

## LIVING IN THE MOMENT IS NOT COMPLICATED

By Danny Tunnell

Paul said, "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content." (Philippians 4:11.)

Contentment is never achieved through more possessions or more status. (Luke 12:15.) Because more is never enough. The Bible says, "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance with increase." (Ecclesiastes 5:10.)

Some never see the value of what they have, so they run off looking for something else to satisfy them. Beware of not being thankful for now. Beware of not enjoying now. It is a trick of the devil to rob you of the goodness of today.

You can be content and satisfied in whatever state or situation you are in, provided you are a Christian walking in the light. (Hebrews 13:5; 1 John 1:7.)

Gloria Gaither wrote, "We have this moment to hold in our hands. And to touch as it slips through our fingers like sand. Yesterday's gone, and tomorrow may never come, but we have this moment today."

Don't be like the airline pilot who

told his copilot, "See that lake down there? As a kid, I used to fish in that lake. Every time I saw a plane fly overhead, I wished I was flying the plane. Now as I look down at the lake, I wish I was a boy again, down there fishing."

Life is short. Don't allow Satan to destroy your joy of the moment. Don't allow the devil to steal your enjoyment of today because you are focused on the cares of tomorrow. (Matthew 6:34.)

Some are happy and content until someone comes along and plants a seed of discontentment. This person is not interested in your well-being, but only in trying to get you stirred up. God hates those who sow discord. (Proverbs 6:19.) Be careful who you take advice from. Be careful who you allow to influence you. If the person is bitter and discontent, steer clear!

If you make the mistake of comparing your situation with others you will always be discontented, because there will always be someone ahead of you. And there is always someone who would love to have what you have. With God you can live in a

tiny, little place, eating a can of beans, and driving a thirty-year-old car, and still be happy, being full of peace, and full of joy!

If someone tries to stir you up to make you discontented, don't take the bait! There is nothing Satan loves more than for a Christian to go around discontented, mad at people, and feeling short-changed.

The Jewish Talmud is complicated, containing some 613 laws. However, Jesus certainly simplified things when He taught us to love God will all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourself. He said, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:35-40.)

We can certainly like things, enjoy things, and be thankful for things, but we must never love things. Reserve love only for God and people.

Heed Jesus' words. Love God and people, but not things. That is the key to contentment, to enjoying this day and the moment you are in right now!

— Miami, OK

## OUR DEBT TO THOSE OLDER

By Milton Smith

The Psalmist has written, "Now also when I am old and gray headed, O God do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, your power to everyone who is to come." (Psalm 71:18.) We quickly note the concern that the inspired writer had for the generations that would follow him. He wanted to show God's strength and power to "this generation" and "everyone who is to come."

Our attitude should be the same. It was not so many years ago that I was young, and the older generation was there to teach me the strength, power, and ways of God. I will always be indebted to that "older" generation for doing so.

May we never forget that God's truth must be taught and re-taught to each generation. The aged apostle Peter wrote to the young and old alike, "I will not be negligent to remind

you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me." (2 Peter 1:12-14.) In this passage, Peter strongly emphasizes the need to always remind people of divine truth, even though they may already know these things.

I belong to a generation that has witnessed a change in direction within the church. Beginning several decades ago, attitudes started to change. Less emphasis was given to what the Bible calls "first principles." (Hebrews 5:12.) The Hebrew writer lamented the fact that such "first principles" had to be taught over and over again to some in the church who should have been "teachers" themselves. This tells us

that we do not need to teach only first principles - especially to those who know and honor such simple truths. But if first principles are not being followed and respected, it becomes necessary to teach and re-teach them.

We will always owe the next generation the knowledge of fundamental divine truths. Failure to do so today will bring nothing but trouble tomorrow.

— Tulsa, OK

"And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4.) "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you lie down, and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy 6:6,7.)

# Old Paths

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"ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16)

## Trusting Thomas

By Joe Slater

Poor Thomas! He's singled out as the doubter even though savvy Bible students know the other disciples doubted too. Not that this excuses anything, mind you! I wonder, though, how many remember Thomas' willingness to follow Jesus even when he believed it meant imminent death.

Lazarus had died. The disciples misunderstood just about everything Jesus said about it. "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." (John 11:11.) They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was resting, which would help him recover from his sickness.

When Jesus clarified his words, the disciples still misunderstood. "Lazarus died. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless, let us go to him." (John 11:15.) With 20-20 hindsight, we know Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. But Thomas (and probably the others) thought He meant to go to the realm of the dead, where Lazarus was. They knew Jesus intended to go to Judea where the Jews were planning to kill Him. (John 11:7-8.) If He returned there now, they might very well seize the opportunity to murder him.

Nevertheless, Thomas was willing to accompany Jesus on what appeared to him to be a suicide mission. "Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with Him.'" (11:16.)

I'd like to change his nickname from Doubting Thomas to Trusting Thomas. He manifested loyalty to Jesus even when he sincerely (albeit mistakenly) believed it meant his imminent death! We ought to remember that with admiration as easily as we remember his later doubt with dismay.

— Justin, TX

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?'" (Matthew 16:24-26.)

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21.)

## NOT A SPRINT, BUT A MARATHON!

By Danny Boggs

A motivational poster says, "Success is not a sprint, it's a marathon." God has been telling us the same thing all along! "Run with patience the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1, KJV.) Have you ever watched a sprinter run a race patiently? Sprinters run in frantic, short bursts and finish quickly. Distance runners, on the other hand, run patiently and seize the occasional opportunities to gain ground. During the race they can analyze the effort they've made so far, plan their next moves, and even take refreshment on the way to the finish line.

Spiritually, do you feel like you're running a sprint or a marathon? Paul once told the Galatians, "You were running well; what hindered you . . .?" (Galatians 5:7.) Running the Christian race like a sprint rather than a marathon causes us to develop either a loser-mentality or an inordinate pride. We need to set goals but our results may indicate neither success nor failure. We may hope to bring a certain friend to Christ this year. If our friend fails to make the decision this year to follow Him, have we failed? Or have we done well by planting the seed of the gospel?

In reality the race isn't finished until we die or Jesus returns. Goals are good, so long as they are subservient to the aim of being well-pleasing to God in whatever we do. (2 Corinthians 5:9.) No one wants to run in vain. (Philippians 2:16; Galatians 2:2.) As we endeavor to share God's will in the world, we must trust Him with the results. (1 Corinthians 3:6.) He is able to accomplish His good purpose through us, even when we may think that we have failed. He is even able to work good in the lives of the lost when our motives for sharing the gospel have become less than godly. (Philippians 1:15-18.)

As we continue in the race, we must determine as the Psalmist, "I will run the way of Thy commandments." (Psalm 119:32.) Those who are guided by this way of wisdom are promised, "When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not stumble." (Proverbs 4:12.) Those who "wait upon the Lord . . . shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31.)

Success in Christian life and in the church is not a sprint; it's a marathon. The ultimate success is dependent on God and not on ourselves. "It does not, therefore, depend on him who desires, neither on him who runs, but on God who shows mercy." (Romans 9:16.) Let's make it our goal to be pleasing and faithful to Him throughout life.

— Neosho, MO



**POET'S CORNER**

By Dalton Key

**OF BOOKS AND COVERS**

My mirror is mistaken in what it shows to me,  
The me I see not even close to true;  
I'm fooled by my reflection and what my eyes  
can see,  
The same should shape the way I look at you.

There's more to you than meets the eye,  
You're more than you appear;  
Beneath, behind your clear disguise,  
Lies truth I needn't fear.

It matters little how you look,  
The color of your skin;  
You're not the cover, you're the book!  
You are the you within.

The poorest may be wealthy (I know it may  
sound odd),  
And beauty may be difficult to chart;  
How sweet would be, were we like God,  
Who sees and loves the heart.

**WOULD YOU?**

It's never right to do what's wrong,  
I wouldn't have you lie;  
But just because a thing is true,  
Does not give you the right,  
To spew forth words that wound a soul,  
Even though they're true;  
The Golden Rule comes into play,  
Would you want it said to you?

**SISTER BIZZY**

Sister Bizzy is a member  
Of the church where I attend;  
In most respects she's priceless,  
On her we all depend.

When saints are gathered she is there,  
Faithful in her pew;  
She sings and gives and bows to pray,  
One of the "faithful few."

But Bizzy has a flaw, you see,  
It's known from north to south;  
The rumors just start flying,  
When she opens up her mouth.

Ol' Bizzy seems to stick her nose,  
In business not her own;  
And then repeats what're she hears,  
In whispers on the phone.

Yes Bizzy Body is her name,  
It seems she's everywhere;  
Could she be sitting, as we speak,  
Snugly in your chair?

EDITORIAL . . .

**DON'T FORGET!**

By Dalton Key

Peter wrote, "For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease." (2 Peter 1:12-15.)

When asked what learning was the most necessary, Antisthenes replied, "Not to unlearn what you have learned." The Greek philosopher had a point. Remembering what we have already learned, what we should already know, is essential. But it can also be frustrating.

In the words of one wit, "A man's memory is what he forgets with."

The truths of the Bible must be learned, relearned, and learned again over the course of a lifetime. Many of us have heard and read and studied the Bible for years. Yet how much of this marvelous book do we remember? How many of the great events of the Old Testament can we recall? How many rich, New Testament texts can we locate? Can we show someone the plan of salvation as laid out in Scripture?

Paul writes of the gospel, "by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you - unless you believed in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:2.) To "hold fast" to this message requires our having not only a memory of it but an understanding and an allegiance to it as well.

You say you can't remember the Bible? Don't blame your brain. A recent article in Scientific American estimates the brain's storage capacity to be equal to 2.5 petabytes. One terabyte is equal to 1000 gigabytes; one petabyte is equal to 1000 terabytes. Without getting into matters of higher mathematics, let's just say that the brain has plenty of space for whatever Bible knowledge you'd like to store there. Barring impairments of disease, advanced age, or illness, you and your brain should be up to the task.

And yet you still say you can't remember the Bible?

I wonder? could it be that we remember more easily what we have a deep and intense interest in? Don't we all tend to remember best what we love most?

If we have little difficulty recalling sports scores and recipes, birthdays and anniversary dates, surely we can do a decent job at remembering the basics of the Bible.

The Psalmist proclaims, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." (Psalm 119:11.) God's word should be more than merely in our homes or on our shelves. It must be in our hearts! And how is this possible? "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day." (Psalm 119:97.)

Don't forget: we remember best what we love most.

**REBELLION AND REMEDY**

By Bobby Key

There was rebellion in the camp. The way had been hard, and the people were discouraged. Complaining about food, water, and hardships of the journey now turned into speaking against their leader, Moses. In fact, it went further and turned into speaking against Almighty God.

Punishment was equally swift. Fiery serpents appeared among the people, and by their bites the Israelites began to die. "We have sinned," the nation cried. "Save us. Take away these snakes!" Their plea was presented to God by an interceding Moses, and a gracious God hearkened unto them. "Make a fiery serpent. And it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he sees it, shall live."

Those who did as they were told, lived. (Numbers 21.)

More is embraced here than just an historical event. Christ says this is an analogy of the redemption of fallen man. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:14,15.)

Sin is the deadly malady that has spread through the world. Wherever man is found, there sin is found also.

Like the venom from the snake, sin is deadly. Victims died from the venom. In a more awful way the victim of sin pays the penalty of death.

Remedy for both snake bite and sin are prescribed by the Lord. The Israelites could not heal themselves; neither can we!

They escaped punishment just as we will, by heeding heaven's

instructions! - (1929-2018)

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:16.)

"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38.)

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16.)

"There is also an antitype which now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 3:21.)

**CARING FOR OUR OLDER LOVED ONES**

By Joe Dale Wilson

Older people have lived their adult lives making their own decisions. They have developed an attitude or resolve of being their own boss. They have grown comfortable with the way things are at their home and are not quick to make changes. This makes them strong-willed because that is a part of their survival mode in life. At the same time they may have developed hearing and eyesight problems, and are often dependent upon medications. Others become disabled and unable to get around. Some begin to have memory problems and when this happens it is imperative that the children step in and help organize their life to a better plan. Others become physically unable to care for themselves and need help. In these cases they might not want help but they need it.

"But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God." (1 Timothy 5:4.) The word translated "parents" means generally any living relative and is not limited to parents or grandparents, although that seems to be in agreement with the beginning of the verse. Such actions are considered "good and acceptable" in the sight of God. This is the reason that McCord translated the passage, "But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show respect for their own family, and

to repay their parents. This is pleasing in God's sight." The inspired writer went on to say, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8.) No matter how faithful a person claims to be, faith is only seen when it is active and productive in the family setting. (James 2:14-17.) A person can do many things that are great works, but if he does not show care and concern for his family, he is in worse shape than an unbeliever. Many excuses are often offered for not caring for parents or grandparents: "I'm too busy;" "I live too far away;" "My family needs me;" "You know we did not always get along well;" etc. Excuses will not save us! If you are the only one living near the relative that has a need, you will need to keep the others informed and ask them for help.

Caring for an older person is not an easy task because they can be a real handful at times. It is easy to lose patience with them. "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (Galatians 6:9.) We have to keep in mind our labor of love for those who cared for us when we were young. We are bearing "one another's burdens" and fulfilling "the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2.) If you are the only caregiver find someone

who can give you some time off and allow you to take care of yourself. It is a very difficult thing to take care of failing parents or even a husband or a wife. Ask for help from your family, and from the church. It is not a sign of weakness but shows that you need to be refreshed so you can do the best you can for the ones you love.

It is a good idea to remember the Golden Rule in dealing with the older ones, as one day soon we will be there too. (Matthew 7:12.) As we grow older we should also strive to grow more understanding and sweeter, especially toward those who are trying to help us!

— Vernon, TX

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