 1849. These sermons are 13 pages long, single spaced, and filled with provocative material on the subject. Fuller coins the two sides on this issue the "Libertarians" and the "Necessarians" in an effort to persuade people to look at the issues rather than developing a defensive attitude upon hearing the sensitive words that inflame. He said:

In reference to predestination and free agency, there are, only two systems--that of the Libertarians, and that of the Necessarians. These systems seem to our minds not only irreconcilable, but antagonistical. Yet the rejection of either involves us in consequences absurd and impious. And what is still more confounding, the bible, with a directness and plainness admitting of no dispute or evasion, inculcates both of these conflicting doctrines, requiring our unmutilated faith in each, without even noticing the inscrutable difficulty and seeming palpable contradiction by which our intellects are bewildered.

Thus perplexed and staggered, what are we do to?

My brethren, the guide, the arbiter we seek is before us. It is God himself. He understands fully his decrees; he also comprehends man's free agency; and he declares as we have seen, that all our speculations are wrong; that both these doctrines are true; and, of course that there is no discrepancy between them [30: 6-7].

Thomas Ascol, Editor of *The Founders Journal*, wrote a letter to a father who was looking for help in teaching his son on the subject of election. In that letter he gets to the heart of the issue:

The first thing I would do would be to go back to basics. In salvation there are 2 absolute truths that see at times to be contradictory: God is absolutely sovereign - He must do it; Man is absolutely responsible - he is culpable if it is not done. Van Til described these two truths as parallel ropes which extend down to earth from heaven. Though they appear to us never to meet, in heaven they will be seen as one rope which is wrapped around the pulley of divine wisdom.

Because these two truths are certain, two universal principles must always be believed and applied in the area of evangelism:

- 1) We cannot do what must be done.
- 2) we must do what can be done.

[31: 1].

APPENDIX II

Notes and Excerpts form QuickVerse Library - Basic Theology

A. Background Terminology.

The following terms and concepts form the backdrop against which election must be viewed.

1. Omniscience. This means that God has innate knowledge of all things actual and possible. Thus God=s choices were made with the greatest knowledge possible.

2. Decree... The decree of God is His plan for everything. The decree contains many decrees. Decreeing and foreordaining are synonymous theological concepts, but they obviously emphasize

the sovereignty facet rather than the free will aspect.

Scripture teaches clearly that God=s plan includes all things (Eph. 1:11), but it also reveals that the degree and directness of God=s relationship to specific events is varied. Sometimes He directly ordains something (Deut. 32:39; Acts 5:1-11). Almost always He works through the natural laws He has ordained and does not lift them to make exceptions even for believers (Phil. 2:30) [24: QVL].

3. *Sovereign, free.* These synonymous words can only refer to God in the absolute sense. He alone is sovereign and free... ASovereign means supreme, and God always was, is, and will be the Sovereign who freely chose the plan He did” [24: QVL].

B. Direct Terminology.

1. *Election.* Election emphasizes God=s free choice of individuals to salvation (the election of Christ, Israel, or angels are not under consideration here). When Paul uses the verb he uses it in the middle voice, indicating that God=s choice was made freely and for His own purposes (1 Cor. 1:27-28; Eph. 1:4). A

They were chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), and because they are elect they are to live godly lives (Col. 3:12; 2 Peter 1:10) [24: QVL].

2. *Predestination.* To predestine is to preplan a destiny. The word *proorizo* means to mark off beforehand. The death of Christ and its meaning were predestined by God (Acts 4:28; 1 Cor. 2:7). God=s elect are predestined to adoption (Eph. 1:5), to an inheritance (v. 11), and to ultimate conformity to Christ (Rom. 8:28-29).

Biblically, predestination is limited to the elect people and assures their present position and future destiny. Theologically, the term has been used to include all things, that is, as a synonym for the total plan of God. From this theological definition it is an easy step for some forms of Calvinism to use predestination in relation to the destiny of the nonelect. Thus there arises a doctrine of double predestination. However, this is a logical assumption, not based on biblical texts. The Bible is clear that the elect are predestined, but it never suggests that there is a similar decree to elect some to damnation [24: QVL].

3. *Foreknowledge.* The word *proginosko* is used (a) of prior, temporal knowledge (Acts 26:5; 2 Peter 3:17); (b) of God=s relation to Israel (Rom. 11:2); (c) of Christ=s sacrifice (Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:20); and (d) of God=s people today (Rom. 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2).

The debate centers around the question of how much relationship exists in the word "foreknowledge." Does it mean merely that God foreknows in the sense of foreseeing without any relationship? Or, a variation of this, does it mean He foresaw faith and not people? Or, as Calvinism holds, does it mean that He related Himself to people before time in some way so that there is a causative connection which makes foreknow practically equivalent to predestine or foreordain? Clearly people are foreknown, not faith (Rom. 8:28-29). Clearly too foreknowledge as mere perception is not the basis of election, for 1 Peter 1:2 includes a decision on God's part. Election is in harmony (*kata*) with foreknowledge, and that foreknowledge included the procedure used in working out the choice. Therefore, there is some relationship and/or decision inherent in the meaning of foreknow [24: QVL].

C. Opposite Terminology.

By "Opposite Terminology," the author (Basic Theology, QVL Library) means the ideas involved in retribution and preterition. Retribution means deserved punishment, while preterition is the passing over of those not elected to salvation. Both terms avoid the concept involved in double predestination or reprobation which means foreordination to damnation." [24: QVL]. The writer continues:

None of these terms appear in the Scripture, though the idea is clearly taught in Romans 9:18, 21; 1 Peter 2:8; and Revelation 17:8. Therefore, the Scriptures do contain a doctrine of preterition though there is not a decree to condemn in the same sense that there is a decree to elect. Obviously the very idea of election has to include the idea of the greater number out of which they were chosen, and those who were not chosen were certainly passed by.

This in no sense implies that God delights in the destiny of the wicked, or that they are driven against their wills, or that the doctrine of election nullifies a whosoever Gospel, or that any individual can know he is not elect and thereby try to excuse himself for rejecting Christ. *All are accountable to God for their attitude toward Christ* (italics added for emphasis by this writer) [24: QVL].

Let Us Praise The Lord
for
THE SUPREMACY OF GOD
&
THE SUFFICIENCY OF GRACE

APPENDIX III

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

NOTES ON 1:7-8b

O. S. Hawkins preached at the Louisiana Baptist Evangelism Conference, January 28, 1997, at First Baptist Church, West Monroe, Louisiana. Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas recently did some research on Generation X (ages 18-30, also called Baby Busters). He found five common characteristics. They are

1. Searching for meaningful relationships in life.

2. They want immediate gratification.
3. They want something for nothing.
4. They are searching for guilt-free living.
5. They thirst for prosperity but do not have any hope of obtaining it.

First, this is a generation that has come up with both parents working out of the home; many have gone through divorce and have lived with a single parent, or in some cases a series of step-parents and step-brothers or sisters. Some were separated from their siblings. Many grew up in an unstable environment and live in fear of what is going to happen next. They may be asking, "If my parents were divorced, how do I know it will not happen to me?"

Second, they have grown up with radio and television commercials and magazine advertisements; for many, their baby-sitter was a television set. Too many of them know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. They want things and they want them right now. This attitude has been fueled by MTV, movies, and their peers, and they never learned self-discipline and patience from parents and church.

Third, they want something for nothing. When they were growing up their favorite entertainers make millions of dollars for a movie; their favorite athletes make millions of dollars a year for playing games; and their parents dream of hitting it big at the boat or casino - or winning the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes.

Fourth, they are searching for guilt-free living. They have been influenced by Humanistic situation ethics, by New Age relativism, and by pop-psychology that seeks to eliminate guilt feelings while denying the guilt.

Fifth, they are thirsty for prosperity, but have no real hope of obtaining it. They have grown up watching shows about the rich and famous, but they realize that they are the first generation in America which will not be better off financially than their parents. There is a sense of hopelessness with many of them.

We have the answer - we have that for which they are searching and we must share it with them. The answer is expressed quite simply in Ephesians 1:7-8a:

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us..."

1. "In Him" is the relationship. We need special relationships and that is what Christianity is - a relationship, not just a religion. We need an inner relationship - we need to be right with ourselves. We need an outward relationship - a good relationship with others. And we need an upward relationship - a relationship with God. A church sign read: "No Jesus, no peace; know Jesus, know peace." The Lord has the answer to all our relationship needs.

2. "We have" is immediate gratification. In Christ you can have your cake and eat it, too." The

ASweet By and By” is as sweet as ever, but you do not have to wait to experience the benefits of the Kingdom of God.

3. By AGrace” we have something for nothing. You cannot buy what God has for you, and you do not deserve it - but it is yours by grace. Grace is the unmerited love and favor of God. It is free, but it is not cheap. It cost God His only Son and it cost Jesus his life. He poured out His blood at Calvary for lost and undeserving sinners, so it is a precious gift that He offers. See Ephesians 2:8-10.

4. ARedemption” frees us from guilt. Jesus does not treat the symptoms, guilt feelings. He deals with the real problem - the guilt. AIf we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9, NAS).

5. AThe riches of His Grace” is the riches He lavishes on us. Jesus said, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

Do we have the answer? Yes! Then let=s share it - the world needs to hear it.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. KJV - King James Version.
2. NKJV - New King James Version.

3. NASV - New American Standard Version.
4. NRSV - New Revised Standard Version.
5. NIV - New International Version.
6. QV - QuickVerse for Windows 95.
7. QVL - QuickVerse Library.
8. BSB - Believers= Study Bible.
9. MH - Matthew Henry.
10. RSB - Ryrie Study Bible.

David Guzik commentary on Ephesians 1 talks about the work of the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, on behalf of the believer. 1. The character and themes of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. a. Paul's letter to the Ephesians is different compared to many of the other New Testament letters he wrote. Like Romans, Ephesians was not written so much to address problems in a particular church; more so, it was written to explain some of the great themes and doctrines of Christianity.