

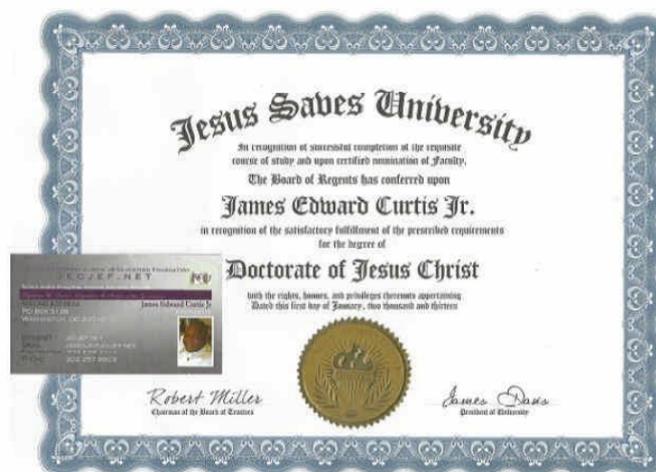
THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER,
A CHRONOLOGICAL MEMOIR OF A CHURCH FORMED BY JAMES EDWARD CURTIS JR.,
WRITTEN BY JAMES EDWARD CURTIS JR
DECEMBER 31, 2013, EDITED MARCH 7, 2014

Church State University 2013 Charter

*Recognition of a Chronological Memoir of a Church Formed
sufficiency for Eldership. It is conferred upon*



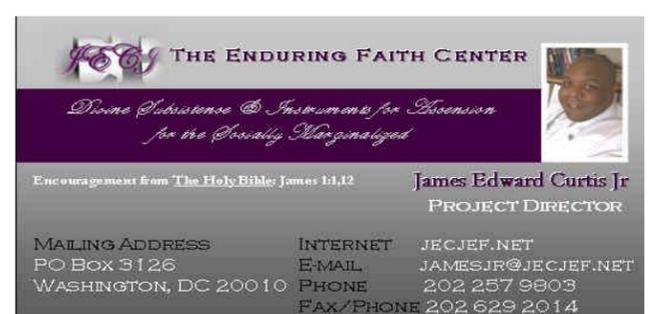
JAMES EDWARD CURTIS JR., HONORARY DOCTORATE OF DIVINITY



JAMES EDWARD CURTIS JR., DOCTORATE OF JESUS CHRIST

IS PSALMS 51:5 (SHAPEN IN INIQUITY) AND GENESIS 1:27 (CREATED IN HIS IMAGE) CONSISTENT? IS A 'COOKBOOK' EXPLANATION FOR BIBLICAL BROWNIAN MOTION CONSISTENT WITH THE 'GOOD NEWS' OF JESUS? WHAT IS THE LESSON FROM POSSIBLE SAD-TECH/SAD-SAS/SAD-SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL PROGRAMMING, WHERE POSSIBLY SHUNNING THE IMAGES OF HAPPY "TECH" IS NOW A SUBSET OF SAD-PROGRAMMING? WHY POSSIBLY PROGRAM LEARNING AND DISCERNMENT PROCESS FOR 'JUST-IN-TIME-TO-IMMEDIATELY-EXPLOIT- RETROACTIVELY' (HA-HA)? IS IT WRONG TO WANT TO KNOW THE 'CRITICAL UNIQUENESS' OF THE CREATIONS OF THE 'CREATOR'? DOES HE/SHE/THEY BELIEVE IN EFFICIENT INEFFICIENCY IN THE SOCIAL PROGRAMMING OF THEIR SUBJECTS? WHY? RE-ENGINEERING/SAS-PATCHES? IS ECCLESIASTES 10:19B (NIV: MONEY IS THE ANSWER FOR EVERYTHING) AND 1 TIMOTHY 6:10 (NIV: FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS A ROOT OF ALL KINDS OF DISTRACTIONS. SOME PEOPLE, EAGER FOR MONEY, HAVE WANDERED FROM THE FAITH AND LOWERED THEMSELVES WITH MANY GRIEFS) CONSISTENT? ARE THE FOLLOWING PERFECTLY CORRELATED AND WHY: WORK EXPERIENCE, CHURCH MEMBERSHIPS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, RESOURCE ENDOWMENT/ACCUMULATION QUALITY OF LIFE OF INDIVIDUALS/ENTITIES. THIS PAPER PRESENTS THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER, A CHRONOLOGICAL MEMIOR OF A CHURCH FORMED BY JAMES EDWARD CURTIS JR, WRITTEN BY JAMES EDWARD CURTIS JR, ANSWERING SOME OF THOSE QUESTIONS.

C00 F00 F03 J00 K00 N00 N10 Z10



The Outline

1985-2014	Resume: The Enduring Faith Center, A Ministry of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
2002 - 2014	Resume: The Credentials of James Edward Curtis Jr
June 2005 –March 2006	Syllabus: Spiritual Transformation Program
February 10, 2006	Testimony: A Testimony of the Central Union Mission Social Work
April 28, 2006	Chart: Genesis 5, 11 of <u>The Holy Bible</u> : Adam to Noah
May 25, 2006	Leadership: Spiritual Transformation Program Graduation Certificate
February 24, 2007	Leadership: Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons
March 24, 2007	Leadership: Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons
April 28, 2007	Leadership: Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons
May 25, 2007	Administration: 8 AM Flyer
May 2007 – July 2007	Administration: 8 AM Service Schedule
May 26, 2007	Bible Commentary: How to Respond to Leadership
May 26, 2007	Leadership: Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons
June 18, 2007	Bible Commentary: Use It Wisely (God & Earth)
June 23, 2007	Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons
July 2, 2007	Bible Commentary: Ignoring God A Commentary
July 16, 2007	Bible Commentary: Taking Out the Trash A Commentary
July 23, 2007	Bible Commentary: Grace/My Heart Condemns Me A Commentary
July 30, 2007	Bible Commentary: Unchanging Love A Commentary
July 30, 2007	Bible Commentary: A Good Stretch A Commentary
July 30, 2007	Bible Commentary: The Lingo A Commentary

 THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER		
<i>Divine Providence & Instruments for Discernment for the Socially Marginalized</i>		
<small>Encouragement from The Holy Bible; James 1:1,12</small>		James Edward Curtis Jr PROJECT DIRECTOR
<small>MAILING ADDRESS</small> PO BOX 3126 WASHINGTON, DC 20010	<small>INTERNET</small> E-MAIL PHONE FAX/PHONE	<small>JECJEF.NET</small> <small>JAMESJR@JECJEF.NET</small> <small>202 257 9803</small> <small>202 629 2014</small>

The Outline (Continued)

August 25, 2007	Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons
September 2, 2007	Bible Commentary: Grace
September 10, 2007	Bible Commentary: Job's Birthday A Commentary
September 19, 2007	Bible Commentary: The Faithfulness of God A Commentary
September 24, 2007	Bible Commentary: All Rise A Commentary
October 8, 2007	Bible Commentary: Be Coachable A Commentary
October 15, 2007	Bible Commentary: Costly Gift A Commentary
September 22, 2007	Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons
November 19, 2007	Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons
November 19, 2007	Bible Commentary: Don't Worry A Commentary
November 26, 2007	Bible Commentary: Hiding My Face A Commentary
November 28, 2007	Bible Commentary: The Birth of Jesus
December 10, 2007	Bible Commentary: Be A Star A Commentary
December 17, 2007	Bible Commentary: Forever Joyful A Commentary
December 19, 2007	Leadership: State of the 8 AM Service Address
January 31, 2013	Bible Commentary: Service
February 14, 2008	Bible Commentary: Love
February 19, 2008	Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons
February 28, 2008	Bible Commentary: Manhood
February 28, 2008	Leadership: The Goals and Objectives of The Men's Ministry
March 20, 2008	Bible Commentary: Joy
March 27, 2008	Bible Commentary: Reconciliation
March 31, 2008	Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons
April 2, 2008	Leadership: Bible Fundamentals Diagnostic Exam
April 3, 2008	Bible Commentary: Stimulating Stewardship
April 17, 2008	Bible Commentary: Suffering
April 21-25, 2008	Syllabus: Old Testament RBC/Christian Courses
June 15, 2008	Administration: Father's Day "Unleashing the Real You"
June 12, 2008	Bible Commentary: Service
July 3, 2008	Bible Commentary: Worry
July 10, 2008	Bible Commentary: Grace
July 17, 2008	Bible Commentary: Prayer
July 18, 2008	Administration: 8 AM Church Bulletin
July 24, 2008	Bible Commentary: Hope

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The Outline (Continued)

August 3, 2008	Bible Commentary: Joy
August 3, 2008	Bible Commentary: Hope A Summary
August 7, 2008	Bible Commentary: Overcoming
August 27, 2008	Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons
September 24, 2008	Administration: 8 AM Service Schedule
November 17, 2008	Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons
December 20, 2008	Leadership: Certificate of Ordination
December 28, 2008	Bible Commentary: Service
January 19, 2009	Administration: National Day of Service
August 3, 2009	Bible Commentary: The Good News
August 19, 2009	Bible Commentary: I am Growing in God
September 2009 – April 2012	The Internet Church: The Enduring Faith Center A Ministry of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
November 27, 2009	Bible Commentary: Unanswered Questions
March 29, 2010	Leadership: A Divine Discussion
April 3, 2010	Bible Commentary: Thankfulness and Inspirational Communications
April 14, 2010	Leadership: Ministry Leadership Training
April 14, 2010	Audio Visual Videos, Ringtones & Hymns: “No Not One”
April 14, 2010	Audio Visual Videos, Ringtones & Hymns: “Holy Holy Holy”
May 12, 2010	Bible Commentary: Developing Hope Through Giving Thanks
May 19, 2010	Bible Commentary: Faith Yet Subjected to Feuding
June 15, 2010	Leadership: The Goals and Objectives of The Men’s Ministry
June 23, 2010	Leadership: Faith-Based Employment Training
August 4, 2010	Leadership: Ministry Leadership Training
September 24, 2010	Leadership: Evangelism Training
August 29, 2011	Leadership: Faith Employment Training Graduation Speech
April 6, 2012	The Internet Church: The Enduring Faith Center A Ministry of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
January 1, 2013	Leadership: Recognition of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
January 1, 2013	Leadership: Recognition of James Edward Curtis Jr, President of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
June 27, 2013	Leadership: Recognition of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
Appendix	Advanced Devotion Topics

 THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER		
<i>Divine Providence & Instruments for Edification for the Socially Marginalized</i>		
<small>Encouragement from The Holy Bible: James 1:1,12</small>		James Edward Curtis Jr PROJECT DIRECTOR
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1985-2014

Resume: The Enduring Faith Center,
A Ministry of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation



THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER

Grace Video Sermons
Growth in God Video Sermons
Faith Men's Ministry
Served by Faith Video Sermons
Slovak Holiness Video Sermons
What is Your Business? Is It Jesus? Working Paper Video Sermons
Did Moments in the Life of James Curtis Jr. Make Ministry Sermons
The Holy Bible
Jesus on the Matched Register

THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER The Internet Church at jecjef.net/faith The Enduring Faith Center
A Chronological Memoir of a Church Formed by James Edward Curtis Jr. written by James Edward Curtis Jr.

THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER The Internet Graduate Divinity University

FAITH/OUTREACH OF THE JAMES EDWARD CURTIS JR EDUCATION FOUNDATION

THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER

The Enduring Faith Center activities
The Enduring Faith Center Model Structure Service Center Interfaith Oversight Organization
James The Epistle eCongregations for Jesus Christ Oversight Organization
Saint James The Apostle Congregants for Christ Jesus Oversight Organization

BIBLE COMMENTARY
ELDERSHIP EDUCATION
JESUS CHRISTOLOGY STRUCTURES
OUTREACH/VOLUNTEERISM



THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER

*Divine Subsistence & Instruments for Discipleship
for the Socially Marginalized*

Encouragement from The Holy Bible: James 1:1,12



James Edward Curtis Jr
PROJECT DIRECTOR

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	FAX/PHONE	202 629 2014

THE FAITH DISTINCTIONS OF JIMMY JAMES EDWARD CURTIS JR
Former Associate, cum jpw pb coz gmhc sogocm nbc wcc mbc nsbc mbc vbc , 1975-2010
Inspirational Soloist , Musician, Singer, Orchestra Marching Band Jazz Band Choirs, 1985-2014
Non Denominational University Gospel Choir Tenor, 1992
Non Denominational University Rankin Chapel Attendance Coordinator, 1993
USA Israel International Delegate, 1995
Church Member & Tithing Giver Lender, 1998-2014
Missionary Baptist Church Men's Ministry, 1998
The Holy Bible Independent Study, 2001-2014
The Enduring Faith Center eArchives, Geocities Officelive Yahoo! YouTube1&1 jecjef, 2002-2014
The Enduring Faith Center Internet Campaign Initiated, 2002
Bible College Faculty Instructor Selectee, 2004
American Baptist Churches, National Capital Baptists Regional Delegate, 2005, 2009
American Baptist Churches Certificate of New Birth, 2005
Christian Missionary, 2005
Christian Mission Food Servant/Training, 2005
Christian Disciple/Discipleship Training, 2006
Christian Mission Devotion Leader, Chapel Assistant, Pastor's Assistant, 2006
Christian Mission Spiritual Transformation Program Graduate Certificate, 2006
Interfaith Commentator/The Holy Bible Commentaries, 2006
Baptist Church Educator/Training, 2007
Baptist Church Food Servant/Training, 2007
Baptist Church Greeter/Greeter Training, 2007
Baptist Church Men's Ministry Co-Chair, Board Secretary, 2007, 2010
Baptist Church Morning Service Administrator, 2007
Baptist Church Trustee Deacon/Elder Deacon Training, 2007
Christian Mission Capital Campaign Financial Contributor, 2007
Christian Mission Employee Service Award, 2007, 2008, 2009
Christian Mission/Baptist Church Member Transportation Provider, 2007
Christian/The Holy Bible Historian/Bible Historian Training, 2008
Christian/Pentecostal Church Historian/Church Historian Training, 2009
Baptist Church Bible College Form Administrator, Scholarship Founder, Faculty Selectee, 2009
Baptist Church Bible Study Teacher, Sunday School Teacher, Vacation Bible School Teacher, 2009
Baptist Church Baptism Assistant, 2009
Baptist Church Funeral Usher, 2009
Baptist Church Ministry Leader/Ministry Leadership Training, 2009
Baptist Church Trustee/Church Membership Coordinator, Giving Software Designer, 2009
Baptist Church Web Host/Web Hosting Training, 2009
Interfaith Oversight Organization, Christians Baptists Mission *Portfolio Designer*, 2009-2014
Praise Curriculum Founder/Teacher, 2009
The Enduring Faith Center Project Director Educator Musician, 2009
The Enduring Faith Center Videos, Working Papers, Correspondences, Internet Issues, 2009
Christian/Pentecostal Professional/Professional Training, 2010
Non Denominational Evangelist/Evangelism Training, 2010
Interfaith Ministry Leader/Ministry Leadership Training, 2010
The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation EIN, 2010
Interfaith Executive/Executive Employment Training, 2011
Interfaith Mission Based Entrepreneur/Entrepreneurship Training, 2011
Christian/Pentecostal Pastor's Aid Selectee, 2011
The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation, Agency College Institute Charter, 2012
Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy, History Law Economics Accountancy, 2012
Interfaith Oversight Organization, The Enduring Faith Center, *Service Center*, 2012-2014
Continual Learning, JDM.ORG Visionary Leadership Webcast Conference Participant, 2013
Doctorate of Jesus Christ, Jesus Saves University, 2013
The Enduring Faith Center, Church State University Charter, 2013
The Enduring Faith Center A Chronological Memoir of a Church Formed, 2013
Honorary Doctorate of Divinity, Church Development, Comparative Theology, Musicology, 2013
Honorary Elder, The Enduring Faith Center, 2013
Honorary Apostle, The Enduring Faith Center, 2014
Interfaith Oversight Organization, James The Epistle eCongregations for Jesus Christ, 2014
Interfaith Oversight Organization, Saint James The Apostle Congregants for Christ Jesus, 2014
Director, JECJEF Libraries JECJEF Paraphernalia JECJEF Special Events Equipment, 2014



THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER

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for the Socially Marginalized*

Encouragement from The Holy Bible: James 1:1,12



James Edward Curtis Jr
PROJECT DIRECTOR

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	FAX/PHONE	202 629 2014

The Chronological History of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation® April 15, 2010



- 1990 1st vision of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 1993 1st verbal communication of the vision of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2001 1st email communication of **The Strategic Plan** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2002 1st internet site* of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation (http://www.geocities.com/jecjr_educationfoundation)
- 2009 **September 15 – current: 2nd internet site**** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation (<http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>)
- 2009 **December 5 – current: 1st video (Growth in God)***** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2009 **December 19:** 1st Potential Business Plan of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 **January 1:** Titling the potential service facilities of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation as 'The Enduring Faith Center'
- 2010 **January 3– current: 2nd video (Jesus Saves)***** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 **January 9:** Reconfiguration of the strategies of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation, entitled 'January 2010 Summary'
- 2010 **February 21 through April 4:** The President and 1st Official of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation notified family, Pastors and Ministers of the internet site information (<http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>)
- 2010 **March 11 & April 4:** James Edward Curtis Jr received **Pastoral counsel** from Pastor Greg Strong and Pastor Stephen Tucker, respectively, concerning the The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 **March 27 & March 31:** The first **Executive Summaries** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation were provided to unaffiliated Pastors, which included the Potential Business Plan, Cost of Living Model, Blessings writings, and Technical Notes.
- 2010 **March 28:** The second design of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation **business card** was produced.
- 2010 **April 3:** James Edward Curtis Jr organized and compiled the **April 2010 Portfolio** of recent progress Concerning The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation, consisting of a Table of Contents, January 2010 Summary, Internet Screen Prints, 2002 Strategic Plan, Executive Summaries, Potential Business Plan, Technical Notes, Cost of Living Model, Blessings writings, Resumes & Transcripts, and Business Contact Info
- 2010 **April 5:** The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation obtained its **Employer Identification Number (EIN: 27-2267541)** from the United States Internal Revenue Service, with James Edward Curtis Jr named as the Sole Proprietor.
- 2010 **April 5:** James Edward Curtis Jr has participated in constructive social outcomes since 1987; However, The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation provided its first documented service to the homeless by providing **dry cleaned clothing to homeless**, near the Salvation Army in Northwest Washington, DC.
- 2010 **April 7:** The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation **requested paperwork** from the US Internal Revenue Service to apply for **501(C)(3) tax-exempt status**
- 2010 **April 7:** The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation completed paperwork for a **bank account** temporarily dedicated to potential finances for the operations of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 **April 10:** The Founder, Owner, President, and 1st Official of the James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation began pursuing **further credentials to effectively administer potential finances and potential clients.**
- 2010 **April 12:** The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation produced its **first official request for financial resources** [request number 00000004122010] and initiated the process of creating request for support packages to local leaders
- 2010 **April 14:** The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation began the process of organizing the preliminary faith writings of James Edward Curtis Jr into **A Basic Bible Commentary® of James Curtis** for refinement & copyrighted, fee-based distribution
- 2010 **April 29:** The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation received critical information concerning the **evangelism strategy** of distributing daily devotions and the **research strategy** of analyzing social needs/resolutions to social needs using statistical software
- 2010 **April 30:** James Edward Curtis Jr organized and compiled an **Electronic April 2010 Portfolio** of recent progress of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 **August 16-current: 3rd video (Scriptures)***** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation 2010
- 2010 **August 18-19-current: 4th video (Saved by Faith)***** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 **August 26:** 1st **Brochure** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 **August 29-30-current: 5th video (Grace)***** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 **September 2:** internet and domain space rented from 1and1.com for the The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 **September 3:** The Enduring Faith Center (jecjef.net) launched based on *James 1:12a* and divine inspiration
- 2010 **September 3:** The Enduring Faith Center (jecjef.net) initiated street evangelism by distributing a \$20 phone card and inspirational literature (on your greatness)
- 2010 **September 5:** James Curtis Jr officially pronounced Project Director of The Enduring Faith Center (jecjef.net) and business cards are printed

When will a **\$25,000,000** financial vision of the initial finances of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation manifest? Donate to The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation; email enduringfaith@jecjef.net or call (202) 257-9803 !

- * In 2002, the 1st internet site of the James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation was launched due to the free internet space provided by Yahoo Geocities (discontinued)
- ** In 2009, The 2nd and current internet site of the James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation launched due to the generous free internet space of Microsoft Office Live
- *** In 2009-2010, The videos of the James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation were launched due to the high-quality software from Windows Movie Maker, AT&T wireless internet services, ACER computing hardware owned by James Edward Curtis Jr & generous free internet-video space provided by Yahoo Video. Furthermore, the 1st video & 2nd video of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation are linked to the current internet site of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation (jecjef.net, formerly <http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>) due to the generous free internet space of Microsoft Office Live.

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<small>MAILING ADDRESS PO BOX 3126 WASHINGTON, DC 20010</small>	<small>INTERNET E-MAIL PHONE FAX/PHONE</small>	<small>JECJEF.NET JAMESJR@JECJEF.NET 202 257 9803 202 629 2014</small>

2002 - 2014

Resume: The Credentials of James Edward Curtis Jr

April 2010 – present, The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation ®

James Edward Curtis Jr is the *President, Director of Operations, Research Economist, Bookkeeper & Educator* for The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation ®, and James Edward Curtis Jr is *Project Director* of The Enduring Faith Center, services include *evangelism, outreach, education, research*

President & Bookkeeper, The responsibilities of James Edward Curtis Jr, the President & Bookkeeper for The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation ®, include but not limited to, (1) creating and updating internet correspondence, and sending, receiving and documenting mail, email, faxes, and phone calls, (2-a) depositing funds and (2-b) maintaining financial records (3) researching and presenting trends, particularly, in inequality, (4) transitioning the Foundation from minimal financial, human and physical infrastructure to sufficient and necessary financial, human and physical infrastructure, (5) establishing a niche and effectively communicating and defending niche services to contributors and reviewers of basic services, (6) providing tools and services for ascension and overcoming difficulties, (7) bolstering and maintaining documents sufficient and necessary for basic services to continue, and (8-a) effectively communicating needs to supporters of the aims of the Foundation, and (8-b) maintaining/updating equipment/supplies for effective functioning of the Foundation

Research Economist, James Edward Curtis Jr is the Research Economist for The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation ®, including

Curtis Jr, James Edward, “Long-Run Differences in Wealth: A Microdata Analysis of US White-Black Differences in Wealth Directly after Mass Emancipation of Southern Slaves”, Working Paper, December 1, 2002.

Curtis Jr, James Edward, “Long Run Wealth Inequality”, Dissertation Draft, December 24, 2002.

Curtis Jr, James Edward, “Wealth Discrimination Theory”, Working Paper, January 31, 2011.

Curtis Jr, James Edward, “Wealth and Faith, What Is Your Real Reason? Is It Jesus?”, Working Paper, March 11, 2011.

Curtis Jr, James Edward, “Freedom Laws & the Economics of Inequality”, Working Paper, January 23, 2012 (a

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revision of “Institutional and Agency Effects on the Status of Free Blacks: Synthesizing Asymmetrical Laws and Social Conditions with Asymmetrical Economic Outcomes”, Working Paper, November 11, 2010).

Education manuscripts, created by James Edward Curtis Jr, include The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation ® , Strategic-Divine Resource Management Models ®, Potential Business Plan ®, Technical Notes ® to the Potential Business Plan ®, *Syllabi, class materials* for advanced courses in Praise, *Syllabi, slides, problem sets and exams* for: Pre-MBA Foundations in Economics, Principles of Microeconomics, and Intermediate Microeconomics, *Syllabi* for advanced courses in Applied Statistics, The Universities and Colleges of James Curtis Jr ® [49 pages, 2012-12-07 Composition of James Curtis Jr]

36 eJournal Publications, 47 Top Ten Acknowledgements, 20 Interdisciplinary Subjects of Specialization

The 20 interdisciplinary subjects of specialization of the publications of James Edward Curtis Jr include: Accounting & Economics, Demography & Race, Econometrics & Statistics, Economic Sociology, Economics & Laws, Educator, Entrepreneurship, Equality & Justice, Faith Religion Christianity, Finance, History, Income Wages Wealth, International, Labor Theory, Macroeconomic Theory, Microeconomic Theory, Philosophy & Literature, Political Economy, Political Theory, and Public Policy

Project Director, Educator, & Musician, James Edward Curtis Jr is also the Project Director, Educator & Musician of *The Enduring Faith Center*, jecjef.net, an evangelistic outreach ministry of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation ®; The duties of James Edward Curtis Jr include, but are not limited to, President & Chairman of Jesus Christology Structures [1 Corinthians 3:10-11], inspirational leadership & presentations of encouragement, food & beverage preparation for consumption & outreach gifts [Luke 9:13-17], presenting inspired unique and/or outsourced faith and/or seemingly secular music DVD CD photography video audio collages [Ephesians 5:19-20], maintaining safe inhabitable inspirational living & office spaces [John 14:2], and meeting/maintaining/meshing personal & potential client holistic socioeconomic needs and concerns [Matthew 25:35-40]

Church State University 2013 Charter, sufficiency for Eldership, conferred upon The Enduring Faith Center, James Edward Curtis Jr., Honorary Doctorate of Divinity, Church Development Corporations, Comparative Theology & The Spoken Word, Musicology

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Bible Commentary drafts of writings of James Edward Curtis Jr include
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Adam to Abraham" (April 28, 2006);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "How to Respond to Leadership" (May 26, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "God and Earth" (June 15, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Anxiety" (June 25, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Rejecting God" (July 2, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Reconciliation" (July 16, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Grace" (July 23, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Love" (July 30, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Faith" (August 6, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Evangelism" (August 27, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Suffering" (September 10, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Hope" (September 24, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Strength from God" (October 8, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Belief" (October 15, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Overcoming" (October 22, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Birth of Jesus" (November 28, 2007);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Money" (January 17, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Service" (January 31, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Manhood" (February 2, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Joy" (March 20, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Stewardship" (April 4, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Bible Fundamentals Diagnostics" (April 10, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Suffering" (April 17, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "The Kings of Judah and Israel" (April 22, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Worry" (July 3, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Prayer" (July 17, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Hope" (August 3, 2008);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Devotion Topics: A Model of Faith-Based Analysis" (March 27, 2009);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "I am Growing in God" (August 19, 2009);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "A Wholesome Objective" (September 8, 2009);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "The Good News" (September 27, 2009);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Faith & Wealth" (January 2, 2010);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "What Is Your Reason? Is It Jesus?" (January 2, 2010);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Developing Hope Through Giving Thanks" (May 12, 2010);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Faithful, Yet Subject to Feuding" (May 19, 2010);
 Curtis Jr, James Edward, "Summary: The Compassionate Leader" (August 3, 2010)

12 eLibrary Publications/Religion-Divinity Interdisciplinary Subjects, Abstract

Curtis Jr, James Edward, "The Enduring Faith Center, A Chronological Memoir of a Church Formed by James Edward Curtis Jr", Working Paper, 1-367 pgs, December 31, 2013.

Abstract Is Psalms 51:5 (shapen in iniquity) and Genesis 1:27 (created in his image) consistent? Is a 'cookbook' explanation for biblical Brownian motion consistent with the 'good news' of Jesus? What is the lesson from possible sad-tech/sad-sas/sad-social-emotional programming, where possibly shunning the images of happy "tech" is now a subset of sad-programming? Why possibly program learning and discernment process for 'just-in-time-to-immediately-exploit- retroactively' (ha-ha)? Is it wrong to want to know the 'critical uniqueness' of the creations of the 'creator'? Does he/she/they believe in efficient inefficiency in the social programming of their subjects? Why? Reengineering/sas-patches? Is Ecclesiastes 10:19b (NIV: money is the answer for everything) and 1 Timothy 6:10 (NIV: for the love of money is a root of all kinds of distractions. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and lowered themselves with many griefs) consistent? Are the following perfectly correlated and why: work experience, church memberships, colleges and universities, resource endowment/accumulation quality of life of individuals/entities. This paper presents The Enduring Faith Center, A Chronological Memoir of a Church Formed by James Edward Curtis Jr, written by James Edward Curtis Jr, answering some of those questions. AEA JEL codes C00 F00 F03 J00 K00 N00 N10 Z10.

 THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER		
<i>Divine Providence & Instruments for Endowment for the Socially Marginalized</i>		
<small>Encouragement from The Holy Bible: James 1:1,12</small>		James Edward Curtis Jr PROJECT DIRECTOR
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The 12 eLibrary publications of James Edward Curtis Jr include
 Christianity
 business & ecommerce
 Educator: Courses, Cases & Teaching, Instructor Material
 General Comparative Religion
 General Ethics Morality Religion Spirituality Transcendence
 Judaism
 Morality
 Philosophy of Religion e]ournal
 Religion
 Spirituality
 Theology
 Transcendence

Internet sites of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation ® are a form of outreach to society, include

Issue 1, http://www.geocities.com/jecjr_educationFoundation®/homepage.htm, [2002 -2007?]
 created/presented by James Edward Curtis Jr

Issue 2-4, <http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>, [September 2009 -April 2012] created/presented by James Edward Curtis Jr

Issue 4, <http://jecjef.net> , [April 2012 -Present], created/presented by James Edward Curtis Jr

Audio/Visual presentations, created/presented by James Edward Curtis Jr
 (viewable at jecjef.net and <http://www.youtube.com/user/JamesCurtisJr>)available in audio/video presentations, include

Praise Violin Solos of James Curtis Jr (forthcoming 2014)

DJ Moment in the Life of James Curtis Jr, October 31, 2012;

MP3 Music of James Curtis Jr, a 24 hour mp3 music radio show presented by James Curtis Jr including Christmas music purchased from Amazon.com, Sermons from Shekinah Glory Ministries, Charles Jenkins & James Curtis Jr, October 31, 2012;

Grace, August 29-30, 2010 [edited April 6, 2012];

Growth in God, December 5, 2009 [edited March 11, 2011, April 6, 2012];

Saved By Faith, August 18-19, 2010 [edited April 6, 2012];

Secular Reflections, August 16, 2010 [edited March 11, 2011, April 6, 2012];

Romans 8 28, December 11, 2011;

Pride, June 15, 2011;

What is Your Reason? Is It Jesus?, January 3, 2010 [edited March 11, 2011];

Ringtones include *Jesus on the Mainline*, and *No Not One*, January 11, 2011.

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The Spiritual Transformation Program Notes of James Curtis Jr Certificate of Completion

(May 2006)

Curriculum

Phase I: Private Study

Phase II: 1:00 PM Classes (Monday – Thursday; June 21, 2005-August 13, 2005)

Grace and Faith

Prayer

The Church

Judgments and Rewards

How to Cope

Sin

Repentance

The New Birth

Phase II : 2:30 PM Classes (Tuesday, Thursday; June 21, 2005-August 13, 2005)

Phase III: 1:00 PM Classes and Study Time (August 15, 2005–January 4, 2006)

Phase III: Journaling (August 16, 2005–January 4, 2006)

Phase IV: 2:30 PM Classes (Tuesday, Thursday; January 9, 2006–March 30, 2006)

Phase IV: Weekly Homework (January 11, 2006–March 22, 2006)

Phase V: Devotion Leadership and Chapel Assistant (April 2006–September 2006)

Notes from the 2005-2006 Spiritual Transformation Program Personalized Classes

Offered by Central Union Mission

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February 10, 2006

Testimony: A Testimony of the Central Union Mission Social Work

February 10, 2006

I want to thank God for this opportunity to give my testimony on behalf of the Social Work Department at Central Union Mission. My name is James Curtis and I am a fourth phase participant in Central Union Mission's Spiritual Transformation Program. I am 32 years old, born February 14, 1973 in Washington, DC, the son of James Curtis Sr., currently in Alexandria, VA, and Karen Curtis, currently in Greenbelt, MD. I have one brother Keith Curtis, also in Greenbelt, MD. I was raised as child in the church - the historic Vermont Avenue Baptist Church just around corner from the Central Union Mission - and was baptized at Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Manassas, VA. I want to tell you, briefly, about: (1) how I invested in education, (2) but found that education would not be my strength in time of need, and (3) instead, it was my faith in God and the works of God's servants, particularly in the department of Social Work at Central Union Mission, that serviced my needs.

Foremost, I have invested heavily in education. I was an 'A' student throughout elementary and secondary schools in Prince William County Public Schools, one of the strongest public schools systems in the area, before my parents separated in 1989 and I moved with my mother to Washington, DC.

I eventually graduated from Coolidge High School in Washington, DC with a 3.8 cumulative GPA, as well as President of the Band, and Vice-President of the senior class. I also graduated with approximately 20 college admissions, including admissions to Boston University, Rutgers University, Manhattan College, West Virginia University, Howard University, Morehouse College, and Hampton University. I was also offered approximately \$300,000 in scholarships and grants.

I decided to go to Rutgers University in Camden for two years, where I made the Dean's List, and eventually transferred to Howard University, where I graduated from Howard University with 2 Bachelor's degrees, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and President of Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity.

After a year of employment at the FDIC, I obtained a Master of Arts degree in economics from the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. This led to opportunities to teach classes at the Ohio State University department of economics, the Ohio State University College of Business Executive

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Education Program, the Ohio Wesleyan University department of economics, and the University of Colorado at Denver department of economics.

However, I learned that education was not my source of strength. About five years ago, I began to experience severe issues related a condition that was later diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenia.

I believe that catalyst for the condition may have been years of over-consumption of alcohol. I began drinking as a teenager in college. I drank heavily, to the point that I experienced black outs on numerous occasions. I believe drinking to the point of blackout led to a severe condition of paranoia schizophrenia—that was only diagnosed later in life. I began to experience paranoia schizophrenia to the point where I believed and accused people of doing things to me that never really happened. This burnt many bridges in my life. The benefits of my education were minimized because the networks I worked so hard to develop were no longer available for friendship, housing, or career connections. I even burnt bridges with my family members due to this condition to the point where I could no longer reside with them. I ended up homeless on the streets of DC, Maryland, Columbus (OH), and Atlanta (GA). My condition of schizophrenia and homelessness led me to charge up my credit cards in order to survive. My condition accelerated to the point where I was involuntarily hospitalized at Georgia Regional Hospital. I was introduced to another mental health agency, where I began receiving temporary housing and medication for my condition. The medication successfully medicated my condition, but they said it would be required for life.

Thanks to God and God's servants (in the Social Work Department), this prognosis was not correct. While an overnight guest at Central Union Mission, I was introduced to men in the Spiritual Transformation Program, and was later admitted into the program myself. As a Phase 2 (Seeker) in the Spiritual Transformation Program, I also began visiting the Department of Social Work at the Central Union Mission for assistance. There, my needs were assessed and some goals for self-sufficiency were discussed. Together we developed goals for spiritual growth, better family relationships, improving my financial condition, and improving my health.

I am proud to say that God has moved in all parts of my life. Now I stand before you a man of God with better knowledge his word. I began investing more heavily into to praying, reading the Bible, and memorizing verses of the Bible. I began meditating on the word day and night. Now, I lead Central Union Mission's daily Chapel services and devotional services with boldness for God. Additionally, I

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have a stronger relationship with my mother, who recently invited me out to her Church gala. Furthermore, my financial condition is being restored with improved credit credentials by notifying creditors of my difficulties and agreeing to pay them on an income contingent basis. In terms of my health, I continue to be independent of alcohol, now going on four years, and am recently no longer dependent on medication prescribed for my mental health condition.

In closing, Philippians 4:11 reads, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." For, it is "by grace (that I have been) saved through faith, that not of (myself), it (was) the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). Finally, I leave with you this word that I have learned from Matthew 6:25 and 33: "Therefore I say to you do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ...But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you." Thank you God and Central Union Mission's Department of Social Work for all you have done for me.

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April 28, 2006

Chart: Genesis 5, 11 of The Holy Bible: Adam to Noah

Devotion: Genesis Chapter 5, 11

Genesis 5 Verses	Father	Years Before Son	Name of Son	Years lived after son	Age at death
3-5	Adam	130	Seth	800	930
6-8	Seth	105	Enosh	807	912
9-11	Enosh	90	Kenan	815	905
12-14	Kenan	70	Mahalalel	840	910
15-17	Mahalalel	65	Jared	830	895
18-20	Jared	162	Enoch	800	962
21-24	Enoch	65	Methuselah	300	365
25-27	Methuselah	187	Lamech	782	969
28-31	Lamech	182	Noah	595	777
32	Noah	500	Shem, Ham & Japheth		950
Total Number of Years					
Adam to Noah		1,056		6,569	7,625
Adam to Shem, Ham and Japheth		1,556			8,575
Genesis 11 Verses	Father	Years Before Son	Name of Son	Years lived after son	Age at death
	Shem	100	Arphaxad	500	600
	Arphaxad	35	Shelah	403	438
	Shelah	30	Eber	403	433
	Eber	34	Peleg	430	464
	Peleg	30	Reu	290	320
	Reu	32	Serug	207	239
	Serug	30	Nehor	200	230
	Nehor	29	Terah	119	148
	Terah	70	Abram, Nahor & Haran	135	205
Shem to Abram, Nahor & Haran		390		2,687	3,077
Adam to Abram, Nahor & Haran		1,946			11,652
Genesis 11 Verses W/ FOOTNOTE	Father	Years Before Son	Name of Son	Years lived after son	Age at death
	Shem	100	Arphaxad	500	600
	Arphaxad	35	<i>Cainan</i>	430	465
	<i>Cainan</i>	130	Shelah	330	460
	Shelah	30	Eber	403	433
	Eber	34	Peleg	430	464
	Peleg	30	Reu	290	320
	Reu	32	Serug	207	239
	Serug	30	Nehor	200	230
	Nehor	29	Terah	119	148
	Terah	70	Abram, Nahor & Haran	135	205
Shem to Abram, Nahor & Haran		520		3,044	3,564
Adam to Abram, Nahor & Haran		2,076			12,139

 **THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER**

*Divine Subsistence & Instruments for Eternation
for the Socially Marginalized*


James Edward Curtis Jr.
PROJECT DIRECTOR

Encouragement from The Holy Bible; James 1:1,12

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May 25, 2006

Leadership: The Spiritual Transformation Program Graduation Certificate





THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER



Divine Subsistence & Instruments for Ascension
for the Socially Marginalized

Encouragement from The Holy Bible; James 1:1,12

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February 24, 2007

Leadership: Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC
 New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary
 February 24, 2007

Attendees: Etta L. Washington, Debbie P. Gordon, Gladys Hardy, Shirley B. Beynum, Janet Slaughter, La Sharon Bartley, Sandra Carter, Evelyn Younger, Michael Younger, Robyne Hill, Patricia Derricott, Megan Hovis, Martina Milton, William Hill, Romaine Johnson, Beevenell Robinson, Clarence Thomas, Tyrone Jones-Hill, Theodora Chapman, and James Curtis

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Steven E. Tucker

1. **Welcome:** Rev. Dr. Stephen E. Tucker welcomed attendees at 1:00 PM
 2. **Minutes from Last Meeting:** None (First Meeting)
 3. **Old Business:** None (First Meeting)
 4. **New Business:** Rev. Dr. Tucker presided over training of new elders and deacons. He provided handouts and presented the following:
 - A. "Orientation for the Training of Elders and Deacons in New Commandment Baptist Church"
 - B. "What are the Qualifications? Why Me & Why Now? What Disqualifies Me?"
 - C. "Elders in the Church"
- Rev. Dr. Tucker also assigned several attendees presentations on the following subjects: "Submission" (Debbie Gordon), "Respecting Authority" (Robyne Hill), "How to Respond to Leadership" (James Curtis), "Proper Communication" (Megan Hovis), "Requirements of Obedience" (Shirley Beynum), "Assembling in Expectation" (Romaine Johnson), and "Being on Time" (Beevenell Robinson). He also assigned James Curtis to be the Scribe.
5. **Announcements:** Rev. Dr. Tucker informed the attendees that future meetings (for training new elders and deacons at NCBC) will be held on the Saturday before the fourth Sunday of each month.
 6. **Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Saturday, March 24, 2007 at 1:00 PM
 7. **Meeting adjourned** at 2:30 PM.

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March 24, 2007

Leadership: Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC
New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary

March 24, 2007

Attendees: Etta L. Washington, Debbie P. Gordon, Gladys Hardy, Shirley B. Beynum, LaSharon Bartley, Megan Hovis, Martina Milton, Romaine Johnson, Beevenell Robinson, Tyrone Jones-Hill, Anthony Malone, James Curtis and Deacon Joyce Milton

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Steven E. Tucker

- 1. Welcome:** Mrs. LaSharon Bartley led the attendees in: Praise and Worship, Prayer, Scripture: (Psalm 78), Testimony, Discussion on “What Did You Think When You Received the Letter to Become an Elder or Deacon?” and Discussion on our calling (Ephesians 4:1-7, 11, 12).

Rev. Dr. Stephen E. Tucker welcomed attendees at 2:00 PM.

- 2. Minutes from Last Meeting:** Minutes from February 2007 meeting were distributed.

- 3. Old Business:** None.

- 4. New Business:** Rev. Dr. Tucker presided over training of new elders and deacons. He presented the following:

- A. Family is important. (But) when Christ calls you, he calls you from family
- B. 1 Timothy presents the minimum qualifications for serving God at a higher level
- C. John 5:14-15 presents the requirement of elders to pray over the sick and anoint them with oil. Faith is required to lay hands on the sick. The power of healing comes from God.
- D. There is a certain freedom when you release your stuff to God. When God releases you from certain burdens, we don't have to go back to those burdens.
- E. 1 John 1:9 states that we are to confess our sin and God is faithful and just and will forgive us. (Therefore) You cannot get in the position of condemning other people; when, in fact, you ought to be rejoicing when they come in church and you see their sin.
- F. You literally have to guard your spirit so you don't become apart of the church crowd, which is coming to be entertained and momentarily satisfied.
- G. James 5:16 states we ought to confess our sins to each other. On a daily basis you have to get it right with God.
- H. Psalm 34:15 states that the Lord sees and hears the righteous. Ask God to ‘keep me’ even if it has to discomfort you.
- I. Romans 7

Attendees prayed together in groups of 2's. Rev. Dr. Tucker also prayed for each attendee and anointed each attendee with oil.

- 5. Announcements:** None

- 6. Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Saturday, April 28, 2007 at 1:00 PM

- 7. Meeting adjourned** at 3:30 PM.

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April 28, 2007

Leadership: Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC
New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary

April 28, 2007

Attendees: Etta L. Washington, Debbie P. Gordon, Gladys Hardy, Shirley B. Beynum, Megan Hovis, Martina Milton, Romaine Johnson, Beevenell Robinson, Tyrone Jones-Hill, James Curtis, Mary Hawes, Sandra Carter, Evelyn Younger, and Janet Slaughter .

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Steven E. Tucker

1. Welcome: Ms. Debbie Gordon led the attendees in: Praise and Worship (Martina Milton, Sandra Carter), Prayer (Shirley Beynum, Megan Hovis), Scripture: (Romaine Johnson, Gladys Hardy: Psalm 27), Testimony (Sandra Carter, Debbie Gordon).

Rev. Dr. Stephen E. Tucker welcomed attendees at 2:30 PM.

2. Minutes from Last Meeting: Minutes from March 2007 meeting were distributed.

3. Old Business: None.

4. New Business: Rev. Dr. Tucker presided over training of new elders and deacons. He presented the following:

A. NCBC needs better representation at events.

B. A leader must stand up/emerge (Acts 2:13-14; 2:37-38; 3:3-4).

C. Responsibility is defined as the willingness to make decisions and stand by them. Responsibility is taking on a task and not leaving it despite who does not show up, or despite negative talk about what you are responsible for, or despite not knowing what the outcome is going to be.

D. Oral Communication is defined as the spoken word. You do not have to be a great public speaker to be a great leader. The power is not always in the public speaking. For example, Moses said he could not lead the Israelites because he wasn't a great public speaker. And God gave him Aaron.

E. Bible Knowledge: Is the message more important than the method or is the method more important than message? In the end, you have to know about what you are talking about. You need to know about: (1) God, (2) Jesus, (3) the Bible, and (4) the Church. You need to know their origin. (Joshua 1:8: Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth...).

F. Interest in and Understanding People: You have to have a genuine concern about people. You have to find good in people even if they do bad. You must be willing to give them another chance. Your job as a leader is to be compassionate with people: When was the last time you called to see how a member of your ministry was doing?

i. (Acts 2:38-41)...about 3000 were added to their number that day

ii. As a leader, you have to commit to winning souls. Your task is to win one soul to church before July 1st.

iii. People leave church because of inactivity, lack of involvement and being driven out with mouths

iv. You have to have favor with people when you are a leader (Acts 2:42-27)

Ms. Megan Hovis made a presentation on Communicating with God. Ms. Debbie Gordon made a presentation on Submission. Finally, Ms. Romaine Johnson made a presentation on Assembling in Expectation.

5. Announcements: During the next meeting, Ms. Shirley Beynum, Mrs. Beevenell Robinson, and Mr. James Curtis will make presentations. Also, please bring at least \$10.00 for textbooks.

6. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Saturday, May 26, 2007 at 1:00 PM

7. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM.

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May 25, 2007

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**NEW COMMANDMENT BAPTIST
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The mission of New Commandment Baptist Church is to glorify God through the Praise, Worship and Witness of His Son, Jesus Christ, including the salvation of souls, the edification and teaching of God's word, the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Promotion of Christian worship, the defense of the faith orally delivered, the cooperation with Christian and Christian activity in harmony with God's Holy Word, the Bible, until our Lord comes again.

Our Ministries provide a place for service to minister to our community and meet the ever increasing human needs of others with our love for Christ Jesus. There is a wealth of nurturing that goes on within our ministries. We provide opportunities for the youth as well as the aged to grow throughout the stages of human development and to grow in the light of Gods Love. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, our ministries provide opportunities for Christian fellowship among our church family to create lasting bonds of Christian Love. Note that our own Pastor Tucker received the 2001 "George Shultz Award" for Community Service from Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

Join us each Sunday morning at 8 AM for a powerful one-hour service followed by a free breakfast. We are located near the corners of Georgia Avenue and Park Road in northwest DC. Don't miss your blessing!



THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER

*Divine Providence & Instruments for Encouragement
for the Socially Marginalized*

Encouragement from The Holy Bible; James 1:1,12

James Edward Curtis Jr
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May 2007 – July 2007

Administration: 8 AM Service Schedule

The following are the Worship Leaders, Speakers and Preachers scheduled for the 8 AM Service on Sundays at NCBC, May 27, 2007 through July 29, 2007:

May 27, 2007

Worship Leader: Debbie Gordon
 Speaker: Mary Cunningham
 Preacher: Theodora Chapman

June 3, 2007

Worship Leader: Beevenell Robinson
 Speaker: Mary Hawes
 Preacher: Nathaniel Harpe

June 10, 2007

Worship Leader: Mary Cunningham
 Speaker: Eleanor Mitchell
 Preacher: Willie Hill

June 17, 2007

Worship Leader: Eleanor Mitchell
 Speaker: Mary Sanders
 Preacher: William Hill

June 24, 2007

Worship Leader: Mary Sanders
 Speaker: Freddie Holman
 Preacher: George Bartley

July 1, 2007

Worship Leader: Freddie Holman
 Speaker: Allen Lemon
 Preacher: Nathaniel Harpe

July 8, 2007

Worship Leader: Roberta Tucker
 Speaker: Debbie Gordon
 Preacher: Willie Hill

July 15, 2007

Worship Leader: Nathaniel Harpe
 Speaker: Tina Buggs
 Preacher: Essie Chapman

July 22, 2007

Worship Leader: Allen Lemon
 Speaker: Etta Washington
 Preacher: Robyn Hill

July 29, 2007

Worship Leader: Tina Buggs
 Speaker: Loria Weaver
 Preacher: George Bartley

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at (301) 693-4129 or jcurtis@missiondc.org.

Sincerely,

James Curtis

 THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER		
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May 26, 2007

Bible Commentary: *How to Respond to Leadership*

James E. Curtis Jr.
 New Commandment Baptist Church
 Washington, DC
 May 26, 2007

How to Respond to Leadership

Who am I? Good Afternoon. My name is James Curtis and I am here to talk to you briefly about how to respond to leadership. But before I begin, I often ask myself, who Am I—in this world—and who am I—in the eyes of God—to have the nerve to talk to you about responding to leadership? From a worldly perspective, I recall instances in my life where I served as a leader (whether it was teaching college and graduate school courses or serving as a student government leader in high school, college and graduate school). I also recall instances in my life where I served under the leadership of others (whether it was serving as a missionary at Central Union Mission or even serving on the greeting ministry here at New Commandment Baptist Church). I recall the former demanding focus and initiative, while the latter demanded humbleness.

But more importantly than asking who am I in this world, is, who am I—in the eyes of God—to talk to you about responding to leadership? From this eternal perspective, I see myself as man saved sin. When I think of the goodness of God, my soul cries out hallelujah, due to the deliverance from sin in my life. **1 Corinthians 6:9 [KJV]** reads “*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate¹, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers², nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*” To make it personal...a fornicator and a drunkard, and such was I. But I am washed, I am sanctified, and I am justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of my God.

¹ Having qualities or characteristics more often associated with women than men.

² To use abusive language.

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Now, that I have stated who I believe I am—in the world and in the eyes of God—I want to share my thoughts with you about how to respond to leadership. I propose that the proper response to leadership is, in fact, humility in the form of listening, submission and faithfulness.

Listening: Formost, **Matthew 11:15** (and **Revelation 2:7**) [NIV] reads “*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*” Ears are designed by God to take in sound, and are not designed to release sound. Therefore, nothing should be just “going in one ear and existing out of the other.” Listening, therefore demands a “one-way” internalization of what was heard. Now what did I just say?

We all have to listen to at least one leader. But more realistically we have to listen to multiple leaders because this is the system of governance that God has ordained for people. **Exodus 18:21** reads: “*But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.*” This is similar to the president / governor / county executive / mayor organizational chart we are subject to in America today. In addition to these communal leaders, we also have leaders on our jobs and leaders at our church. Therefore, we are subject to multitude of leaders which we have to respond to on a daily basis.

Some of you might be thinking I will listen to one but not the other; I will listen to her but not to him. In other words, I’m going to be selective in whom I listen to. But, does anyone know what the problem with that decision might be? The problem is God not only designed the system of leadership but also chooses our leaders. **Romans 13:1-2** reads “*Everyone must submit himself to governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.*” By choosing to listen to some leaders and not others, you are picking and choosing God’s decisions for your life: you are saying yes to one of God’s choices and no to other choices of God. Some of you might think some people are just inappropriate for leadership; justifying your decision not to listen to them. Look at him: He can’t be a leader. Well, my NIV study Bible made any interesting point when stating, “*God’s leaders don’t necessarily come through regulation channels.*” For instance, the book of Judges explains that God made Gideon a leader of the Israelites. And **Judges 6:14-16** reads “*The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” “But Lord,” Gideon asked, “how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” The LORD answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.” Gideon claimed himself to be the weakest of the weakest. But God determined his strength to be sufficient for leadership. Therefore, through the Word of God, we must*

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prepare our hearts and minds, for whom God may send as leaders and for whom God expects us to listen to.

Submission. Second, we should respond to leaders with submission because (1) leaders are held accountable for our lives and (2) our lives may depend on the advice of leaders. **Hebrews 13:17** reads “*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*” Our accountability to leaders via submission makes the job of a leader, who is accountable to God, easier.

We should also respond to leaders with submission because our lives may depend on guidance by a leader. Consider the example of the Israelites and their response to Moses. Moses was chosen by the Lord to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. In **Exodus 12:22-23**, Moses instructed the Israelites to “*Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.*” What would have happened to the Israelites if they had not obeyed the leadership of Moses? What if they had degraded the instructions of Moses to silliness and ignored the command to put the blood on the doorframes? The answer is they would have died. Therefore, responding to leadership appropriately is sometimes a matter of life and death.

Faithfulness. Finally, we should respond to leadership with faith in God. **Hebrews 11:6** reads “*without faith it is impossible to please God*”. We are given an example of an unfaithful response to leadership when recalling the experiences of Joshua and Caleb. Remember again that Moses was chosen by the Lord to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to a land flowing with milk and honey (**Exodus 3:7-10**). The Lord commanded Moses to “*send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which (he is) giving to the Israelites*” (**Numbers 13:1-2**). After forty days of exploring the land, they returned to the community of Israelites (**Numbers 13:25**) and confirmed that “*it does flow with milk and honey*” (**Numbers 13:27**). But 10 of 12 men sent to explore the land stated: “*the people who live there are powerful*” (**vs. 28**)...and “*they are stronger than we are*” (**vs. 31**). “*And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored*” (**vs. 32**). Only Joshua and Caleb gave a good report of the land (**Numbers 14:6-9**). After hearing

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the bad report, the community of Israelites responded to the good report by Joshua and Caleb with talk of stoning them (vs.10).

This is an example of the community of Israelites responding to leadership with a lack of faith. When we respond to leadership without faith, we threaten to damage our relationship with God and could ultimately relinquish his promises to us. For, God threatened to strike down the Israelites with a plague due to their unfaithfulness (vs.12). It was only after the petition of Moses, in **verse 19**, that saves the Israelites from the plague but does not save them from suffering in the wilderness for 40 years for their lack of faith. These events, recorded in the books of Exodus and Numbers, demonstrate to us that God expects faithful responses to his chosen set of leaders.

In closing, we are to respond to leaders by listening, with submission and with faithfulness. **Hebrews 13:7** reads “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.”

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May 26, 2007

Leadership: Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC
New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary

May 26, 2007

Attendees: LaSharon Bartley, Etta L. Washington, Debbie P. Gordon, Gladys Hardy, Beevenell Robinson, Tyrone Jones-Hill, James Curtis, Mary Hawes, and Evelyn Younger .

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Steven E. Tucker

1. Welcome: Mr. James Curtis led the attendees in: Praise and Worship, Prayer (James Curtis, LaSharon Bartley), Scripture: (Gladys Hardy: Psalm 23), Testimony (LaSharon, Bartley, Mary Hawes, Gladys Hardy).

Rev. Dr. Stephen E. Tucker welcomed attendees at 1:20 PM.

2. Minutes from Last Meeting: Minutes from April 2007 meeting were distributed.

3. Old Business: James Curtis collected money for textbooks.

4. New Business: Rev. Dr. Tucker presided over training of new elders and deacons. He presented the following:

A. There is a need for leaders and **division of labor** (Exodus 18:17-26). The Bible is the basis of organization of nations. This scripture presents the government of the church and a distinct organization of leadership for disputes, not if, but when they arise. In the church, people often bring disputes to the pastor no matter if they are major or minor. This bogs down the Pastor.

i. Elders and Deacons are suppose to take of minor issues but need training to determine what is major and minor.

ii. Other requirements for Elder/Deacon leadership include compassion, wisdom, patience and determination.

B. Leaders must become leaders. Leaders have to be careful about being drawn into conflict. Humility must exist among leaders and followers. Leaders in the church must remember they are servant leaders. Leadership is born out of a servant's heart and not born out of "where you sit." Jesus took on the form of a servant and washed feet. Who ever wants to be a leader must serve. Servanthood and leadership go together. You have to use good judgment as a servant leader.

i. You must understand when and how to lead. Leave them when they are not responding (receiving) your leadership. A leader does not leave them bitter. Three things to look for include:

a. An attitude that you can't help them,

b. 'Sizing you up'—for instance, they know you from a previous encounter and don't want your help, and

c. Remember that you are trying to serve them.

iii. Note that there an antagonists in the church (people who make conflict in the church). Do not judge your whole servanthood (leadership) based on one or two people.

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- C. There is a **structure** that exists for handling issues:
- i. Leaders need to know what other leaders do so you can direct the people to the leaders and get their needs met.
 - ii. Just because an individual is a deacon does not mean he or she is versed in every aspect of ministry (There is specialization based on gifts).
 - iii. You have to get someone (a leader) to meet them where they are.
- D. The **characteristics** of a true leader include humility, submission, devotion, sacrifice and concern for the welfare of those being served.
- i. Ephesians 4:11-13: Some to be apostles...prophets...evangelists...pastors and teachers.
 - ii. We all ought to be in the business of ministry (ministers). We ought to reproduce or duplicate ourselves.
- E. **Field training**: When we are not in class, we are still in class. You will be called to put in practice what we learned.
- i. James 1:2-4; When we are tried, our patience kicks in. We erroneously refer to patience in reference to material possessions. When we are tried, our faith is on trial.
 - ii. James 1:26; We can't be saved and talk the same old way.
 - iii. Mark 16: 15-17, Acts 28:1-5; 'shake'm off
 - iv. 'Don't wear people too tight'
 - v. Pastor wants the class to minister to the sick. Find out who is sick and pass that information on in order to formulate a response to the sickness (card, phone call or visitation). Remember the power of God, not the power of man, heals.
 - vi. Acts 2:12, 27-38

Mrs. Beevenell Robinson made a presentation on Being on Time. Mr. James Curtis made a presentation on How to Respond to Leadership. Ms. Debbie Gordon was voted to lead our efforts to minister to the sick.

5. **Announcements**: None

6. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**: Saturday, June 23, 2007 at 1:00 PM

7. **Meeting adjourned** at 3:50 PM.

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June 18, 2007

Bible Commentary: Use It Wisely (God & Earth)

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
“Use It Wisely”: A Commentary
June 18, 2007

Welcome: (name, accounting/maintenance assistant, 2006 STP Grad, program (intake, clothing room, maintenance admin), 3 college degrees, homeless 3 years, jobless 4 years, alcoholic 10 years – 6 years sober, substantial debt 6 years – more than 100K, now less than 15K, a former sinner under the grace of God, active member of NCBC (greeter, 8 AM Service coordinator, culinary ministry volunteer, anniversary committee member) – child of God – **John 1:12** : Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

Summary: I am here talk to you about today’s daily bread which is entitled, “Use It Wisely” and which talks about being good stewards over what God has given us, primarily, this planet earth. I will divide my discussion up into four parts: (1) What does the Bible have to say about our role on earth? This is essentially the who, the how, the when, the where, the what and the why questions of mankind; (2) How well have we done in our role on earth? Here I will talk about contemporary factors that address our Biblical roles here on earth. (3) Can we measure the impact of our decisions on our physical environment? Finally, (4) Where should our focus be?

1) **What does the Bible have to say about our role on earth?**: (TIME TO RESPOND) **Genesis 2:7-15**, the daily bread scripture for this day, tells us about the origins and purpose of mankind as it relates to God and earth. The NIV reads:

“7 the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. 8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10 A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. 11 The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) 13

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The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Through this scripture and scriptures throughout Genesis chapter 1 and 2, we can answer the who, how, when, where, what and why questions of mankind.

1. **WHO: Genesis 1:27** answers the who question: Who formed man? (TIME TO RESPOND)

“God created man.” **Psalm 139:13** confirms our origin from God: the NIV reads “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb.”

Even when talking to Jeremiah, the Lord said “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart” (**Jeremiah 1:5**). Furthermore, **1 Peter 2:9** confirms our selection from God. The NIV states what: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.” So when you are down and out, and you are ready to give up and leave the program, remember that God is your maker and he selected you to be his people.

2. **HOW: Genesis 2:7** answers the how question: How did God form man? (TIME TO

RESPOND) ...“the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”. This is conformed in **Genesis 3:19b** which states “for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

3. **WHEN: Genesis 1:24-31** answers the when question: When did God create man? (TIME TO RESPOND) Man was created “on the sixth day”

4. **WHERE: Genesis 1:1** and **Genesis 2:8** answer the where question: Where did God keep man³? (TIME TO RESPOND) “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”...(and **Genesis 2:8** reads) “God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.”

³ 1. Note: According to SundaySchoolResources.com :“Genesis 2:8 (expresses) The garden was in the east. Since the author was probably in the land of Israel at the time, this indicates the garden was east of the land of Israel. A river divided into four rivers at the garden. Genesis 2:11. The location of the Pishon river is not known today. Neither is the location of the land of Havilah. Genesis 2:13. The location of the Gihon river is not known today. Neither is the location of the land of Cush. Genesis 2:14. The Tigris river and the Euphrates river flows through modern day Iraq.”

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5. **WHAT: Genesis 2:15** answers the what question: What did God create man for? What was his task? (TIME TO RESPOND) ...”The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

Taking care of a garden that God prepared for you cannot be but so difficult. This would indicate that God intended for work to be simplistic for man. Note that when man sinned in the Garden of Eden, work became more challenging. **Genesis 3:17b** reads “through painful toil will you eat of it” and **Genesis 3:19a** reads by the sweat of your brow you will eat your food.”

6. **WHY: Genesis 1:26** answers the why question: Why did God create man? (TIME TO RESPOND) ... (to) “rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Be not confused, God is Lord over the earth: **Psalm 24:1** [KJV] states “The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof.” Furthermore, **Psalm 47:2** [NIV] states “How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!” **Psalm 47:7** [NIV] states “For God is the King of all the earth.”

Genesis 1:26 essentially states that God gave man dominion over a planet that was already prepared for man to occupy. Similarly, in **Genesis 2:8**, God gave the man or Adam a garden he already planted. Looking ahead a little further, God gives Israel land that has already been prepared for living. **Joshua 24:12b-13** reads “You did not do it with your own sword and bow. So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.” Consistently, we see in the Bible that God equipped man and his chosen people with all that they needed.

Note that Central Union Mission is our garden planted for men in need of rescue. CUM has supplied us with shelter, food, clothing, new work skills, social workers, spending money, and Christian counseling and Christian education. We can rewrite **Genesis 2:15** in terms our experiences to state that the LORD God took the program man and put him in the Garden of CUM to work it and take care of it.

- 2) **How well have we done in our role on earth?**: Now that we have addressed our role here on earth, we can ponder about how well we have done in our role here on earth. The June 18th devotion of Our

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Daily Bread reads “God gave us an incredible gift—the beautiful world in which we live. Naturally, though, as we share this planet with so many others, we run the risk of seeing its beauty diminished and its resources depleted.” This is talking about taking better care of our environment.

Dean Ohlman of RBC Ministries⁴, writes:

“Christians, of course, don’t want to be associated with nature worship, so we don’t want to be characterized as “environmentalists.” However, the difference between environmentalism and true stewardship of God’s handiwork – good earth-keeping – is extreme. Some environmentalism does indeed tend toward worship of the creation. Biblical earth-keeping (caring for creation in accord with the Holy Scriptures), however, is centered on a personal relationship with, and worship of, the Creator. As a part of our worship we respect and care for the creation that comes from God’s awesome power and gracious providence. Caring for creation is one of the major responsibilities given by God to His people (Genesis 2:15)”.

(3) Have our decisions affected others?: In some instances while caring for creation, we may have not been the best stewards of what he gave us. What are some of the environmental problems that we may be dealing with? (TIME TO RESPOND)...

A. Global Warming: The Wikipedia free encyclopedia⁵ defines “Global warming (as) the increase in the average temperature of the Earth's near-surface air and oceans in recent decades and its projected continuation.”

B. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council⁶, global warming is a real phenomenon:

“Carbon dioxide and other air pollution that is collecting in the atmosphere like a thickening blanket, trapping the sun's heat and causing the planet to warm up. Coal-burning power plants are the largest U.S. source of carbon dioxide pollution ~ they produce 2.5 billion tons every year. Automobiles, the second largest source, create nearly 1.5 billion tons of CO2 annually.... Although local temperatures fluctuate naturally, over

⁴ ‘Isn’t “caring for creation” just a euphemism for environmentalism?’ *Answers to Tough Questions* (n.d.). Retrieved June 14, 2007 from http://www.rbc.org/bible_study/answers_to_tough_questions/answers/30948.aspx

⁵ *Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 12, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming

⁶ *National Resources Defense Organization: Issues* (n.d.). Retrieved June 12, 2007, from <http://www.nrdc.org/globalWarming/f101.asp#1>

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the past 50 years the average global temperature has increased at the fastest rate in recorded history. And experts think the trend is accelerating: the 10 hottest years on record have all occurred since 1990.... (Furthermore) since the early 1950s, snow accumulation has declined 60 percent and winter seasons have shortened in some areas....”

C. To the contrary, Tom Bethell⁷ writes:

“Global warming became the environmentalists' cause ...in the late 1980s. ... It has been based on little more than extrapolated temperatures and spurious charts. What are the facts? Surface temperature measurements show a global warming period from about 1910 to 1940, followed by a cooling period until 1975. Since then we have experienced a slight warming trend. These three periods add up to a surface-temperature increase of perhaps one-degree Fahrenheit for the entire 20th century. Satellite measurements of atmospheric temperatures do not agree, however. They began only in 1979, and have shown no significant increase over the last quarter century. Balloon readings did show an abrupt, one-time increase in 1976-1977. Since then, those temperatures have stabilized.

Environmentalists believe that the 20th-century warming was caused by human activity, primarily the burning of fossil fuels. That produces carbon dioxide -- one of several "greenhouse gases." The argument is that their release into the atmosphere wraps the Earth in an invisible shroud⁸. This makes the escape of heat into outer space slightly more difficult than its initial absorption from sunlight. This is the Greenhouse Effect. So the Earth warms up. But whether man-made carbon-dioxide emissions have caused measurable temperature increases over the last 30 years is debated. ...The surface data suggest that man-made carbon dioxide has not in fact increased global temperatures. From 1940 to 1975, coal-fired plants emitted fumes with great abandon and without restraint.... Yet the Earth cooled slightly in that time. And if man-made global warming is real, atmospheric as well as surface temperatures should have increased steadily. But they haven't.”

⁷ Bethell, Tom. “The False Alert of Global Warming,” *The American Spectator* (5/18/2005). Retrieved June 14, 2007 from http://www.spectator.org/dsp_article.asp?art_id=8177.

⁸ Something that conceals, protects, or screens

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D. Economics: Let's try to go a little deeper. Economics is study scarcity or optimizing under limited conditions. In economics, we study side effects of economic decisions: "Every decision (you make) will not only have an impact on the decision maker himself but will also have an impact on the other members of the society which is known as externalities..." "Externalities can be either positive, when an external benefit is generated, or negative, when an external cost is imposed upon others. It is a form of side effect...Those who suffer from external costs do so involuntarily, while those who enjoy external benefits do so at no cost."

- i. "Examples of negative externalities include: Pollution by a firm in the course of its production which causes nuisance (a side effect)...to others.... Many of the most important negative externalities in the economy are concerned with pollution and the environment, such as global warming as we already discussed.
- ii. "Examples of positive externalities... include: Education, which leads to a more civically-minded citizenry with a greater sense of altruism, and leads to a work force that can create more wealth. (What about Christian Education? A side effect of reading the Bible is more tithes and offerings for the church to care for widows, orphans, the sick, prisoners, the naked, the hungry, and the homeless)⁹.

4) **In Closing, where should our focus be?:** (TIME TO RESPOND) We've discussed the origin and purpose of mankind as it relates to earth. We've assessed mankind's stewardship of the earth by discussing side effects of our decisions, like global warming. Now we want to refresh our minds on where our focus should be.

While God gave us dominion over the land and the animals, we need to be reminded that our ultimate focus is on eternity. I recently lost my mother. She suffered and died from colon-rectal cancer. I miss my regular conversations with her. But the night before she died, she said something very eerie. For she must have known her time was limited because she concluded our phone conversation with the statement "it's just life." An interpretation her statement "it's just life" might be that our lives here on earth are temporary vessels of dust. For such a remark is supported in **2 Corinthians 4:17-18**: The NIV reads "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs

⁹ Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia. (n.d.). Retrieved June 14, 2007, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Externality>

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them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Furthermore, our minds ought not to be focused on this earth. **Colossians 3:1-2** states “... you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” **Philippians 3:20** confirms this eternal focus by stating “our citizenship is in heaven.”

Finally, **1 Peter 1:3-4** also encourages us to keep our eye on the prize in heaven. The NIV reads “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.”

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June 23, 2007

Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC
New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary

June 23, 2007

Attendees: Etta L. Washington, Mary Hawes, Beevenell Robinson, Megan Hovis, Evelyn Younger , Gladys Hardy, Janet Slaughter, and James Curtis.

1. **Welcome:** Mrs. Beevenell Robinson led the attendees in: Praise and Worship (Gladys Hardy), Prayer (Evelyn Younger), Scripture: (Gladys Hardy: Psalm 34; James Curtis: Matthew 5:1-12), Testimony (Gladys Hardy, Beevenell Robinson, Etta Washington, Janet Slaughter).
2. **Minutes from Last Meeting:** Minutes from May 2007 meeting were distributed.
3. **Old Business:** none.
4. **New Business:** Corporate Prayer.
5. **Announcements:** none.
6. **Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Saturday, August 25, 2007 at 12:00 PM (July 2007 Meeting was canceled).
7. **Meeting adjourned** at 2:00 PM.

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July 2, 2007

Bible Commentary: Ignoring God A Commentary

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
“Ignoring God”: A Commentary
July 2, 2007

Introduction. Today’s devotion discusses how God might be trying to speak to us but are we really listening? The July 2, 2007 devotion from Our Daily Bread, written by Dave Branon, reads:

“None of us enjoys being ignored. If we’re in a conversation with a friend, it hurts to have our words disregarded. If we’re in a store looking for help, it’s irritating to be ignored by the clerks. When we’re struggling with a problem, it’s painful when no one offers to help. Imagine, then, how it must grieve God when we ignore Him. Think of how His heart of love must break when, despite the fact that He dwells within us through the Holy Spirit, we act as if He’s not there. Or consider how He must feel when His guidelines contained in the Book He gave us are ignored.”

I think what led me to CUM and to the STP was not giving enough attention to God as he desires from me. Despite having several degrees, a good job, rental housing, and a car, it is possible that God was trying to speak to me by leading to CUM. It is possible that God thinks the worldly things that I had collected were insufficient for me. It is possible that he wanted not only instruction about the world we live in to proceed out of my mouth, but also instruction about eternity to proceed out of my mouth. So it is possible that he used joblessness, homelessness, and poverty to bring me closer to him. **Proverbs 13:18 (New International Version)** reads: “He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.” Today, I stand before you with the honor of presenting God’s word to God’s people. Today we are going to discuss a double standard that some of us may find ourselves employing: the double standard of: (i) Desiring God to Listen to You But Not Listening to God, and (ii) Serving God But Not Listening to God. Then we will define what it means to reject or ignore God. Next, we will talk the ways in which we reject God and their consequences: we talk about Rejecting God’s Authority, Rejecting God’s Laws, Rejecting God’s Wisdom, Rejecting God as King, and Rejecting God’s Son. Finally, I will also talk about ways to avoid ignoring God.

The Double Standard: (i) *Desiring God to Listen to You But Not Listening to God.* In **Psalm 55:1 (New International Version)**, David asks God to “Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea.” Many of us ask for an attentive ear from God when we pray, especially when we feel we are deeply

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troubled by our circumstances. We need to be careful not to live by a double standard of asking God to hear us via our prayers yet ignoring God when he speaks to us.

(ii) *The 2nd Double Standard is Serving God But Not Listening to Him.* Rejecting or ignoring God makes us unproductive leaders and can result in misguided future generations of people. **Proverbs 10:17 (New International Version)** reads “He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.” Furthermore, **1 Corinthians 14:37-39 (New International Version)** reads: “If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.” If you are selected by God and ignore God’s commands, you may be punished by being ignored yourself.

Defining Rejection. What does it mean to be rejected or ignored? To ignore is defined as “To refuse to pay attention to; disregard.” Similarly, rejection is defined as “(refusing) to accept, submit to, believe, or make use of.” Ignoring someone is a passive form of rejection. To reject is also defined as “To discard as defective or useless; throw away.” When we reject God, we “discard” God’s authority and kingship as “useless.” We essentially “throw away” his wisdom.

Now we will talk about Rejecting God’s Authority, Rejecting God’s Laws, Rejecting God’s Wisdom, Rejecting God as King, and Rejecting God’s Son.

(1) Rejecting God’s Authority. (i) *Adam and Eve.* God has had to deal with denial and rejection since formation of man. For, the Lord was ignored by man as early as Adam and Eve when they sinned by eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil **Genesis 2:16-17 (New International Version)** reads “And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.” But the serpent convinced the woman that they would not die. **Genesis 3:6 (New International Version)** reads “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” After they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, God cursed the serpent, the woman (Eve) and the man (Adam). **Genesis 3:16-19 (New International Version)** reads (what):

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“To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

The main lesson of Adam and Eve is that when God gives us a command, we should not ignore him.

(ii) *Pharaoh, the Egyptians and the Hebrew Slaves.* God was also ignored by man when Pharaoh ignored what Moses said. Moses was selected by God to lead his people, the Israelites, out of Egypt. On numerous occasions, Moses went to the Pharaoh of Egypt, on behalf of the Lord, to demand what the Lord had said to Moses. (What did Moses say?) **Exodus 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13 (New International Version)** reads: “let my people go, so that they may worship me.” When Pharaoh ignored this command of the Lord, the Lord sent plagues throughout Egypt. (What plagues did he send?): the plague of blood (7:14-24), the plague of frogs (8:15), the plague of gnats or lice (8:16-19), the plague of flies (8:20-32), the plague of livestock (9:1-7), the plague of boils (9:8-12), the plague of hail (9:13-35), the plague of locusts (10:1-20), the plague of darkness (10:21-29), and the plague of the firstborn (11:1-10). Note that the plague of hail describes one of the consequences that men had to deal with when they ignored God.

[Exodus 9:13-26](#) (New International Version) reads (what):

“13 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, 14 or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. 15 For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go. Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. Give an order now

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to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.' "Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt—on men and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt." When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt; hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both men and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.”

We see hear that the penalty for ignoring God was loss productivity throughout Egypt, in terms of their help and their livestock, leading to, ultimately, a loss of their wealth.

(2) Rejecting God’s Laws. Not listening to God’s words and laws is rejecting God’s words and laws. **Leviticus 26:14-39** and **Deuteronomy 28:15-68** describes the consequences for ignoring God’s Law. For example, **Deuteronomy 28:16-19 (New International Version)** reads “You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. 17 Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. 18 The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. 19 You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out.” Basically, ignoring God’s laws leads to unproductive efforts in anything you attempt to do. Additionally, **Hosea 4:6 (New International Version)** reads “my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.” It’s important that we do not veer left or right from God’s instruction. **Hebrews 2:1 (New International Version)** reads “1We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”

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(3) Rejecting Godly Wisdom and Knowledge. God provides us wisdom to live by. **Proverbs 1:20-33 (New International Version)** warns against rejecting Godly wisdom. It reads:

“Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech: "How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you. But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you- when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm."

This passage concludes by advising us to listen and not to ignore God and his wisdom.

We are further advised not to ignore Godly wisdom in **Proverbs 8:32-35.** The **New International Version** reads:

"Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD."

(4) Rejecting God as King. When you seek guidance by man and not by God, you are also rejecting him. God was disappointed that the Israelites rejected God as King when they asked for a King that came from among men. **1 Samuel 8:6-8 (New International Version)** reads:

But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I

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brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.

We must be careful to keep God as the center or King of our lives. Putting government over God makes God grieve. Listening to government officials and paying government taxes before listening to preachers and teachers and sending your tithes and offering to Church are misplaced priorities. It is by the direction of God that we are guided to kingdom of God. For, **Psalm 118:9** reads “It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.”

(5) Rejecting God’s Son. **John 3:35-36 (New International Version)** reads “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.” To hear words of Jesus and not to respond to him is penalized by judgment. **John 12:47-48 (New King James Version)** reads:

“And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”

In **Luke 10:16 (New International Version)**, Jesus is talking. It reads "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me." To be right with God, we must not ignore but listen to the teachings of Jesus. In **John 18:37 (New International Version)**, Jesus spoke saying, "You (Pilate) are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Listen to Avoid the penalty of ignoring God. To avoid the penalty of ignoring and rejecting God, listen to God and act when he speaks to you. **James 1:19 (New International Version)** reads “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak.” **James 1:22-23 (New International Version)** reads: “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror.”

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Those who belong to God listen to and do not ignore God. **1 John 4:4-6 (New International Version)** reads:

“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them (being false prophets), because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They (being false prophets) are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We (children of God) are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us...”

In closing. I still remember applying to colleges and being rejected admission into several graduate school programs. I also remember being rejected for housing from close friends and family, leading to my homelessness. Rejection is not a good feeling.

Some of you might feel ignored by ending up at Central Union Mission. Well, I believe some of us, here at CUM, may have may have been rejected in life because we were rejecting a proper relationship with God, the relationship God desires to have with us. If you fall in this category, do not be discouraged: It is possible God used worldly rejection to bring us closer to him and then re-establish our relationships with world on a right foundation.

Despite what circumstance you may find yourselves in, remember that God is a good God. **Psalm 94:14 (New International Version)** reads “For the LORD will not reject his people” **Psalm 10:17 (New International Version)** reads “You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry” Time after time, God still comes to our rescue. **Psalm 66:20 (New International Version)** reads: “Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!”

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July 16, 2007

Bible Commentary: Taking Out the Trash A Commentary

James Curtis
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“Taking Out the Trash”: A Commentary
July 16, 2007

Today’s devotion, in Our Daily Bread, written by Joe Stowell, reads:

“Just as we need trucks to pick up the garbage that accumulates in our homes, we need to let Jesus remove the “trash” that inevitably accumulates in our hearts. When we forget to take out the trash, it’s not a pretty picture. Jesus wants us to dump it regularly at the foot of the cross. In fact, He has promised to remove it and forget it.... Taking out the trash begins with confession, and then counting on Jesus to get rid of it.”

Reconciliation. Today we are talking about getting rid of sin in our lives and reconciling our relationship with God after we have sinned. When we were younger, some of us may remember arguing with a parent or sibling. And after the argument, the feelings of one of the persons in the argument may have been hurt by the other in the argument. But we may also remember not allowing the conflict to stop at hurt feelings, possibly because there was a blood, time-tested relationship with the person we argued with. For, one of us felt compelled to apologize to other so the relationship to endure. This apology and the acceptance of the apology is a form of reconciliation.

Definition. To reconcile means “To reestablish a close relationship ... (or) to settle or resolve¹⁰.” I like the first part of the definition of reconcile: to reestablish a close relationship, not a distant relationship. In order re-establish, we have an initially established relationship. Then something must happen in order for re-establishment to occur.

For, we have a close, even a blood, relationship with God that established in the beginning. For, God is the maker of man. That is our relationship established by God. **Genesis 1:26-30 (New International Version)** reads:

“Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures

¹⁰ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

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that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so."

Then God noticed what he made and was more than satisfied with his creations. **Genesis 1:31 (New International Version)** reads "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." These passages describe how God gave man dominion over his earth and how God was pleased with his creations, which included man. For, he described them all as 'very good'. The latter passage suggests that the relationship between man and God was indeed 'close'.

However, when sin entered the world, the close relationship we had with God had to be reestablished. For sin breaks the relationship we have with God. Only God's mercy via God accepting our repentance and via us accepting his Son Jesus could reestablish a close relationship with God.

Sin has been with us since the creation of man. **Genesis 2:16-18 (New International Version)** reads: 'And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'" Then, **Genesis 3:6 (New International Version)** reads "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."

And God has had to punish us for sin since the creation of man, in order to maintain that 'close relationship'. **Genesis 5:5 (New International Version)** reads: "Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died." **Romans 5:12 (New International Version)** reads "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—" Even in the New Testament, the Lord sustained a penalty for sin. **Romans 6:23 (New International Version)** reads "For the wages of sin is death."

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The death mentioned in **Romans 6:23** is a physical death. If we are not careful to do God's commandments, we may find us experiencing a second death, which is spiritual death. **Revelations 20:11-15 (New International Version)** reads:

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Man as reconciler. Note that in the Old Testament, God used Moses to attempt to reconcile his chosen people among each other and with God. **Acts 7:23-28 (New International Version)** reads:

“When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?' 'But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'"

In this passage, Moses attempts to protect a fellow Israelite from an Egyptian but goes too far and kills the Egyptian. Moses also attempts to stop two Israelites from fighting but is pushed aside by his fellow Israelites. Later, despite his history of murder, God uses Moses to guide the Israelites out of enslavement by the Egyptians. The Lord spoke to Moses in **Exodus 3:10 (New International Version)**, saying “So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” (Notice the Lord did not say he will use Moses to bring the Israelites into the Promised Land. This may be a prophetic moment where God intentionally omits this, knowing Moses would sin and, therefore, not be

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usable for second stage of the plight of the Israelites). For, Moses sinned (again) against the Lord by (this time) showing a lack of sufficient faith and, therefore, could not be used to bring the Israelites into the land God would give to the Israelites. **Numbers 20:7-12 (New International Version)** reads:

“The LORD said to Moses, Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.” So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

Moses did a lot of good for his people by obeying God's commands. But Moses was just a man, unlike the Son of God. Time after time—way after the days of Moses and Joshua—the Israelites continued to sin before the Lord. The book of Judges concludes by stating, “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.” (**Judges 21:25 - New International Version**). For, men continued to sin, and priests had to make amends for their sin. **Leviticus 4:27-28 (New International Version)** reads “ 'If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands, he is guilty. When he is made aware of the sin he committed, he must bring as his offering for the sin he committed...'” **Leviticus 4:31 (New International Version)** reads “In this way the priest will make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.” For, men could not go to God for reconciliation until God sent a Savior.

Jesus as reconciler. Only a close relationship with Jesus can reestablish a close relationship with God. **John 3:35-36 (New International Version)** reads “The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life (that is, life eternal), for God's wrath remains on him.” **John 5:24 (New International Version)** reads "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

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God sent his son, Jesus the Christ, through his shed blood, death, burial and resurrection, to reconcile man with God so man would not have to go to another man in order to re-establish a close relationship with God. **Romans 5:6-11 (New International Version)** reads:

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Furthermore, **Colossians 1:13-20 (New International Version)** reads:

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

God has expectations on us (as believers) now that we are reconciled to him through Jesus. 2

Corinthians 5:14-21 (New International Version) reads:

“For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is

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in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

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July 23, 2007

Bible Commentary: Grace/My Heart Condemns Me A Commentary

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"My Heart Condemns Me": A Commentary
July 23, 2007

Today's Devotion in Our Daily Bread, written by Herbert Vander Lugt, reads:

"Do you sometimes feel guilty and unworthy because of something you did years ago? You have confessed it and asked God to forgive you, but the memory of it still haunts you. I empathize with you....God, who is greater than our heart and knows us thoroughly (1 John 1:9), has forgiven us..."

This forgiveness is a form of grace from God. Today, we will focus on the subject of Grace. The devotion, dated October 24, 2005, from Our Daily Bread, written by Richard De Haan, reads:

"We are saved by grace, and by grace alone (Rom. 3:24). We can do nothing to earn it (v.28). Our redemption is a gift from God. Our part is to acknowledge our sinfulness and inability to save ourselves. We must place our trust in Jesus, believing that He died on the cross for our sins. God has provided salvation for you-that's His part. Receiving it by faith-that's yours. Have you done your part?"

Defining Grace. Grace is defined as "A favor rendered by one who need not do so"¹¹. Imagine if God had not 'rendered' us the favor of forgiveness. Where would we be? The devotion, dated June 12, 2004, from Our Daily Bread, written by Joanie Yoder, reads:

"Many non-Christians know the hymn "Amazing Grace" but may not know what *grace* means. One day when evangelist D. L. Moody was studying the meaning of God's grace, he dashed into the street and shouted to the first man he saw, "Do you know grace?" Mystified, the man replied, "Grace who?" No doubt Moody then explained grace —that God has compassion on sin-sick people and freely offers them forgiveness and new life through faith in Christ."

¹¹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/grace>

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The devotion, dated September 5, 2006, from Our Daily Bread, written by David McCasland, reads: “God offers to give us what we can’t buy—mercy, pardon, and a changed life infused with His presence....By God’s grace, we can freely receive His something—for nothing.

The devotion, dated December 7, 1999, from Our Daily Bread, written by Joanie Yoder, reads:

‘But what is grace? Paul summed up its countless virtues by calling them "exceeding riches" (Eph. 2:7). He spelled out some of those riches in Ephesians 2. Grace is: God's favor bestowed on undeserving people (v.1); God's instrument for bringing salvation to each believer (v.8); God's provision of spiritual fellowship with others (vv.5-6); and God's creative influence, equipping the believer to fulfill His purposes (v.10). God's grace is not only amazingly rich, it's also free. Yancey points out, "Grace is free only because the giver Himself has borne the cost.”

The devotion, dated September 9, 2003, from Our Daily Bread, written by David McCasland, reads:

“By God's grace—His unmerited love and favor—we have been forgiven in Christ. God tells us that instead of relating to others from a position of superiority, we must put others ahead of ourselves. We should wear the clothes of humility because He "resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). When "the God of all grace" (v.10) controls our lives, He can transform interruptions into opportunities, mistakes into successes, pride into humility, and suffering into strength. That's the amazing power of God. That's the evidence of His grace!”

The devotion, dated November 27, 2005, from Our Daily Bread, written by Dennis fisher, reads: “God's Spirit convicts us of sin and gives us the power to forsake it. When we receive Christ as our Savior, He does for us what we are powerless to do in our own strength. That's amazing grace.”

God has abundant grace to bestow upon us in the form of His Son Jesus. For, **John 1:14-17 (New International Version)** reads:

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of **grace** and truth.... From the fullness of his

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grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

Furthermore, grace was given to those who told of the goodness of Jesus the Christ. **Acts 4:33 (New International Version)** reads: “With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.”

The Grace to the Righteous. God’s grace flows to righteous. Genesis 6:5-9 (New King James Version) reads:

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.”

It is not hard for us to imagine a righteous man receiving grace. For, Joseph was a righteous man who found grace from his Father and from God.

Genesis 37:3-5 (King James Version) reads:

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.”

Genesis 37:26-28 (King James Version) reads:

“And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites

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merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.”

Genesis 39:1-4 (King James Version) reads:

“And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. “

Psalm 84:11 (New King James Version) reads: “For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.” This is confirmed in [Proverbs 3:34 \(King James Version\)](#) which reads: “Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth **grace** unto the lowly.”

Salvation by Grace. **Romans 21-24 (New International Version)** reads:

“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

Acts 15:1-11 (New International Version) reads:

‘Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very

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glad. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

This is confirmed in **Galations 5:3-4 (New International Version)** which reads: "Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace." **Romans 6:13-15 (New International Version)**: "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace." **Romans 5:19-21 (New International Version)** reads:

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. ...But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Closing. The devotion, dated January 18, 2002, from Our Daily Bread, written by Herbert Vander Lugt, reads: "As we consider what Jesus did for us on the cross, taking the full punishment for all our sins, then we will be overwhelmed with the wonder of grace." The devotion, dated October 20, 2004, from Our Daily Bread, written by David McCasland, reads: Christ left His glory in heaven and died on the cross for our sin so that we could be forgiven through faith in Him. His sacrifice was based on His love, not on our merit. All we are and all we have are the Savior's loving gifts of grace to us. For, **Ephesians 2:8-9 (New International Version)** reads: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast."

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July 30, 2007

Bible Commentary: *Unchanging Love* A Commentary

James Curtis

Central Union Mission

“Unchanging Love”: A Commentary

July 30, 2007

In today’s devotion in Our Daily Bread, David McCasland writes:

“God never changes, and neither does His love for us. We are recipients of a perfect love from our heavenly Father, who has loved us “with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3). We are called to accept His unfailing love, to allow it to shape our lives, and to extend it to others.¹²”

Definition of Love. Today we are going to talk about love. Love is defined by the free dictionary¹³ as (1) “A deep, tender, ineffable¹⁴ feeling of affection and solicitude¹⁵ toward a person, such as that arising from kinship, recognition of attractive qualities, or a sense of underlying oneness.” Vernon Grounds writes about an unemotional form of love. He states:

“From childhood on, we are urged to show love, whether it's for parents or pets or friends, and especially for Jesus. But what is love? We think of love as an emotion, a tender feeling, a positive reaction. So when Scripture *commands* us to love God and our neighbor, we may be confused about the meaning of love (Matthew 22:37-40). Feelings simply cannot be commanded. A mother can order her child to love spinach, but she can't compel him to react positively when faced with a helping of that green vegetable. So love must be more than an emotion. An old translation of our Lord's command may help us to understand love as an action that we choose: "Thou shalt love" It's choosing to be patient, kind, selfless, and humble (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). We can love others even though we may not like them....¹⁶”

Vernon Grounds also writes:

¹² “Unchanging Love,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, July 30, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-07-30-07.shtml>)

¹³ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Love>

¹⁴ “Incapable of being expressed; indescribable or unutterable,” according to the <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Love>

¹⁵ The state of being solicitous; care or concern, as for the well-being of another,” according to <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/solicitude>

¹⁶ “Love Goes Beyond Liking,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, November 25, 2005. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-25-05.shtml>)

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“Even the best of human love is insufficient to give us the security and significance we need. Why? One reason is that man's life is fleeting. People grow old and die, and love eventually comes to an end. Another reason is that in personal relationships, we know that people are sinful, fickle, and unfaithful. We need the eternal love of God, who is love. He views each of us as priceless. And the gospel reveals that we have such love in the Person of God's Son, Jesus Christ. His love will never let us go¹⁷.”

Biblical Definition of Love. Dave Branon writes:

“If there is one thing believers in Jesus should be known for, it is love. The word *love* appears in Scripture more than 500 times. The essence of the gospel is love, as we see in John 3:16. "For God so loved the world . . ." The epistle of 1 John 3:16 elaborates: "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us." Christians are to serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13), love their neighbors as themselves (Galatians 5:14), live a life of love (Ephesians 5:2), and love with actions and in truth (1 John 3:18)...¹⁸.”

The Biblical definition of love can be found where? **1 Corinthians 13 (New International Version)**

reads:

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put

¹⁷ “Human Love Isn't Enough,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, December 11, 2002. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-11-02.shtml>)

¹⁸ “Why Love Begets Hate,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 18, 2005. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-18-05.shtml>)

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childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

So to recap, the Biblical definition of love is patient, kind (not rude), humble (not proud), selfless (not self-seeking), slow to anger (not easily angered), forgets wrongs, rejoices in truth, protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres, and always succeeds (never fails).

And verse 13 states that love is greater than faith and hope. The biblical definition of faith is found where? **Hebrews 11:1 (King James Version)** reads “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Furthermore, **Hebrews 11:6 (King James Version)** reads: “But without faith it is impossible to please him.” Therefore, since love is greater than faith, it is impossible to please God without love.

Moreover, The Free Dictionary defines hope as “A...desire accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment.”¹⁹ God said he would give us hope. Do you know where in the Bible? **Jeremiah 29:11 (New International Version)** reads “For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” If love is greater than hope, will not only prosper you with hope and a future, but he will prosper you with love.

The Greatest Commandment of God. Do you know what the greatest commandment of God is? love.

Where in the Bible does it state this? **Matthew 22:36-39 (New International Version)** reads:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

How does the greatest commandment and second greatest commandment relate to the 10 commandments? Foremost, where are the 10 commandments located? **Exodus 20:1-17 (New International Version)** reads:

¹⁹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/hope>

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“And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (1) "You shall have no other gods before me. (2)"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments. (3) "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. (4) "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

(5) "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. (6) "You shall not murder. (7) "You shall not commit adultery. (8) "You shall not steal. (9) "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. (10) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

How are the 10 Commandments related to the greatest commandment? Commandments 1-4 are commanding us to love who? God. Commandments 5-10 are commanding us to love who? each other. This command is confirmed in the Book of John. **John 13:34 (New International Version)** reads: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Displaying Love. One of the most familiar acts of love occurred in when a women washed Jesus' feet with where hair. **Luke 7:36-47 (New International Version)** reads what?

“Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned

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that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much."

David Roper writes:

"We're forgiven for all our sins, held fast by God's love, and destined to enjoy eternal fellowship with Him, not because of anything we have done but because He has done everything for us. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John 4:10). That's perfect love!²⁰"

Proverbs 10:12 (King James Version) reads: "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins."

David Branon writes: "Jesus is the ultimate source of love and respect (Ephesians 5:25-33). True love is Christ-like love."²¹

David McCasland writes:

"It's no accident that one of the best-known verses in the Bible is John 3:16. It says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish

²⁰ "Perfect Love," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, February 13, 2004. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-13-04.shtml>)

²¹ "True Love," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, December 4, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-04-03.shtml>)

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but have everlasting life." Could it be that the love we long for the most is God's love? Is Jesus Christ the special person we so eagerly seek to sweep us off our feet? If so, then accepting God's love in Christ could change our lives in remarkable ways. Hope, peace, and a zest for living—they all spring from being in love with Jesus.²²

In Closing. **Psalm 36:5-7 (New International Version)** reads:

“Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O LORD, you preserve both man and beast. How priceless is your unfailing love! “

Psalm 33:5 (New International Version) reads “The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.” **Psalm 33:18 (New International Version)** reads: “But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love.” **Psalm 100:5 (New International Version)** reads: “For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.” **Psalm 103:8 (New International Version)** reads: “The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.” **Psalm 107:1 (New International Version)** reads: “Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.” **Proverbs 15:9 (New International Version)** reads: “The LORD detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness.”

Finally, Mart De Haan writes:

“God has more than enough love to go around. Besides, those who are "well" and are not "lost" experience the Father's love as fully as those to whom He gives special attention (v.31). Father, forgive us for feeling slighted when You shower Your love on needy sinners. Help us to see how needy we are and to abide in Your boundless love.²³”

²² Looking For Love,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, November 2, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-02-03.shtml>)

²³ “Who Gets the Love,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, September 23, 2004. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-09-23-04.shtml>)

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July 30, 2007

Bible Commentary: A Good Stretch A Commentary

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
“A Good Stretch”: A Commentary
July 30, 2007

Cindy Hess Kasper writes:

‘While we stretch our spiritual muscles, we may feel discomfort. But God assures us, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9). Our adequacy—our sufficiency—is found in Him (3:5). When you boldly step out in faith and obedience to God, you may be surprised at how a “good stretch” can strengthen your spiritual life!²⁴

Today, we are going to talk about faith, in terms of historical figures in the Bible.

Dictionary Definition of Faith. The Free Dictionary defines faith as “(1) Confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing; (2) Belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence...[and] (3) ...The theological virtue defined as secure belief in God and a trusting acceptance of God's will²⁵.”

Biblical Definition of Faith. **Hebrews 11:1-3, 6 (New International Version)** reads: 1Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2This is what the ancients were commended for. 3By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible....6And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Herbert Vander Lugt helps us understand the Biblical explanation of faith:

“...many have told me that they are troubled by the description of faith in Hebrews 11:1. To them it defines faith as absolute intellectual certainty—something they do not always have. But in its context, this verse explains both what faith is and what it does. It affirms the certainty that comes

²⁴ “A Good Stretch,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 6, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-06-07.shtml>)

²⁵ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/faith>

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as we continue in our commitment to trust Jesus and His Word. As we do, we become assured of the reality of God and the heaven that awaits us²⁶.”

Joanie Yoder writes about the misguidance of ‘feelings-centered faith’:

“Some Christians try to live from one dramatic mountaintop experience to another. Their relationship with the Lord is based on their feelings at the moment. They go from Bible conferences to seminars to Bible studies, trying to maintain an emotional high....What's an effective antidote for a feelings-centered faith? According to the apostle Paul in Colossians 2, being Christ-centered is the answer. Having received Christ Jesus by faith, we are instructed to continue to "walk in Him" by faith (v.6) through both the highs and lows of life. By walking in close fellowship with Him each day, we become "rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith" (v.7). We grow steadily into maturity as we focus on Christ and what He has done for us, and not on our feelings. Mountaintop experiences can be beneficial, but nothing is more profitable than an ongoing, Christ-centered life of faith.²⁷”

Herbert Vander Lugt writes about the importance of salvation-based faith: “Genuine saving faith...is based on the truth of God's Word....A Bible-instructed faith focuses on Christ-His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Only that kind of faith can bring salvation and comfort²⁸.”

Furthermore, Vernon Grounds writes about faith in the unseen: “Today, some are seeking high-voltage experiences to buttress their faith. But ..., blessed are those who believe without having seen (Jn. 20:29). Blessed are those for whom God's Word is sufficient²⁹.” Vernon Grounds also writes about avoiding unbelief through faith:

“Instead of...bleak unbelief, we can open our hearts and minds to have faith in God as He has revealed Himself through His Son Jesus Christ. We can have forgiveness of our sin through His death on the cross. This not only assures us of a blessed eternity but also fills our here-and-now experience with measureless blessings of meaning and hope. We can know by the indwelling Holy Spirit that Jesus' words in John 8:12 are true: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me

²⁶ “What Faith Is and Does,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, January 26, 2001. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-01-26-01.shtml>)

²⁷ “Christ-Centered Faith,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 25, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-25-03.shtml>)

²⁸ “An Instructed Faith,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, May 6, 2000. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-05-06-00.shtml>)

²⁹ “Faith Now, Sight Later,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, March 13, 1999. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-13-99.shtml>)

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shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." As we move along on our earthly pilgrimage, we don't need to stumble in the darkness of unbelief. Instead, we can walk confidently in the light toward an eternity of unending blessedness. That's the difference faith in Jesus Christ makes³⁰."

Displaying Faith. **Hebrews 11** talks about faithful men in the Bible—We will focus on Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

(1) Abel. Foremost, let's talk about Abel and Cain. Who are they? The sons (or the 1st generational descendent) of Adam and Eve. What did they do differently? Abel brought forth better offerings than Cain. **Genesis 4:1-5 (New International Version)** reads what?

"1 Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor."

The Bible describes Abel as faithful. **Hebrews 11:4 (New International Version)** reads: "4By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings...."

(2) Enoch. Second, let's talk about Enoch. Who is Enoch? Enoch is the name of a son of Cain (**Genesis 4:17**) and also the name a descendent of Seth. Who is Seth? Seth is the third son (but still the 1st generational descendent) of Adam and Eve. Enoch is the great, great, great grandson (or the 5th generational descendent) of Seth (or the 6th generational descendent of Adam and Eve). Who is the son of Enoch, Seth's descendent, and why is he significant? Methuselah (**Genesis 5:21-27**). He lived longer than any other man. How long did he live? 969 years (**Genesis 5:27**). Getting back Enoch, Seth's descendent, who is he again? Enoch is the great, great, great grandson of Seth and the 6th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. What was special about Enoch? He never died. **Genesis 5:18-24 (New International Version)** reads:

³⁰ "The Difference Faith Makes," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, January 20, 2006. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-01-20-06.shtml>)

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“18 When Jared (the great, great grandson of Seth) had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. 19 And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. 20 Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. 21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.”

The Bible describes Enoch as faithful. **Hebrews 11:5 (New International Version)** reads: “5By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.”

(3) Noah. Noah is the great (6 times) grandson (or 8th generational descendent) of Seth (or 9th generational descendent of Adam and Eve). Noah was special in the eyes of God. **Genesis 6:5-8,11-14 (New International Version)** reads:

“5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD....

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. 14 So make yourself an ark....”

The Bible describes Noah as faithful. **Hebrews 11:7 (New International Version)** reads: “7By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.”

(4) Abraham. What is the original name of Abraham? Abram. Abram is the 10th generational descendent of Noah (**Genesis 11:10-32**). Abram is also the 19th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. The Lord made him the father of many nations. **Genesis 12:1-4 (King James Version)** reads:

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“1Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. 4So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.”

The Bible describes Abram or Abraham as faithful. **Hebrews 11:8 (New International Version)** reads:

“8By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.”

For a long time, Abram had no children. **Genesis 16:1-4,15-16 (New International Version)** reads:

“1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived...

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.”

Genesis 17:1-8 (New International Version) reads:

‘1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. 2 I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for

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the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."

Genesis 21:1-4 (New International Version) reads:

"1 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. 3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him."

The Bible describes Abraham again as faithful. **Hebrews 11:11-12 (New International Version)** reads:

"11 By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered himself faithful who had made the promise. 12 And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore."

(5) Isaac. Who is Isaac again? The son Abraham and Sarah had at old age. Isaac is also the 20th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. What happened between Abraham and Isaac? God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. **Genesis 22:1-18 (New International Version)** reads:

"1 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. 9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son

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Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram ^[a] caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." 15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

For the 3rd time, the Bible describes Abraham as faithful. **Hebrews 11:17-19 (New International Version)** reads:

"17By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."19Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death."

(6) Jacob. Who is Jacob? Jacob was the son of Isaac and the twin brother of Esau. Jacob is also the 21th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. **Genesis 25:21-27 (New International Version)** reads:

"21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." 24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. ^[e] 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. ^[f]

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Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. 27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.”

What did Jacob due to Esau? Jacob tricked his brother Esau into selling his birthright from his father.

Genesis 25:29-34 (New International Version) reads:

“29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. 30 He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.) 31 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright." 32 "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?" 33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.”

What does Jacob due to his father? Jacob tricks his father Isaac and gets Esau’s blessing. **Genesis 27:1-40**

(New International Version) reads:

“1 When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." "Here I am," he answered. 2 Isaac said, "I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death. 3 Now then, get your weapons—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. 4 Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die." 5 Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, 6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, 7 'Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.' 8 Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: 9 Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. 10 Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies." 11 Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I'm a man with smooth skin. 12 What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather

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than a blessing." 13 His mother said to him, "My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me." 14 So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. 15 Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. 16 She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. 17 Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. 18 He went to his father and said, "My father." "Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?" 19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing." 20 Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?" "The LORD your God gave me success," he replied. 21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not." 22 Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." 23 He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him. 24 "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked. "I am," he replied. 25 Then he said, "My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing." Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. 26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me." 27 So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed. 28 May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness— an abundance of grain and new wine. 29 May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed." 30 After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. 31 He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, "My father, sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing." 32 His father Isaac asked him, "Who are you?" "I am your son," he answered, "your firstborn, Esau." 33 Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!" 34 When Esau heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me—me too, my father!" 35 But

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he said, "Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing." 36 Esau said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob ^[a]? He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!" Then he asked, "Haven't you reserved any blessing for me?" 37 Isaac answered Esau, "I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?" 38 Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!" Then Esau wept aloud. 39 His father Isaac answered him, "Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above. 40 You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck."

The Bible describes Isaac as faithful. **Hebrews 11:20 (New International Version)** reads: "20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future."

Note that an angel of God changed Jacob's name to what? Israel. **Genesis 32:24-28 (New International Version)** reads:

"24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. 28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."

The sons of Jacob are the foundation of the tribes of Israel. Who are tribes of Israel? Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. **Genesis 49:1-28 (New International Version)** describes their blessings from Jacob. Jacob claims Joseph's sons as his own, thereby; getting blessings directly from Jacob as they would they get from their own father. In **Genesis 48:5-6 (New International Version)** Jacob states to Joseph:

"5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. 6 Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers."

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The Bible describes Jacob as faithful. **Hebrews 11:21 (New International Version)** reads: “21By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.”

In Closing. Vernon Grounds writes unfailing faith:

“Many of us talk about loss and suffering and argue about why evil things happen to good people. But it's quite different to deal victoriously with the painful experiences that happen to us personally. What we really need in the teeth of affliction is not a plausible explanation but the ability to endure without emotional collapse or spiritual bitterness. We need the sustaining confidence that enables us to believe in God's love and wisdom (Job 1:21; 2:10). Pray for an unfaltering faith that stands strong under life's greatest pressures³¹.”

³¹ “Unfaltering Faith,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 25, 2000. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-25-00.shtml>)

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July 30, 2007

Bible Commentary: *The Lingo* A Commentary

James Curtis
 Central Union Mission
 “The Lingo”: A Commentary
 July 30, 2007

Anne Cetas writes about methods of sharing our faith to others. She states:

“Believers in Jesus have their own lingo as well. We use common jargon that nonbelievers may not comprehend. For instance, we use the words *grace*, *saved*, and *repentance*. These are all good words, but as we’re sharing our faith, it might be more helpful to say, “God’s gift of unearned forgiveness” instead of *grace*. Or “rescued from death and given eternal life” for *saved*. We could say, “to turn away from wrongs” for repentance. The apostle Paul was willing to be flexible in his ministry in order to reach as many as possible with the gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 9:19-23). That might have even included the words he used as he explained the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Explaining our faith in easy-to-understand terms may help someone to grasp the meaning of being born again—transformed by Jesus’ love and forgiveness³².”

Vernon Grounds also writes about explaining our faith to others. He uses an example of a scientist and writes about the limitations of formal worldly education when trying to explain our faith to others. He writes:

“British scientist Thomas Huxley (1825-1895) vigorously supported the theory of evolution, which earned him the nickname “Darwin’s bulldog.” As an agnostic, he believed religion was a harmful superstition. One day Huxley asked a deeply committed Christian, “What does your faith mean to you?” Knowing Huxley’s skepticism, the man paused and then replied, “You are very educated, and you can dispute anything I say.” Huxley urged him to explain why he was a Christian. So from his heart the man told what Jesus meant to him. Huxley, deeply moved, didn’t argue. Wistfully he said, “I’d give my right hand for your faith in Jesus.” We can draw two lessons from this encounter. One is that while we may prize knowledge, we know that formal education is not necessary for the exercise of life-changing, saving faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). The second lesson is

³² “The Lingo,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, August 27, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-27-07.shtml>)

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that a simple, straightforward testimony from the heart can often be more effective than a scholarly argument....Let's not hesitate to tell people what Jesus means to us personally³³.”

I have come to a similar conclusion: explaining our faith simply with our testimony far outperforms explanations based on scholarly jargon. After all these years after investing in secular schooling (for instance, investing time and energy in being the best elementary school student, investing time and energy in being the best middle school student, investing time and energy in being the best high school student, investing time, money and energy in being the best college student, and investing in time, money and energy in being a top graduate school student, investing time and energy in learning musical instruments that I forgot how to play, investing time and energy in student government activities, and forgoing at least 10 to 15 years of substantial employment income), I have grown in my relationship with God to learn that my wisdom from secular education is minimally important relative to my wisdom from Biblical education. Moreover, my wisdom from secular education is minimally important relative to the power of my testimony of overcoming my downfalls in my life.

Today, we are going to talk about effectively sharing God's word or a term called evangelism. We will first define evangelism. Then we will discuss why we should engage in evangelism and how to be an evangelist.

Definition of evangelism. What is evangelism? Evangelism is defined as “(1) Zealous preaching and dissemination of the gospel, as through missionary work; (2) Militant zeal for a cause; and (3) zealous preaching and advocacy of the gospel³⁴.” Note that zealous is defined as “Enthusiastic devotion to a cause, ideal, or goal and tireless diligence in its furtherance³⁵.” Therefore, evangelism is an ‘enthusiastic devotion’ to the ‘dissemination of the gospel.’ **Revelation 3:15-17 (New International Version)** warns us against having a lack of enthusiasm with regard to Him and His word. It reads: “15I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” Based on this passage of Scripture, God wants us to tell the ‘good news’ with certain level of excitement.

³³ “A Powerful Witness,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, November 9, 2002. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-09-02.shtml>)

³⁴ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/evangelism>

³⁵ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/zeal>

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Why Work as an Evangelist? We are to be evangelists because God commands it. Foremost, we are commissioned to be evangelists because we are commissioned by the Lord. For, the Great Commission in **Matthew 28:19-20 (New International Version)** reads what? “19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Second, God’s word directly tells us to be ‘evangelists’: **2 Timothy 4:5 (New International Version)** reads: “But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”

Third, we are commissioned to be evangelists who are a light of righteousness in the darkness of sin. **Matthew 5:14-15 (New International Version)** reads:

“14You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Julie Link uses the example of lighthouses to explain why we are commissioned to evangelists. She writes

“Lighthouses were not built just to be admired; they were built to hold lights that guide sailors to safety. A lighthouse is most useful and appreciated when, in the darkness of night, only its light can be seen—not the structure itself. When Jesus sent out His disciples, He called them "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). He also indicated that their task was not to draw attention to themselves, but to do good works that would cause people to recognize God's goodness and glorify Him. Jesus said that just as a lamp's purpose is to give light, we also are to let our light shine (vv.15-16). We're most effective when we shine brightly in the darkness, guiding people who need to find safe harbor in Christ. For a light to be effective, it has to be shining in a dark place³⁶.”

Fourth, we are to be evangelists because the scripture was made to be taught and provide a living hope during times of duress. **Romans 15:4 (New International Version)** reads: “For everything that was

³⁶ “This Little Light Of Mine,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, October 14, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-14-03.shtml>)

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written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Furthermore, God commands, in the New Testament, that we be prepared evangelists. **1 Peter 3: 15 (New International Version)** reads: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” God desires for us to be prepared evangelists no matter what the circumstances may be. **2 Timothy 4:1-2 (New International Version)** reads:

“1In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

Note that, we, believers in Christ, are God’s communicators and He takes responsibility for the results. For, David McCasland reads: “Through our words and actions, we testify of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. We are His messengers, but He is the message³⁷.” **Matthew 13:22-24 (New International Version)** reads:

“22The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. 23But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

How to be an evangelist? Henry Bosch, Haddon Robinson and Julie Link, of RBC Ministries, write about how to be effective evangelists. Foremost, Henry Bosch writes about methods of being more enthusiastic about evangelism by comparing evangelism to banking. He states:

“it's just like getting interest in a bank. You have to put in a little something first or you'll never have any! The more you put in, the more you'll get out of it. Try it." That philosophy is simple but true. If you lack interest in something, it is probably because you have put very little into it. You say you can find no pleasure in Bible study, but have you ever sat down with a concordance and looked up the Scripture references on a given subject? Have you ever read the Psalms until you came to some promise that comforted you, and then meditated on that truth until your heart

³⁷ “Just A Messenger,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, January 23, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-01-23-03.shtml>)

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overflowed with praise? Have you ever read a book of the Bible at one sitting so you could get the sense of its message? If not, no wonder you have no interest! The apostle Peter emphasized the effort we need to put into the Christian life if we are to be fruitful (2 Pet. 1:5-10). Perhaps you say you have little enthusiasm for evangelism or discipling others. Have you ever tried to speak to someone or volunteered for ministry? If not, it's time to invest some effort-then watch your interest grow^{38!}"

I propose that you need to be invested in the ministries of the church in order to gain a zeal for disseminating the gospel or evangelism. Once you have invested your money, time and energy in ministry, for instance, in the usher/greeter/security ministry or in the deacon ministry, it is only natural to desire to see the return in your life and the lives of others. Therefore, I argue that evangelism not requires not only investing time in learning God's word but effective evangelism also requires active participation in the aims of your church.

Haddon Robinson writes about removing the stereotypes of evangelism. He states:

"When you think of the term *evangelism*, what picture flashes onto the wall of your mind? A large stadium filled with people? A small booklet with a set of diagrams? A Christian wearing a pin with the symbol of a fish? A zealous believer playing intellectual chess with a pagan opponent? A salesman convincing a reluctant person to "try Jesus"? Evangelism is a 10-letter dirty word to some of us. While we think it's a dandy idea for others, we're sure it isn't for us. We're not cut out to sell, nor shrewd enough to play intellectual games with non-Christians. Evangelism, though, isn't about being a huckster who cons people into buying what they don't need. It has nothing to do with grabbing people by the lapels and shoving on them a faith that goes no deeper than the shirt pocket. What a grim indictment resides in the remark, "You could identify the people she had witnessed to by their haggard look." Evangelism is simply sharing with others what we know about Jesus. "We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Corinthians 4:5). No tricks. No deception. Speak the truth...in love. Then leave the results with God³⁹."

Julie Link writes about simply being yourself when engaging in evangelism. She writes:

³⁸ "No Interest?," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, April 13, 1999. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-13-99.shtml>)

³⁹ "To Tell the Truth," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, October 14, 2005. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-14-05.shtml>)

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“The authentic story of the work Christ has done in our lives is the best testimony we have. We don’t need to doctor it or dramatize it. When we tell the truth about Christ’s power to save us and keep us from sin, our testimony will be credible. If the thought of taking classes or memorizing plans has kept you from witnessing, try a different approach: be yourself⁴⁰!”

(Discuss Handouts; written by Nick Pollard)

In closing, David Egener writes:

“Followers of Christ have a similar mission. We have a life-transforming message to proclaim to those who need to hear it (Romans 10:9-15). Every day, people all over the world are being saved from sin and its consequences through faith in the Lord Jesus. Our mission as His followers is to be messengers who "preach the gospel of peace" (v.15), telling others about the Savior, Jesus Christ. There is no more worthy mission, for "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (v.13). Are you doing your part to fulfill this mission?”

⁴⁰ “Just Be Yourself,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, June 22, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-06-22-07.shtml>)

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August 25, 2007

Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC
New Commandment Baptist Church Classroom

August 25, 2007

Attendees: Etta L. Washington, Mary Hawes, Debbie P. Gordon, Shirley B. Beynum, Beevenell Robinson, Clarence Thomas, and James Curtis
Speaker: Rev. Dr. Steven E. Tucker

1. **Welcome:** Rev. Dr. Stephen E. Tucker welcomed attendees at 12:00 PM.
2. **Minutes from Last Meeting:** Minutes from June 2007 meeting were distributed.
3. **Old Business:** Money was collected for textbooks.
4. **New Business:** Rev. Dr. Tucker presided over training of new elders and deacons. He presented the following information on 'What Deacons/Elders Do?':

A. It is the responsibility of the Officers (Deacons/Elders) to make sure the Communion table is ready. Deacons/Elders also serve communion to the sick and shut-in. This is a primary function of Deacons/Elders:

i. Identify the sick and shut-in. The Pastor determines who is sick and coordinated by NCBC office (Sister LaSharon Bartley/Deacon Joyce Milton).

Note: A current issue is the need to update the church roster to include new members and correcting phone numbers and zip codes of old members.

ii. It is good to go in teams (2-4 persons) when serving communion. Divide up the teams geographically. Divide up the responsibilities among Deacons/Elders

iii. Get the permission of sick and shut-in to commune them first. Once invited in by a sick or shut-in person,

(1) Find out their condition—see how they are feeling,

(2) Sing a song that pertains to communion,

(3) Join hands and pray,

(4) Serve the bread and then the wine,

(5) Sing another song, and

(6) Close in prayer.

Note: If you read a Scripture, read from the book of Corinthians.

(7) If they want to pay their tithes or have a prayer request, take their tithes and prayer requests back to the Church.

B. Deacons/Elders also serve during Baptism:

i. Identify the candidates for Baptism,

ii. Be at the Baptismal service when the candidates arrive,

iii. Make sure the candidates change their clothes

iv. Make sure candidates for Baptism are here on Sunday for the right-hand of fellowship

Note: The 'ball can be dropped' (or mishaps can occur) when it is time to fill the Baptismal pool, to call the candidates, to meet the candidates, or instruct the candidates.

C. With church growth, disciples multiply (Acts 6:1-6). When the church grows, clicks (or factions) occur. One group (or family) desires one way, and another click (or family) desires another way.

D. Deacons/Elders have a role in the prayer life of the Church. The pastor cannot be everywhere and pray for everybody. The congregation needs to feel comfortable with you praying for them.

E. God does things decently and in order.

i. Communion and Baptism ought to be orderly!

ii. You ought to inform the Pastor if you are going to represent the church out of respect for the Pastor (For, he may have something else for you).

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iii. Be mindful of the occasion:

- (1) Do not go to an officers' day event and preach an ushers' day word,
- (2) Choose your Scripture readings wisely, and
- (3) Choose your songs to fit the occasion.

iv. Deacons-in-Training should allow ordained Deacons to take the lead in Deacon responsibilities. Deacons-in-Training should sit with Deacons. If a Deacon-in-Training serves another post, they should leave that post when it is time for communion and meetings. Deacons-in-Training should wear white on Communion Sunday.

5. **Announcements:** none

6. **Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Saturday, September 22, 2007 at 1:00 PM

7. **Meeting adjourned** at 2:00 PM.

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September 2, 2007

Bible Commentary: Grace

James Curtis
New Commandment Baptist Church
“Grace”
September 2, 2007

Introduction. (name, I grew up as a child at VABC and spent some time as a member of MBC before coming to NCBC, currently I am the assistant bookkeeper in the accounting office at CUM and an administrative assistant in the maintenance department, trained to teach college students and conduct/supervise research, earned 3 college degrees (HU, OSU), also studied at (RU, UMCP, UT);

But these credentials did not prevent 3 years of homelessness, 4 years of joblessness, 10 years of alcoholism, and more than 100K in financial debt;

Now—after rededicating my life to God via a Spiritual Transformation Program and Bible education/wisdom from this church, I have housing, I am gainfully employed at a Christian mission, teach a Bible class to men recovering from drugs and alcohol, have not had a drink in 6 years, reduced my debt down to 15% of the peak amount, and I am active member of the world’s greatest church—NCBC (8 AM Service coordinator, greeter, and anniversary committee member);

Essentially, I have become a child of God. For **John 1:12 (NIV)**: “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” I am a living example of God’s grace. Richard De Haan⁴¹, of RBC Ministries, writes:

“We are saved by grace, and by grace alone (Rom. 3:24). We can do nothing to earn it (v.28). Our redemption is a gift from God. Our part is to acknowledge our sinfulness and inability to save ourselves. We must place our trust in Jesus, believing that He died on the cross for our sins. God has provided salvation for you—that’s His part. Receiving it by faith—that’s (your part).”

Defining Grace. Grace is defined as “A favor rendered by one who need not do so⁴².” Imagine if God had not ‘rendered’ us the favor of forgiveness. Where would we be? David McCasland, of RBC Ministries writes: “God offers to give us what we can’t buy—mercy, pardon, and a changed life infused

⁴¹ October 24, 2005, from Our Daily Bread

⁴² <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/grace>

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with His presence....By God's grace, we can freely receive His something—for nothing⁴³." Joanie Yoder, of RBC Ministries, writes:

'But what is grace? Paul summed up its countless virtues by calling them "exceeding riches" (Eph. 2:7). He spelled out some of those riches in Ephesians 2. Grace is: God's favor bestowed on undeserving people (v.1); God's instrument for bringing salvation to each believer (v.8); God's provision of spiritual fellowship with others (vv.5-6); and God's creative influence, equipping the believer to fulfill His purposes (v.10). God's grace is not only amazingly rich, it's also free. Yancey points out, "Grace is free only because the giver Himself has borne the cost"⁴⁴."

David McCasland, of RBC Ministries, writes:

"By God's grace—His unmerited love and favor—we have been forgiven in Christ. God tells us that instead of relating to others from a position of superiority, we must put others ahead of ourselves. We should wear the clothes of humility because He "resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). When "the God of all grace" (v.10) controls our lives, He can transform interruptions into opportunities, mistakes into successes, pride into humility, and suffering into strength. That's the amazing power of God. That's the evidence of His grace!⁴⁵"

Noah. God's grace flowed to Noah. **Genesis 6:5-9 (New King James Version)** reads:

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God."

Joseph. Joseph also found grace from his Father and from God. **Genesis 37:3-5 (King James Version)** reads:

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him

⁴³ September 5, 2006, from Our Daily Bread

⁴⁴ December 7, 1999, from Our Daily Bread

⁴⁵ September 9, 2003, from Our Daily Bread

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more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.”

Genesis 37:26-28 (King James Version) reads:

“And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.”

Genesis 39:1-4 (King James Version) reads:

“And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.”

Romans 21-24 (New International Version) reads:

“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

Jesus. Through Jesus we obtain grace. **Romans 5:19-21 (New International Version)** reads:

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. ...But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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In closing, **Ephesians 2:8-9** reads: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”

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September 10, 2007

Bible Commentary: Job's Birthday A Commentary

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"Job's Birthday: A Commentary"
September 10, 2007

Introduction. name, I grew up as a child in Virginia (thru age 16) and DC (age 16 on); I grew up at VABC and spent some time as a member of MBC, SOGO before coming to NCBC (Georgia Ave and Park Road NW); Currently I am the assistant bookkeeper in the accounting office at CUM and an administrative assistant in the maintenance department but I am trained to teach college students and conduct/supervise research; I earned 3 college degrees (HU, OSU), also studied at (RU, UMCP, UT);

But these credentials did not prevent suffering including 3 years of homelessness, 4 years of joblessness, recent death of my mother due to cancer, 10 years of alcoholism, and more than 100K in financial debt;

Now—after rededicating my life to God via a Spiritual Transformation Program in 2005 and 2006; Bible education/wisdom from my church, I have housing, I am gainfully employed at a Christian mission, have not had a drink in 6 years, reduced my debt down to 15% of the peak amount, teach a Bible class to men recovering from addiction, and I am active member of NCBC (8 AM Service coordinator, greeter, and anniversary committee member);

Essentially, I have become a child of God. For **John 1:12 (NIV)**: "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

Today, we are going to talk about suffering. I will define suffering. Then I will talk about the suffering of Job and how suffering for a little while can lead to positive outcomes.

Definition of Suffering. Suffering is defined by the free dictionary⁴⁶ as "the bearing of pain or distress; misery resulting from affliction; a state of ill-being due to affliction or misfortune; and emotional distress; a fundamental feeling that people try to avoid."

Dave Brannon⁴⁷ writes about the purpose of suffering:

"Why is there suffering? You might ask that question when you hear of hurricanes, mudslides, earthquakes, and other disasters taking people's lives. Job asked that question too. Why is there so much pain in God's world? Consider these reasons:

⁴⁶ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/suffering>

⁴⁷ "Suffering: How Do We Respond?," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, October 10, 2006, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-10-06.shtml>).

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1. *We can't escape the laws that govern our universe.* We need such things as gravity, weather, and fire to survive, but they can lead to tragedy (Matt. 5:45). Fire is good in your stove, but an out-of-control fire can kill.
2. *We are a social race.* Our lives are intertwined, so we sometimes suffer when the sin or foolishness of others spreads trouble (1 Cor. 12:26).
3. *Sin brought a curse on the earth and its people.* This curse includes disease and death (Gen. 3:15-24).
4. *Suffering awakens compassion.* Jesus told us to care for those who suffer in poverty. We are His partners in helping others (Luke 10:33-35).

As Job discovered, God's world is a fallen place. When we see suffering, we can use it as an opportunity to serve God by helping others, to trust Him in spite of the difficulty, and to grow in our faith in Him. When trouble hits, let our first reaction be to trust the Lord and care for the needs of others.”

Dennis De Haan⁴⁸ writes about who suffers, focusing on the suffering of good people:

“(A young man) struggled with a question that theologians have wrestled with for centuries. For him the problem was not theoretical but practical. He was trying to understand why his mother had to have brain surgery. He asked, “Why do good people suffer, Mom?” She told him, “Suffering is part of living in a sin-cursed world, and good people suffer like anybody else. That’s why I’m glad we have Jesus. If I die, I’ll go to a better place, and I’ll long for the day when I can see you again.” She then said that she could understand his frustration, but she told him not to put the blame on God. If you and I are baffled by the suffering of good people, we can put the question squarely before God, argue with Him if we must, and struggle with our doubts. But let’s not blame Him. God didn’t explain to Job what He was doing but said that He could be trusted to do what is right (Job 38-42). And He has assured us in His Word that Jesus suffered on our behalf, rose from the dead, and is now preparing a suffering-free place for us.”

⁴⁸ “An Age-Old Question,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, April 15, 2007, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-15-07.shtml>).

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Richard De Haan⁴⁹ also writes about the experience of suffering in terms of tribulation, and the need for development of patience and perseverance. He writes:

“A young Christian went to an older believer and asked, "Will you pray that I may be more patient?" So they knelt together and the man began to pray, "Lord, send this young man tribulation in the morning; send him tribulation in the afternoon; send him—" Just then the young believer blurted out, "No, not *tribulation!* I asked for *patience.*" "I know," said the wise Christian, "but it's through tribulation that we learn patience." The word *perseverance* in today's Scripture can mean the ability to remain steadfast under difficulties without giving in. John A. Witmer wrote, "Only a believer who has faced distress can develop steadfastness. That in turn develops character." When the apostle Paul told the Christians in Rome that "tribulation produces perseverance" (Romans 5:3), he was speaking from personal experience. He had suffered beatings, whippings, stoning, shipwreck, and persecution. Yet he remained steadfast in his faith and did not shrink from his responsibility to preach the gospel. If you are facing a difficult test, praise God! Under His wise control, everything that happens to us—whether pleasurable or painful—is designed to develop Christ-like character. That's why we can glory in tribulation.”

David Roper⁵⁰ writes about suffering as a form of motivation to obtain God's will:

“Suffering and adversity become the means by which we're made hungry and thirsty for God. Disappointments become the tools that wean us away from earthly occupations and move us toward a preoccupation with God alone. Even sin, when repented of, becomes a mechanism to push us closer to Him so that we can experience His love and forgiveness. All things become useful when viewed as the means to the highest good—drawing near to God. Like Paul, we may say, “I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me” (Philippians 3:12). How do we press on? With a humble and grateful response to His love. But it all begins with God. He seeks us so that we may seek Him alone.”

The Suffering of Job. **Job 1:1-3 (New International Version)** discusses the great wealth of Job:

⁴⁹ “Suffering's Reward,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, September 14, 2003, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-09-14-03.shtml>).

⁵⁰ “Pressing On,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 18, 2006, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-18-06.shtml>).

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“1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. 2 He had seven sons and three daughters, 3 and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.”

Job 1:6-22 (New International Version) talks about how Job was tested with multiple calamities:

6 One day the angels ^[a] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan ^[b] also came with them. 7 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." 8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." 9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." 12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. 13 One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 16 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 17 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 19 when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell

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you!" 20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship 21 and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." 22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing"

Job 2:1-10 (New International Version) talks about how Job was tested again, but this time with painful sores. It reads:

"1 On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." 3 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." 4 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. 5 But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." 6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life." 7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. 8 Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. 9 His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" 10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said."

Job 2:11-13 (New International Version) talks about friends who attempted to comfort Job. It reads:

"11 When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. 13 Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was."

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Job 42:10-17 (New International Version) talks about the healing of Job after time had passed. It reads:

“10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before. 11 All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought upon him, and each one gave him a piece of silver ^[a] and a gold ring. 12 The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. 13 And he also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. 15 Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers. 16 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. 17 And so he died, old and full of years.”

Julie Link⁵¹ summarizes the suffering and recovery of Job. She writes:

“In a short period of time, he (Job) lost his children, his health, his wealth, and his wife’s respect. Job’s distress was so great that he pleaded, “May the day perish on which I was born” (Job 3:3). Job wanted God to erase not just a year, but all memory of his existence! He had enjoyed years of success and respect. Now, he questioned the purpose of living (3:20). Job wanted to die and be forgotten, but instead God made sure his name and story would be remembered forever. Rather than give Job what he asked for, God gave future generations what they would need—an inside look at the spiritual battle between God and Satan. The result is a God-inspired document about suffering that has comforted countless people.”

Suffering and positive outcomes. **Romans 5:1-5 (New International Version)** talks about the positive results from suffering. It reads:

“1Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4perseverance, character; and

⁵¹ “Job’s Birthday,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, September 10, 2007, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-09-10-07.shtml>).

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character, hope. 5And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

Romans 8:16-18 (New International Version) talks about our future glory from our present sufferings.

It reads:

“16The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. 18I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

In Closing. **Psalm 22:23-24 (New International Version)** reads:

“23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! 24 For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.”

Psalm 119:50 (New International Version) reads: “My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.”

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September 19, 2007

Bible Commentary: *The Faithfulness of God* A Commentary

James Curtis
New Commandment Baptist Church
“The Faithfulness of God”: A Commentary
September 19, 2007

Introduction. (name, DC/VA/DC, I grew up as a at VABC and spent some time as a member of MBC before coming to NCBC, currently I am the assistant bookkeeper in the accounting office at CUM and an administrative assistant in the maintenance department, trained to teach college students and conduct/supervise research, earned 3 college degrees (HU, OSU), also studied at (RU, UMCP, UT);

But these credentials did not prevent 3 years of homelessness, 4 years of joblessness, 10 years of alcoholism, and more than 100K in financial debt;

Now—after rededicating my life through faith in God via a Spiritual Transformation Program and Bible education/wisdom from this church, I have housing, I am gainfully employed at a Christian mission, teach a Bible class to men recovering from drugs and alcohol, have not had a drink in 6 years, reduced my debt down to 15% of the peak amount, and I am active member of the world’s greatest church—NCBC (8 AM Service coordinator, greeter, and anniversary committee member). One of my favorite scriptures comes from **Philippians 4:11-13**. The New International Version reads:

“I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”
Personally, I get my strength through my faith in God.

In today’s Our Daily Bread, David McCasland writes about having faith in God. He writes:

‘Hudson Taylor, pioneer missionary to China, said that Jesus’ words in Mark 11:22, “Have faith in God,” could be translated, “Hold on to the faithfulness of God.” D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, former pastor of London’s Westminster Chapel, appreciated Taylor’s insight and said: “Faith is

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holding on to the faithfulness of God and, as long as you do that, you cannot go wrong. Faith does not look at the difficulties. . . . Faith does not look at itself or at the person who is exercising it. Faith looks at God Faith is interested in God only, and it talks about God and it praises God and it extols the virtues of God. The measure of the strength of a man's faith, always, is ultimately the measure of his knowledge of God⁵². . . .'

Cindy Hess Kasper, also an RBC author, encourages us to take a step out on faith. She writes:

'While we stretch our spiritual muscles, we may feel discomfort. But God assures us, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Our adequacy—our sufficiency—is found in Him (3:5). When you boldly step out in faith and obedience to God, you may be surprised at how a "good stretch" can strengthen your spiritual life!⁵³

Today, we are going to talk about faith. We will define faith according to the dictionary, then, according to the Bible. Then, we will observe how several persons mentioned in the Bible displayed their faith.

Dictionary Definition of Faith. The Free Dictionary defines faith as "(1) Confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing; (2) Belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence...[and] (3) ...The theological virtue defined as secure belief in God and a trusting acceptance of God's will⁵⁴."

Biblical Definition of Faith. Hebrews 11:1 (King James Version and New King Version) reads: "1Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." But what does that mean? Hebrews 11:1 (Amplified Bible) reads: "1NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]. Versus 1-3 and 6 of the New International Version reads:

"1Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2This is what the ancients were commended for. 3By faith we understand that the universe was formed at

⁵² "The Faithfulness of God," *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, September 19, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-09-19-07.shtml>)

⁵³ "A Good Stretch," *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, August 6, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-06-07.shtml>)

⁵⁴ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/faith>

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God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible....⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. “

Since it is impossible to please God without faith, this must be an important characteristic to possess.

Herbert Vander Lugt, a RBC Ministries author, helps us understand the Biblical explanation of faith:

“...many have told me that they are troubled by the description of faith in Hebrews 11:1. To them it defines faith as absolute intellectual certainty—something they do not always have. But in its context, this verse explains both what faith is and what it does. It affirms the certainty that comes as we continue in our commitment to trust Jesus and His Word. As we do, we become assured of the reality of God and the heaven that awaits us⁵⁵.”

Joanie Yoder, another RBC Ministries author, writes about the misguidance of ‘feelings-centered faith’:

“Some Christians try to live from one dramatic mountaintop experience to another. Their relationship with the Lord is based on their feelings at the moment. They go from Bible conferences to seminars to Bible studies, trying to maintain an emotional high....What's an effective antidote for a feelings-centered faith? According to the apostle Paul in Colossians 2, being Christ-centered is the answer. Having received Christ Jesus by faith, we are instructed to continue to "walk in Him" by faith (v.6) through both the highs and lows of life. By walking in close fellowship with Him each day, we become "rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith" (v.7). We grow steadily into maturity as we focus on Christ and what He has done for us, and not on our feelings. Mountaintop experiences can be beneficial, but nothing is more profitable than an ongoing, Christ-centered life of faith. ⁵⁶”

Herbert Vander Lugt also writes about the importance of salvation-based faith: “Genuine saving faith...is based on the truth of God's Word....A Bible-instructed faith focuses on Christ-His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Only that kind of faith can bring salvation and comfort⁵⁷.”

⁵⁵ “What Faith Is and Does,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, January 26, 2001. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-01-26-01.shtml>)

⁵⁶ “Christ-Centered Faith,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, August 25, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-25-03.shtml>)

⁵⁷ “An Instructed Faith,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, May 6, 2000. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-05-06-00.shtml>)

		
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Furthermore, Vernon Grounds, a RBC Ministries author, writes about faith in the unseen:

“Today, some are seeking high-voltage experiences to buttress their faith. But ..., blessed are those who believe without having seen (Jn. 20:29). Blessed are those for whom God's Word is sufficient⁵⁸.”

Vernon Grounds suggests we should avoid unbelief by having faith:

“Instead of...bleak unbelief, we can open our hearts and minds to have faith in God as He has revealed Himself through His Son Jesus Christ. We can have forgiveness of our sin through His death on the cross. This not only assures us of a blessed eternity but also fills our here-and-now experience with measureless blessings of meaning and hope. We can know by the indwelling Holy Spirit that Jesus' words in John 8:12 are true: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." As we move along on our earthly pilgrimage, we don't need to stumble in the darkness of unbelief. Instead, we can walk confidently in the light toward an eternity of unending blessedness. That's the difference faith in Jesus Christ makes⁵⁹.”

Displaying Faith. Hebrews 11 talks about faithful men in the Bible—We will focus on Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob.

(1) Abel. Foremost, let's talk about Abel and Cain. Who are they? The sons (or the 1st generational descendent) of Adam and Eve. What did they do differently? Abel brought forth better offerings than Cain. **Genesis 4:1-5 (New International Version)** reads what?

“1 Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor.”

The Bible describes Abel as faithful. **Hebrews 11:4 (New International Version)** reads: “4By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings....”

⁵⁸ “Faith Now, Sight Later,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, March 13, 1999. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-13-99.shtml>)

⁵⁹ “The Difference Faith Makes,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, January 20, 2006. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-01-20-06.shtml>)

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(2) Enoch. Second, let's talk about Enoch. Who is Enoch? Enoch is the name of a son of Cain (**Genesis 4:17**) and also the name a descendent of Seth. Who is Seth? Seth is the third son (but still the 1st generational descendent) of Adam and Eve. Enoch is the great, great, great grandson (or the 5th generational descendent) of Seth (or the 6th generational descendent of Adam and Eve). Who is the son of Enoch, Seth's descendent, and why is he significant? Methuselah (**Genesis 5:21-27**). He lived longer than any other man. Getting back Enoch, Seth's descendent, Enoch is the great, great, great grandson of Seth and the 6th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. What was special about Enoch? He never died. **Genesis 5:18-24 (New International Version)** reads:

“18 When Jared (the great, great grandson of Seth) had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. 19 And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. 20 Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. 21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.”

The Bible describes Enoch as faithful. **Hebrews 11:5 (New International Version)** reads: “5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.”

(3) Noah. Noah is the great (6 times) grandson (or 8th generational descendent) of Seth (or 9th generational descendent of Adam and Eve). Noah was special in the eyes of God. **Genesis 6:5-8,11-14 (New International Version)** reads:

“5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD....

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to

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Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. 14 So make yourself an ark..."

The Bible describes Noah as faithful. **Hebrews 11:7 (New International Version)** reads: "7By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."

(4) Abraham. What is the original name of Abraham? Abram. Abram is the 10th generational descendent of Noah (**Genesis 11:10-32**). Abram is also the 19th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. The Lord made him the father of many nations. **Genesis 12:1-4 (King James Version)** reads:

"1Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. 4So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran."

The Bible describes Abram or Abraham as faithful. **Hebrews 11:8 (New International Version)** reads: "8By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going."

For a long time, Abram had no children. **Genesis 16:1-4,15-16 (New International Version)** reads:

"1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived..."

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael."

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Genesis 17:1-8 (New International Version) reads:

'1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. 2 I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."

Genesis 21:1-4 (New International Version) reads:

"1 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. 3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him."

The Bible describes Abraham again as faithful. **Hebrews 11:11-12 (New International Version)** reads:

"11 By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered himself faithful who had made the promise. 12 And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore."

Who is Isaac again? The son Abraham and Sarah had at old age. Isaac is also the 20th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. What happened between Abraham and Isaac? God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. **Genesis 22:1-18 (New International Version)** reads:

"1 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in

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the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. 9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." 15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

For the 3rd time, the Bible describes Abraham as faithful. **Hebrews 11:17-19 (New International Version)** reads:

"17By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."19Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death."

(5) Jacob. Who is Jacob? Jacob was the son of Isaac and the twin brother of Esau. Jacob is also the 21th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. **Genesis 25:21-27 (New International Version)** reads:

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“21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." 24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. 27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.”

What did Jacob due to Esau? Jacob tricked his brother Esau into selling his birthright from his father.

Genesis 25:29-34 (New International Version) reads:

“29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. 30 He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.) 31 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright." 32 "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?" 33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.”

What does Jacob due to his father? Jacob tricks his father Isaac and gets Esau’s blessing. Read **Genesis 27:1-40 (New International Version)**. Note that an angel of God changed Jacob’s name to what? Israel.

Genesis 32:24-28 (New International Version) reads:

“24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. 28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.”

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The sons of Jacob are the foundation of the tribes of Israel. Who are tribes of Israel? Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. **Genesis 49:1-28 (New International Version)** describes their blessings from Jacob. Jacob claims Joseph's sons as his own, thereby; Joseph's sons got blessings directly from Jacob as they would get from their own father. In **Genesis 48:5 (New International Version)** Jacob states to Joseph: "5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine."

The Bible describes Jacob as faithful. **Hebrews 11:21 (New International Version)** reads: "21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff."

In Closing. Vernon Grounds writes unfailing faith:

"Many of us talk about loss and suffering and argue about why evil things happen to good people. But it's quite different to deal victoriously with the painful experiences that happen to us personally. What we really need in the teeth of affliction is not a plausible explanation but the ability to endure without emotional collapse or spiritual bitterness. We need the sustaining confidence that enables us to believe in God's love and wisdom (Job 1:21; 2:10). Pray for an unfaltering faith that stands strong under life's greatest pressures⁶⁰."

⁶⁰ "Unfaltering Faith," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 25, 2000. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-25-00.shtml>)

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September 24, 2007

Bible Commentary: All Rise A Commentary

James Curtis
“All Rise”: A Commentary
September 24, 2007

In today's Our Daily Bread, Julie Link writes: “God has something for each of us to do, despite our limitations. Rise up and ask what He might want to do through you.” This is equivalent to saying that there is hope despite our situations.

I remember many days sitting in transitional housing thinking and worrying about my next step in life. You see, I have obtained a lot of education but it is almost worthless without continuous study and a mentor who helps place you after your studies are complete. When I became homeless, my studies became discontinued due to lack of funds and lack of guidance by my mentors. Furthermore, since my studies and mentors were concentrated in Ohio and I was homeless in DC, Maryland and Atlanta, I became separated from my mentors. The mentors, that invested time and energy in me, were too distant for an effective relationship and my resources for further education were exhausted.

But thank God for Central Union Mission and my church, New Commandment Baptist Church.

There, I began to re-educate myself based on the Bible and develop a new talent of teaching scripture.

Now, I have been asked to teach at my church and at Central Union Mission. And the rewards to teaching God's word have overflowed to benefits on my job, enhanced responsibilities at my church, and a better personal financial condition. And this hope in Christ I have can be developed in you.

The Free Dictionary defines hope as (1) “A wish or desire accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment;” and (2) “The theological virtue defined as the desire and search for a future good, difficult but not impossible to attain with God's help.” The second definition implies a little work on behalf of the person with hope. It states: ‘the desire and search for a future good.’ Therefore, if our hope is in God, we must be active seekers of Him. This is confirmed in **Hebrews 11:6 (New International Version)** reads “...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

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Dennis De Haan⁶¹ writes:

“It's when we can't do anything that *God does everything*. And herein lies a profound paradox of the Christian's experience. Faith is simultaneously an exercise of our will and the impartation of divine strength. And from that marvelous mixture spring joy and peace and an abundance of hope.

Are you in a totally helpless situation? Strength gone? All options exhausted? If you have trusted Jesus as your Savior, God will strengthen you to keep on believing. As you trust Him, He'll give you not only joy and peace, but also hope when all hope is gone.”

Haddon Robinson⁶² writes:

“Anticipating what God has in store for us can put a smile in our heart. Hope gives us poise and lets us live with inner strength, because we know that one day we will be dramatically different than we are now.

If you are in some way damaged by past abuse or feeling defeated by sin, or if you feel so inferior to others that you walk with your eyes to the ground, take heart in what God has in store for you. Live today with the courage God gives you. Make what you can of your afflictions. But rejoice, because all that degrades and limits you is only temporary. It will be gone—some of it sooner rather than later.

If you have a living hope in Christ, you can deal with your past because of your future. God's glorious best for you lies ahead”

David McCasland⁶³ writes:

“The Bible is far more than a book of wishful thinking; it is a book of well-founded confidence in God's purpose and plan for us as believers. Whatever we are like today, we know that in Christ we have a living hope, and it will not end in disappointment.”

⁶¹ “New Hope,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, May 21, 2004 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-06-07.shtml>)

⁶² “A Living Hope,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, March 8, 2006 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-08-06.shtml>)

⁶³ “The Book Of Hope,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, March 19, 2002 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-19-02.shtml>)

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Dave Branon⁶⁴ writes:

“Promises are the hope of our heart. A child's security depends on a parent's promise to keep him or her safe. A spouse can live with confidence because of a mate's promise of fidelity, loyalty, and love. Businesses depend on promises from employees, vendors, and clients. Countries remain safe when neighbors keep their promise to honor their borders.

Unfortunately, hearts and relationships are broken in all of those situations by unkept promises. There is one Promise-Maker, though, who can be trusted completely and without fear. That one is God. He has given us hundreds of promises in His Word, and He keeps every one of them....

Are you looking for hope? Then search the Scriptures diligently and claim the promises of God that apply to you. Promises truly are the hope of the heart, and God always keeps His word.”

David Egnor writes:

“Think of what it would be like if we went to bed some night knowing that the sun would not rise again the next morning. Think of the coldness, the unending darkness, the inescapable fingers of death that would gradually move across the earth. Plants would wither, flowers would wilt, trees would die, and all of life would perish for lack of sunlight.

But praise God, the sun does rise every day. Its warm, life-giving light floods the earth. The "death" of a sunset each day is followed by the "resurrection" of a sunrise the next day—and our hope is renewed. Every morning the rays of the sun remind us that the long night of sin and darkness will give way to eternal day in heaven.

Even more sure than the rising of the morning sun is the certainty of our resurrection in Jesus Christ. The dark night of death came upon Him, and His lifeless body was laid in the tomb. But He arose! And in His resurrection is the promise of our own resurrection to life. The apostle Paul declared, "Even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

The next time you see the sun rise and watch its rays brighten the morning sky, let hope fill your heart.”

⁶⁴ “The Hope Of The Heart,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, October 15, 2001 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-15-01.shtml>)

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If you are low on hope and here at the mission because you are need of food, clothing, shelter, and/or spiritual guidance, please be informed that you have come to the right place. The mission does provide those things. But more importantly God knows and hears your needs. **Psalm 9:17-19 (Amplified Bible)** reads: “18For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the expectation and hope of the meek and the poor shall not perish forever.” Furthermore, **Psalm 10:17 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: You listen to the longings of those who suffer. You offer them hope, and you pay attention to their cries for help. But **Matthew 6:33 (New International Version)** reminds us to: “33...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

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October 8, 2007

Bible Commentary: *Be Coachable A Commentary*

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"Be Coachable": A Commentary
October 8, 2007

David Egner⁶⁵, writes in today's Our Daily Bread, "We grow in faith as we allow God through His Word and the Holy Spirit to empower us to serve Him." This proportional to saying that God's Word strengthens us. Today, I want to focus on the topic of strength from God. I will define and discuss strength from the Lord. Then we will talk about the strength of the God displayed in the Israelites. Finally, we talk about the source and the ultimate source of our strength.

Defining strength. The Free Dictionary defines strength as "(1) a source of power... or (2) the power to resist strain or stress; durability."

Discussion. Bill Crowder⁶⁶ writes about the kind of strength that stretches you. He writes:

"Tensile strength is the maximum amount of stretching a material can withstand before it tears. If the engineer miscalculates, the structure may collapse under the pressure.

When we are under the weight of stress and hardship, we may wonder whether our Lord, who engineered us, has miscalculated our personal "tensile strength." We are certain that we are going to collapse under the weight of the trials, but our Designer knows exactly what we can handle by His grace. He knows our limits and will never permit more than we can bear. As Bible teacher Ron Hutchcraft said, "God may send a load, but He never sends an overload!"

Reinforced by the steel of God's provision, our tensile strength won't fail."

David Roper⁶⁷ writes unbounded strength. He writes:

⁶⁵ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-08-07.shtml>

⁶⁶ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-21-06.shtml>

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“Life's heartbreaks and tragedies can put an end to our resilience, our endurance, our nerve, and bring us to our knees. But if we put our hope in the Lord and rely on Him, He renews our strength. The key to our endurance lies in the exchange of our limited resources for God's limitless strength. And it is ours for the asking.

With God's strength we can "run and not be weary," even when days become hectic and demanding. With His strength we can "walk and not faint," even though tedious, dull routine makes the way seem dreary and long. The psalmist exclaimed in the midst of his weary, tearful pilgrimage, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in You" (Psalm 84:5).

Oh, what an exchange—God's infinite strength for our finite weakness!”

Dave Branon⁶⁸ writes strength during the down times our lives. He writes:

“When life has you down—whether through sorrow that seems too hard to bear or circumstances that make each day a morning-to-night grind—my friend's advice can help. First, let God pull you up by His power (Ps. 54:1-4). Then, hold on to His hand. Cling to Him and “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (Eph. 6:10).

Trust His power and hold on. He will give you the strength to keep from falling (Isa. 40:31).”

Joanie Yoder⁶⁹ writes about God as an enabler or strengthener. She writes:

“Most people own a calendar or an appointment book in which they record details of future commitments. A Christian friend of mine uses one in the opposite way. He doesn't record key activities until after they've taken place.

Here's his approach: Each morning he prays, "Lord, I go forth in Your strength alone. Please use me as You wish." Then, whenever he accomplishes something unusual or difficult, he records it in his diary in the evening.

⁶⁷ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-24-03.shtml>

⁶⁸ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-07-31-07.shtml>

⁶⁹ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-01-04.shtml>

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For example, he may write, "Today I was enabled to share my testimony with a friend." "Today God enabled me to overcome my fear through faith." "Today I was enabled to help and encourage a troubled person."

My friend uses the word *enabled* because he knows he couldn't do these things without God's help. By recording each "enabling," he is giving God all the glory....

As you enter each new day, ask God to strengthen and use you. You can be sure that as you look back on your day, you'll praise and glorify the Lord as you realize what He has enabled you to do."

Bill Crowder⁷⁰ writes about the limits of personal strength. He writes:

"Peter, the "fragile stone," reminds us that no amount of personal strength or talent can make us adequate for this life and its challenges. Only as we rest in the strength of Christ will we find His provision. When we acknowledge our frailty and dependence on Him, Christ's strength can empower us for the troubles life throws our way.

Like Peter, we are all "fragile stones." How grateful we can be for His strength that is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)."

David McCasland⁷¹ reiterates the Word that says 'God is our strength. He writes:

"God is our refuge and strength," wrote the psalmist, "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). Eugene Peterson's vivid paraphrase says: "God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need Him."

Through prayer, we can step into the calming presence of the Lord and find strength to go on. As we bring our heartaches and needs to God, He meets us where we are and gives us His peace. He is an ever-present help who cares for us in every situation.

....there is strength from the Lord to help us as we care for those who need us.'

The Strength in the Lord Displayed in the Journey of the Israelites. Exodus 12:40 (New International Version) reads "Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years." After the

⁷⁰ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-10-06.shtml>

⁷¹ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-09-13-06.shtml>

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Lord struck down the first-born in Egypt, Pharaoh released the Israelites. **Exodus 13:18 (New International Version)** reads: "So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea." But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh had his men pursued them.

Exodus 14:21-31 (New International Version) reads:

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. 23 The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. 24 During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. 25 He made the wheels of their chariots come off [b] so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt." 26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." 27 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward [c] it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. 28 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived. 29 But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. 30 That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. 31 And when the Israelites saw the great power the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

Exodus 15:1-2 (New International Version) reads:

"1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD : "I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. 2 The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him."

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Here, we see Moses and his people giving full credit to God for their victory. David former King of Israel and Judea also gives credit to the Lord. **Psalm 27 (New International Version)** reads:

1The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. 3Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. 4One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. 5For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. 6And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD. 7Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. 8When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. 9Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. 10When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up. 11Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. 12Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. 13I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. 14Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Furthermore, **Psalm 18:1-39 (New King James Version)** reads:

1 I will love You, O LORD, my strength. 2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies. 4 The pangs of death surrounded me, And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. 5 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry came before Him, even to His ears. 7 Then the earth shook and trembled; The

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foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken, Because He was angry. 8 Smoke went up from His nostrils, And devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it. 9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down With darkness under His feet. 10 And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him was dark waters And thick clouds of the skies. 12 From the brightness before Him, His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire. 13 The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire. 14 He sent out His arrows and scattered the foe, Lightnings in abundance, and He vanquished them. 15 Then the channels of the sea were seen, The foundations of the world were uncovered At Your rebuke, O LORD, At the blast of the breath of Your nostrils. 16 He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me, For they were too strong for me. 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the LORD was my support. 19 He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me. 20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. 21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God. 22 For all His judgments were before me, And I did not put away His statutes from me. 23 I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. 24 Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to the cleanness of my hands in His sight. 25 With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; 26 With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. 27 For You will save the humble people, But will bring down haughty looks. 28 For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. 29 For by You I can run against a troop, By my God I can leap over a wall. 30 As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him. 31 For who is God, except the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God? 32 It is God who arms me with strength, And makes my way perfect. 33 He makes my feet like the feet of deer, And sets me on my high places. 34 He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great. 36 You enlarged

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my path under me, So my feet did not slip. 37 I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed 38 I have wounded them, So that they could not rise; They have fallen under my feet. 39 For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.

The Source of Our Strength. Henry Bosch⁷² writes ‘the source of our power.’ He writes:

“...we must ever be aware of the ultimate source of our power. He is the strength of our life! There can be no true progress spiritually without the power of the Holy Spirit to undergird our life and all that we do.

Let's recognize our own weakness and echo the cry of the psalmist: "I will go in the strength of the Lord God" (71:16). Then we will not faint nor fail. “

We must remember our basic capacity to perform service at work, at church, or at the mission is an ability on loan from God. Therefore, the fruits of our abilities are ultimately His also. **Deuteronomy 8:17-18 (New International Version)** reads:

“You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." 18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.”

Therefore, if we are skillful, have perfected a trade or craft to the point where we have generated income or revenue, we must give God credit with our praise and our sacrifices (which are our tithes and offerings).

Furthermore, Christ is our ultimate source of strength. **Romans 5:6-11 (New King James Version)** reads:

6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for

⁷² <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-12-03.shtml>

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us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

In closing, **Philippians 4:13 (New King James Version)** reads: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

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October 15, 2007

Bible Commentary: Costly Gift A Commentary

James Curtis
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"Costly Gift": A Commentary
October 15, 2007

In Today's Our Daily Bread, Cindy Kasper writes:

"Few things of value are inexpensive. Fewer still are free. But salvation—the most important gift of all—is free. Unlike the imitation Rolex, salvation is of infinite value. Yet it is free because, as one hymn reminds us, "Jesus paid it all." No one can earn salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). We need only believe and receive the gift of eternal life that God offers (Rom. 6:23)."

Today, I want to focus on beliefs and believing in God. (1) I will define what it means to believe. And we will discuss some statistics on our beliefs. (2) Then, we will discuss Christian belief and the importance of sharing our beliefs. (3) Then, we will discuss the miracles/signs the led to Israel's belief in Moses as the chosen leader. (4) Fourth, we will discuss believing versus seeing.

Definition of Belief. A belief is defined as (1) The mental act, condition, or habit of placing trust or confidence in another: (For instance) 'My belief in you is as strong as ever.' (2) A belief is defined as: Mental acceptance of and conviction in the truth, actuality, or validity of something: (For instance) His explanation of what happened defies belief. (3) A belief is defined as: Something... accepted as true, especially a particular tenet or a body of tenets accepted by a group of persons. Vernon Grounds⁷³ writes about some statistics about our beliefs. He writes:

"For more than 50 years, the Gallup organization has been surveying the religious beliefs of the American people. Here are some of their findings: In 1947, 93% professed faith in God, 73% expected an afterlife, 90% affirmed that they pray, and 41% attended some kind of church service frequently. In 1997, the survey findings were virtually the same, except that professed faith in God went up to 96%.

⁷³ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-01-28-99.shtml>

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What most concerned one analyst, however, was the content of the faith of the 96% who said they believed in God. He wondered if many of them believed in "a celestial Santa Claus" or a "disengaged clockmaker" who set the world in motion but now couldn't be bothered by human needs.

If we take the Bible as our guide, we worship the one true God. He is the holy, eternal, almighty, infinitely wise, and gracious Creator, who abhors sin and yet forgives on the basis of the sacrifice of His Son on Calvary. This one true and living God is the God who can assure us of life forever in heaven's glory."

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Vernon Grounds⁷⁴ defines Christian belief. He writes:

“I believe in God.” Those are also the first words of The Apostles' Creed, and they are an affirmation that is basic to our Christian faith. In fact, that statement is the foundation from which we view all time and eternity.

That belief is the only solid foundation for rebuilding a nation or for building a life. If we ignore God, the best of human efforts will crumble in the long run and be shown to have no eternal value.

We must be sure, however, that the God we believe in is the one, true, and living God (Hebrews 11:6). We must believe in the God who has made Himself known in the Bible, and through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus said to His heavenly Father, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). Truly, this is the most basic belief.”

Note that David McCasland⁷⁵ writes about the importance of sharing our belief. He writes:

“Francis Collins earned a Ph.D. in physical chemistry at Yale University and then entered medical school. During his training at a North Carolina hospital, a dying woman often talked to him about her faith in Christ. He rejected the existence of God, but he couldn't ignore the woman's serenity. One day she asked, “What do you believe?” Caught off guard, Collins' face turned red as he stammered, “I'm not really sure.” A few days later the woman died.

Curious and uneasy, the young doctor realized that he had rejected God without adequately examining the evidence. He began to read the Bible and the writings of C. S. Lewis. A year later he fell to his knees and gave his life to Jesus Christ. The catalyst? A sincere question from an elderly woman whose physical heart was failing but whose concern for others was strong.

⁷⁴ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-17-02.shtml>

⁷⁵ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-04-07.shtml>

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In a prophetic picture of the Messiah, Isaiah 50:4 says, "The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary."

May we be ready with a timely word or a caring question to point others toward our Savior..."

The Belief of the Israelites. The Israelites had to deal with the question of belief when Moses came back to Egypt to bring the Israelites out of Egypt from slavery. **Exodus 3:1-10 (New International Version)** reads:

"1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."

5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.""

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Exodus 4:1-7 (New International Version) reads:

“1 Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?'" 2 Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied.

3 The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground." Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. 4 Then the LORD said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. 5 "This," said the LORD, "is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you."

6 Then the LORD said, "Put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous, like snow. 7 "Now put it back into your cloak," he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.”

Exodus 4:29-31 (New International Version) reads:

“29 Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, 30 and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, 31 and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.”

David McCasland⁷⁶ writes: “The miracles of Jesus identified Him as the Son of God, the Savior who had come to give His life for the sins of the world. His works and resurrection were not magic tricks, but miracles of love and grace.” We can say the same thing about the signs exhibited by Moses: The signs exhibited by Moses identified him as the servant of God, whose works were not ‘magic tricks’ but also signs of ‘love and grace.’

Believing vs. Seeing. David McCasland⁷⁷ also writes about belief and the limits of sight. He writes:

⁷⁶ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-07-10-07.shtml>

⁷⁷ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-22-02.shtml>

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“Seeing is believing,” according to the old saying. But if we believe only what we can see, we will never know God or experience His presence.

I traveled to England during the height of the foot-and-mouth disease epidemic. At home I had read newspaper stories of the tragic effects on farmers. I had watched television reports of slaughtered animals being burned and buried to try to stop the spread of the disease. But as I traveled by train from London to Devon, I saw many flocks of healthy sheep and herds of cattle in the fields. Nowhere did I see a sign warning of foot-and-mouth disease. Should I believe my eyes or the reports of reliable sources?

After Jesus was raised from the dead, Thomas refused to believe the reports that He was alive. He said that unless he touched the nail marks in Jesus' hands and the wound in His side, he would not believe (John 20:24-25). When the Lord appeared to the disciples 8 days later, Jesus said to Thomas, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (v.29).

Even though we have not seen Jesus, we accept by faith the word of reliable witnesses, we embrace the living Lord, and we believe.”

For, **1 Peter 1:3-9 (New International Version)** reads:

“3Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, 5who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

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Although we proceed in faith without seeing God or Christ Jesus, who is God, our faith would vanish if we did not see the fruits of our faith while we are still alive. David says it so eloquently in **Psalm 27:13 (New King James Version)**: “I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.”

In Closing, Mart De Haan⁷⁸ writes about belief and the story of Jesus. He writes:

“...(A) "survival story" from centuries ago is still controversial. A man by the name of Jesus Christ walked out of the Judean wilderness making claims a lot of people found difficult to believe. He was later executed and pronounced dead. But 3 days later He showed up alive. And there have been skeptics ever since.

But consider the facts of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. His integrity is well-founded. Prophets foretold His coming. Miracles supported His deity. Eyewitnesses verified His resurrection. And today the Holy Spirit confirms to anyone who is seeking to know the truth that Jesus is alive.

Yes, you can believe it! Do you?”

And finally, **John 1:11-13 (New International Version)** reads:

“11He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.”

⁷⁸ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-21-03.shtml>

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November 5, 2013

Bible Commentary: Overcoming

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
“OVERCOMING”
November 5, 2007

Introduction. (name, DC/VA/DC, I grew up as a at VABC and spent some time as a member of MBC before coming to NCBC, currently I am the assistant bookkeeper in the accounting office at CUM and an administrative assistant in the maintenance department, trained to teach college students and conduct/supervise research, earned 3 college degrees (HU, OSU), also studied at (RU, UMCP, UT); But these credentials did not prevent 3 years of homelessness, 4 years of joblessness, 10 years of alcoholism, and more than 100K in financial debt;

Now—after rededicating my life through faith in God via a Spiritual Transformation Program and Bible education/wisdom from this church, I have housing, I am gainfully employed at a Christian mission, teach a Bible class to STP men, have not had a drink in 6 years, reduced my debt down to 15% of the peak amount, and I am active member of NCBC (8 AM Service coordinator, greeter, and anniversary committee member).

Question. Has anyone overcome anything in here?

Is anybody trying to overcome anything in here?

What does it mean to overcome?

First definition of overcome. The Free Dictionary defines overcome as to defeat (another) in competition or conflict; conquer; David McCasland⁷⁹ writes overcoming personal circumstances leading victories in sports competitions and victories in life. He writes:

“In 2005, the surprising Boys Town High School Cowboys carried a perfect record into a Nebraska state semifinal football game. But more important, the players had taken giant strides toward overcoming their family backgrounds of ... abandonment, and neglect that had brought them to the safe, caring environment of Boys Town.

⁷⁹ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-13-06.shtml>

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Their coach, Kevin Kush, believes that football is a way to build character, and says: “Victories at Boys Town are not won on a present-day athletic field. They are won years from now in cities and towns across this country when our players become productive citizens.” His team plays to win while pursuing higher goals of sportsmanship, discipline, and teamwork.

Paul held a similar long-range view of our experience as followers of Christ. In the midst of personal setbacks, he urged the Corinthians not to lose heart (2 Cor. 4:17). In spite of loss, we are to pursue the higher goals of God’s kingdom now, anticipating our eternal triumph in Christ.”

Mart De Haan⁸⁰ writes about the inspiration of overcomers in competitions compares this to Jesus overcoming sin. He writes:

“Who is not inspired by the competitor who makes a comeback after being down and seemingly out of the running! The runner who stumbles while coming off the starting blocks but moves gradually into the lead stirs the imagination of us all. The team that can come from behind in the last moments to win excites us even more than the team that constantly wins by scoring big in the first part of the game.

Jesus made the most amazing comeback the world has ever seen. After being humiliated, insulted, spit upon, whipped, beaten, and nailed to a cross, His executioners claimed victory and declared Him dead. A military guard secured His tomb. How could anyone be more down and out than that?

Yet the struggle was not over; it was only the beginning. Three days later, He rose from the grave and reappeared as the victor over sin, death, and hell—a comeback like no other in all of history.

Are you feeling out of the running today? Have you stumbled badly? Think about Jesus’ suffering. Ponder His resurrection. Ask Him to give you the victory. Just imagine what He has to offer you, no matter how far down you are now!

No one has overcome like our Lord.”

⁸⁰ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-16-06.shtml>

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Second definition of overcome. (2) The Free Dictionary defines overcome as to prevail over; **Genesis**

32:24-28 (New International Version) reads:

“24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

28 Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.”

The **Amplified Bible** reads:

“24And Jacob was left alone, and a Man wrestled with him until daybreak. 25And when [the Man] saw that He did not prevail against [Jacob], He touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with Him. 26Then He said, Let Me go, for day is breaking. But [Jacob] said, I will not let You go unless You declare a blessing upon me. 27[The Man] asked him, What is your name? And [in shock of realization, whispering] he said, Jacob [supplanter, schemer, trickster, swindler]!

28And He said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob [supplanter], but Israel [contender with God]; for you have contended and have power with God and with men and have prevailed.”

Jacob is initially remembered as a trickster. What did Jacob do to Esau? In **Genesis 25:29-34**, Jacob tricked his brother Esau into selling his birthright from his father. What does Jacob due to his father? In **Genesis 27:1-40**, Jacob tricks his father Isaac and gets Esau’s blessing. But, now, after wrestling with God, he is remembered in God’s eyes doing such. **Genesis 32:28 (New International Version)** says it best: “you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome” (or prevailed).

Third definition of overcome. The Free Dictionary also defines overcome as to overpower; surmount opposition; be victorious; Recall the experiences of Joshua and Caleb. Remember again that Moses was chosen by the Lord to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to a land flowing with milk and honey (**Exodus**

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3:7-10). The Lord commanded Moses to “send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which (he is) giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders” (**Numbers 13:1-2**). Caleb was chosen from the tribe of Judah (**Numbers 13:6**) and Joshua was chosen from the tribe of Ephraim (**Numbers 13:8, 16**). After forty days of exploring the land, they returned to the community of Israelites (**Numbers 13:25**) and confirmed that “it does flow with milk and honey” (**Numbers 13:27**). But 10 of 12 men sent to explore the land stated: “the people who live there are powerful” (**Numbers 13:28**)... and “they are stronger than we are” (**Numbers 13:31**). “And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored” (**Number 13:32**). Only Joshua and Caleb gave a good report of the land (**Numbers 14:6-9**). **Numbers 13:30 (New King James Version)** reads: “Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.” Here, the word, overcome means, although the obstacles seen large, the victory is still possible.

Overcoming Evil with Good. David McCasland⁸¹ recalls Columbine and writes about overcoming evil with good:. He writes:

“For most of my life the word *columbine* brought to mind the beautiful state flower of Colorado. But all that changed on April 20, 1999, with the tragic shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. The violent actions of two hate-filled students changed the meaning of the word for me, and for countless others.

Evil can hang a shroud of despair over any word in our lives. It may be the name of a person who has deeply hurt us, or a place where we failed, or a time when we were rejected. But God's love has dynamic power to redefine the most painful words.

In Romans 12, God gives us the antidote for the poison of evil so prevalent in our hearts and in the world around us: "Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (v.9). "Repay no one evil for evil" (v.17). "Do not avenge yourselves" (v.19). "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink" (v.20). "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (v.21).

⁸¹ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-08-02.shtml>

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Everything in our lives that has been defined by evil is an opportunity to seek the Lord's power to overcome it with good. There is no painful word that cannot be redefined by the goodness of God.”

David Roper⁸² also writes about overcoming evil with good. He writes:

“It is not our business to judge God's enemies. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Our business is to tell the world, and even those who oppose us, about His offer of salvation.

Paul gave us these instructions: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink' . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (vv.20-21). We must overwhelm evil opponents with love if we can, bring them to Jesus if they will come, and leave judgment with God.”

Joanie Yoder⁸³ writes about being an overcomer through Jesus. She writes:

“Jesus gave us grounds for good cheer and confidence by declaring, "I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33). He accomplished this by His death and resurrection, and secured the victory for all generations. Preacher and author Watchman Nee (1903-1972) wrote, "Oh, that we might learn the undefeatedness of God!"

According to Jesus, it's possible to experience His "undefeatedness" in every adversity. Paul testified, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37). And the apostle John wrote, "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world~our faith" (1 Jn. 5:4).

How are you facing life's trials these days? As a defeated victim? Or as an overcoming victor? Hear Jesus lovingly say, "Be of good cheer!" (Jn. 16:33). He has overcome all these things, and so can you~through Him!"

Mart De Haan⁸⁴ writes about overcoming evil with good, especially as a Christian. He writes:

⁸² <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-15-02.shtml>

⁸³ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-15-99.shtml>

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“For the Christian...there are problems with trying to "get back" at someone. We lower ourselves to the level of the person who irritates us. This makes us vulnerable because we violate the principles of faith and love. Revenge appeals to our lower instincts rather than to the high strategy of goodness found in Christ.

The Word of God is clear: Getting even is never the answer. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). So what are we to do when someone offends us? We must continue doing good, and let God handle vengeance in His perfect time and way. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (v.21).”

In Closing. The reason we can overcome evil with good is because the good within us is greater than evil within the world. **1 John 4:1-6 (New International Version)** reads:

“1Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

4You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them (*which is 'every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus'*), because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 6We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.”

Therefore, we overcome or subdue evil in the spirit realm and not in the natural.

⁸⁴ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-22-98.shtml>

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September 22, 2007

Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC
New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary

September 22, 2007

Attendees: Mary Hawes, Debbie P. Gordon, Shirley B. Beynum, LaSharon Bartley, Gladys Hardy, William Hill, Beevenell Robinson, Clarence Thomas, Evelyn Younger, Janet Slaughter, and James Curtis

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Steven E. Tucker

1. Welcome: Mr. James Curtis led the attendees in: Praise and Worship: Scripture: (James Curtis: Psalm 23; 1 Tim 1:12-15; LaSharon Bartley: 1 Tim 3:8-10), Prayer (Shirley Beynum, Gladys Hardy), Testimony (Shirley Beynum, Beevenell Robinson, Evelyn Younger).

Rev. Dr. Stephen E. Tucker welcomed attendees at 12:30 PM.

2. Minutes from Last Meeting: Minutes from June 2007 meeting were distributed.

3. Old Business: Money was collected for textbooks.

4. New Business: Rev. Dr. Tucker presided over training of new elders and deacons.

A. Rev. Dr. Tucker requested that participants select a Deacon for mentoring. The following Deacon-in-Training/(Deacon) pairings were made: Mary Hawes/(Mary Sanders), Debbie P. Gordon /(Joyce Milton), Shirley B. Beynum/(Mary Cunningham), LaSharon Bartley/(Essie Chapman), Gladys Hardy/(Eleanor Mitchell), Beevenell Robinson/(Evelyn Holman), Clarence Thomas/(Freddie Holman), Evelyn Younger/(Roberta Tucker), Janet Slaughter/(Tina Buggs), and James Curtis/(Allen Lemon).

B. Rev. Dr. Tucker recalled points from the Deacons meeting and Shining Star Service:

i. Re-evaluate your calling,

ii. Have standards: How are our young people living (shacking up)? How are some older persons and Christians living (shacking up)?

iii. 'We are dead': No enthusiasm, no life, no celebration, no joy, no AMENs; There ought to be some responsiveness as a leader. (Furthermore, if 'we are dead' and we attach Deacons-in-training to Deacons, either Deacons-in-training will resurrect Deacons or Deacons will make Deacons-in-training 'dead.') You have to be careful who you sit next to or they might put your fire out. Worship, due to age and health, is possibly 'dead'. We must be diverse and have no tensions between devotion and praise teams just because there are generational differences.

iv. Note that Second Christian Church changed their name to Light of the World Church and the Church took on a whole new attitude.

v. There ought to be a spirit of attachment instead of sitting in the back and leaving spaces. There is a lack of evangelical fervor. If we took church seriously, we would have no place to sit. A lot of our members our raw Christians. They consider church a 'hang out' atmosphere. The church has some rules and protocol.

vi. Part of regeneration of the Church is education of the Church.

C. Rev. Dr. Tucker discussed differences between the DC and Baltimore ordination of Deacons. Questions must be answered during ordination in Baltimore.

D. Rev. Dr. Tucker discussed differences between Jobs Partnership and NCBC.

5. Announcements: none

6. Date and Time of Next (Training) Meeting: Saturday, November 10, 2007 at 12:00 PM

7. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

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November 10, 2007

Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC
New Commandment Baptist Church Conversation Center

November 10, 2007

Attendees: Etta Washington, Gladys Hardy, Shirley B. Beynum, Evelyn Younger, Debbie P. Gordon, Beevenell Robinson, James Curtis; and Deacons and Ministers

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Steven E. Tucker

1. Welcome: Mrs. Mary Cunningham led the attendees in Praise and Worship; Scripture: (*Psalm 27*), Songs (Mary Cunningham, Martina Milton and Gladys Hardy), Testimony (Mary Cunningham).

Rev. Dr. Stephen E. Tucker welcomed attendees.

2. Minutes from Last Meeting: Minutes from September 2007 meeting were distributed.

3. Old Business: none.

4. New Business: Rev. Dr. Tucker presided over training of new elders and deacons.

A. We must mesh together those serving, ministering and in-training.

B. Two things need strengthening: worship and evangelism

C. How to respond to gratitude (What happens when their needs are met):

i. *Luke 17:11-19*: Consider the case of the ten men with leprosy. They were told to see the priests (faith and obedience healed them). One went back to Jesus and said thank you.

D. A video was shown on where the Church was trying to go.

E. Handouts were passed out:

i. Editorial

ii. "Elders Lead": responsibilities include presiding, providing care.

F. God has not called us to be average or lukewarm.

G. Growth should be on our mind; We have a lot of inactive members.

H. A handout were passed out ("Turning Attenders to Members"):

i. We must move away from the individualist attitude.

ii. The community is connected to the Church.

iii. Don't try to get people right (in a five-minute encounter); you have to get them to the gospel. We have to get people to the church because someone witnessed to them.

iv. We need to numerically grow the church.

v. We need to see the vision and participate in the growth of the church.

5. Announcements: none

6. Date and Time of Next (Training) Meeting: Tuesday, February 19, 2008 at 7:00 PM

7. Meeting adjourned.

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November 19, 2007

Bible Commentary: Don't Worry A Commentary

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"Don't Worry": A Commentary
November 19, 2007

I. Introduction. In today's Our Daily Bread, Cindy Kasper writes about worrying and being anxious. She writes "When your mind turns to anxious thoughts about the future, remember that 'your heavenly Father knows' (Matt. 6:32) and will give you what you need."

In the daily devotional, Our Daily Bread, dated June 25, 2007, Anne Cetas writes:

"The number of ways people try to deal with serious stresses in life are as numerous as there are people. Having a drink. Blaming God. Stuffing ourselves with food. Keeping our feelings inside. Blaming others. These responses might calm us, but they're just a temporary means of escaping our problems. No product we reach for can take them away."

This particular devotion is hard-hitting and convicting. It describes me and how I used to respond to stress... "Having a drink." (Describe drinking habit) It even describes how I have recently responded to stress when it talks about "Stuffing ourselves with food." Such responses to stress can be described as anxiety and worry about the things of life. I believe anxiety and worry steal the joy out of our lives that God intended for us to have.

II. Defining the Problem. Anxiety is defined as "a state of apprehension, uncertainty, and fear resulting from the anticipation of a realistic or fantasized threatening event or situation, often impairing physical and psychological functioning⁸⁵." Worry is similar to anxiety. Worry is defined as "to feel uneasy or concerned about something; be troubled⁸⁶." Anxiety describes the condition of an individual while worry describes an action of an individual. Basically, anxiety and worrying are unhealthy forms of fear.

II.A. Healthy Fear. Note while anxiety is discouraged, a healthy form of fear is the fear of the Lord. In this instance, fear is defined as "Extreme reverence or awe, as toward a supreme power⁸⁷."

[Proverbs 1:7](#) (New International Version) reads "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of

⁸⁵ thefreedictionary.com

⁸⁶ thefreedictionary.com

⁸⁷ thefreedictionary.com

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knowledge...” David feared the lord. [Psalm 16:1](#) (New King James Version) reads “Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.”

II.B. Unhealthy Fear. But the unhealthy form of fear or anxiety can lead to a condition called generalized anxiety disorder:

“Given the stresses of modern life, it is normal to experience occasional anxiety. However, people with generalized anxiety disorder, or GAD, suffer from persistent worry and tension that is much worse than the anxiety most people experience from time to time. The high level or chronic state of anxiety associated with GAD can make ordinary activities difficult or even impossible.

The main symptom of GAD is an exaggerated or unfounded state of worry and anxiety, often about such matters as health, money, family, or work. Although people with GAD may realize that their anxiety is excessive or unwarranted, they are unable to simply “snap out of it.” For them, the mere thought of getting through the day can provoke anxiety.

The persistent worrying characteristic of GAD is hard to control and interferes with daily life. Many GAD sufferers seem unable to relax and may startle easily. In addition, GAD is often accompanied by physical symptoms, such as fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, and gastrointestinal problems⁸⁸.”

II.C. Biblical Definition of the Problem. The Bible describes anxiety adds unnecessary pressure on a man. **Proverbs 12:25** (New International Version) reads “An anxious heart weighs a man down....” Furthermore, anxious efforts are not productive. **Ecclesiastes 2:22-23** (New International Version) reads, “What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.”

III. Solution to the Problem.

III.A. Pray. [Philippians 4:6](#) (New International Version) reads “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” In

⁸⁸ Retrieved June 22, 2007 from: http://www.lexapro.com/understand_condition/anxiety_symptoms.aspx?prevNav=nav2

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Our Daily Bread, dated September 1, 2006, Bill Crowder writes about the steps necessary for replacing anxiety with peace:

“It’s comforting to know that such things (things that cause stress and anxiety) are in our Father’s hands. My inability to do anything about the problem was more than matched by my confidence in God, for whom all things are possible. As I prayed about the situation, my anxiety was replaced by His peace (Phil. 4:6-7).

III.B. Trust in God. Both anxiety, the condition, and worry, the act, are based on a lack of trust in God. Trust is defined as “firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of (an individual) a person or thing⁸⁹.” If you are overanxious or a worrier, then you are possibly over-dependent on your own strength and not firmly relying on the ability of the Lord or trusting on the Lord. Instead of engaging in anxiety and worry, trust in God in order to relieve your anxiety. **Jeremiah 17:7-9 (New King James Version)** reads:

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.”

We need to learn to reduce our stress and anxiety by practicing patience and trust in the Lord. **Psalm 40:1-3 (New International Version)** reads:

“I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD.”

Furthermore, [1 Peter 5:7](#) reads “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” **Ecclesiastes 11:9-10 (New International Version)** reads “So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body.”

III.C. God will fulfill our needs that we are anxious about. We should not worry about our needs.

We are given two accounts of the same basic instructions on anxiety in **Luke 12** and **Matthew 6**. **Luke 12:22-29 (New King James Version)** reads:

⁸⁹ thefreedictionary.com

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Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do *the* least, why are you anxious for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He* clothe you, O *you* of little faith? “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.”

The same account is given in **Matthew 6** but slightly altered at the ending. **Matthew 6:33-34 (New King James Version)** reads: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

Here, at Central Union Mission, we are given everything that we need: food (3 meals a day plus snacks, if you are fortunate to work in the kitchen or unload the food truck), clothing (an opportunity to rebuild our wardrobe via donations to clothing room and suits that Ms. Johnson brings from time to time), shelter, new/refreshed job skills, pocket change/spending money, a social worker, nurturing to restore or initiate interaction with family and church members, quality Christian education, and opportunity to restart our lives again. It is because we sought the latter (Christian education) and our conforming to a Christian way of life at a Christian mission, God provided the rest.

III.D. God Gives You Peace. By engaging in closer walk with God, we worry less and gain peace. **Psalm 55:18 (New King James Version)** reads “He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me.” [Psalm 4:8 \(New International Version\)](#) reads “I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.” Note that it is God that heals you from anxiety. Psalm 94:19 (New International Version) reads “When anxiety was great within me, your consolation⁹⁰ brought joy to my soul.” [Psalm 29:11 \(New International Version\)](#) reads “The LORD gives strength to

⁹⁰ comfort

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his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.” [Psalm 85:8](#) **New International Version (NIV)** reads “I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints.”

IV. In Closing: A man in right standing with God does not have to worry about his future. [Psalm 37:37](#) (**New International Version**) reads “Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the man of peace.” Furthermore, **Proverbs 23:17-19** (**New International Version**) reads “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off. God has good future plans for you.” Additionally, [Jeremiah 29:11](#) (**New International Version**) reads “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

And, in Our Daily Bread, dated September 1, 2006, Bill Crowder writes:

The problems of life can be taxing on us—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Yet, as we learn to trust in the Father’s care, we can have the peace that not only surpasses all understanding but also overcomes our anxiety. We can be at rest, for we are in God’s hands.”

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November 26, 2007

Bible Commentary: *Hiding My Face* A Commentary

James Curtis
 Central Union Mission
 “Hiding My Face”: A Commentary
 November 26, 2007

I. Introduction. Julie Link writes about victory over evil. She writes:

“Years ago, He warned the Israelites that He would turn away from them if they turned toward evil (Deut. 31:18). They did, and He did (Ezek. 39:24).

The prophet Habakkuk had not forsaken God, but he suffered along with those who had. “Why do You show me iniquity,” he asked the Lord, “and cause me to see trouble?” (Hab. 1:3).

God’s response to His confused prophet indicates that even when evil obscures the face of God, our inability to see Him does not mean He is uninvolved. God said, “Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe, though it were told you” (v.5). God would judge Judah, but He would also judge the invading Babylonians for their evil (see Hab. 2). And through it all, “The just shall live by his faith” (2:4).

When world events cause you to despair, turn off the news and turn to Scripture. The end of the story has been written by our holy God. Evil will not prevail.”

II. Defining Evil. But we throw around the term evil without a full investigation of the term. So what is evil?

Evil is defined⁹¹ as “morally objectionable behavior; wickedness; immorality; iniquity; transgression (which is the act of transgressing, or the violation of a law or a duty or moral principle).”

Evil is further defined as “deviltry (which is wicked and cruel behavior); foul play (which is unfair or

⁹¹ www.thefreedictionary.com/evil

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dishonest behavior especially involving violence). Evil is also defined as “irreverence; violation (which is a disrespectful act that which causes harm or destruction or misfortune). Evil is defined as “bad, badness (which is below standard or expectations as of ethics or decency).” Moreover, evil is defined as “the quality of being morally wrong in principle or practice; or malice.” Evil is also defined as “malignity (which is the quality of being disposed to evil; or intense ill will); or the quality or nature of being harmful.” Evil is definitely defined as “immorality (which is the quality of not being in accord with standards of right or good conduct). An interesting definition of evil is “the greatest damage or wickedness of which one is capable.” Furthermore, evil is defined as “nefariousness, vileness, ugliness, wickedness; reprehensibility (which is being reprehensible; worthy of and deserving reprehension or reproof); perverseness, (which is perversity or deliberately deviating from what is good).”

Evil is defined as “wrongdoing, error (which is a departure from what is ethically acceptable); vice.” Evil is being “morally bad or wrong; having undesirable or negative qualities; Evil is “unrighteousness; wickedness.” How about disobedience—is disobedience evil? **Deuteronomy 28:1-20 (New International Version)** mentions the blessings and cursing due to obedience and disobedience respectively. It also links disobedience to evil. It reads:

1 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. 2 All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: 3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. 4 The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. 5 Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. 6 You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. 7 The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven. 8 The LORD will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

9 The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. 10 Then all the peoples on earth will

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see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will fear you. 11 The LORD will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your forefathers to give you.

12 The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. 13 The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. 14 Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

15 However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: 16 You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. 17 Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. 18 The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. 19 You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out.

20 The LORD will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him.

III.A. Where does God for introduce the term evil? God introduces the term, evil, in the garden.

Genesis 2:8-9 (King James Version) reads “8And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”

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Note that God is not the creator of evil itself. Tim Jackson⁹² writes:

“In summing up the gamut of His awesome character and unpredictable ways (see also Isaiah 55:8-9), God declares:

‘I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged Me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things’ (Isaiah 45:5-7 NIV).

This is the signature exclamation of the only sovereign (ruler) of the universe: "I did this!" From the beginning to the end, from light to darkness, from prosperity to disaster, all are the work of His hands. God uses even the most wicked and evil exploits of this world to bring about His glory and divine purposes. That is what is so awesome about God. Only He can take the most wicked, evil, and self-serving intentions and make good come out of them (see also Romans 8:28).

Does God create evil? Certainly not. If He was the author of evil, then He certainly would not be a good God that is worthy of worship and praise, much less trusted to have our well-being in mind. The idea of a good God creating His own enemy and the object of His wrath seems inconceivable. It would be inconsistent for a good God to mastermind the idea of evil, will it into existence, and still be considered a good God.”

Dan Vander Lugt⁹³ writes about why God permitted evil to enter the world. He writes:

“God permitted evil to enter His universe as the price of freedom. Although He could have created the universe without the potential for suffering or sin, such a universe would not have allowed free creatures to exist. It would have been a robotic universe, with no more awareness of grace or God's goodness than a colony of insects.

⁹² http://www.rbc.org/bible_study/answers_to_tough_questions/answers/30871.aspx

⁹³ http://www.rbc.org/bible_study/answers_to_tough_questions/answers/30870.aspx

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The Bible teaches that God became a human being and entered into the suffering of His creation. By experiencing and sharing His universe's suffering, He made redemption possible. He made it possible for all of the wrongs of the world to eventually be made right.

God's true nature is revealed in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul declared: 'In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form' (Colossians 2:9). In the natural universe, underlying reality appears at times to be good and at times to be evil. Only Jesus provides a clear definition of God's holy, loving nature."

III.B. What did God think of evil? He did not want us to have any knowledge of it such that he was willing to put us to death over such knowledge.

Genesis 2:16-18 (King James Version) reads "16And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Even in the days of Noah, God saw how evil had penetrated the earth and he dealt harshly with men, all except Noah. **Genesis 6:1-8 (New International Version)** reads:

"1 When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. 3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with [a] man forever, for he is mortal [b] ; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures

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that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD."

III.C. Why does God dislike evil? Well, we know he dislikes the knowledge of evil via information from who? The serpent.

Genesis 3:4-6 (King James Version) reads "4And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Richard De Haan⁹⁴ writes about teaching the next generation to hate evil. He writes:

"Every Christian should have a ...hatred for evil (Ps. 101:3-8). Yet many mothers and fathers who are so careful to guard their youngsters from physical harm don't notice the evil forces that threaten their spiritual welfare. As a result, they leave them unprotected. They show little concern for the kinds of friends their children make, the magazines they read, or the TV programs they watch. But whenever these influences are bad, they should be seen as a deadly threat, and we should protect our children from them. It's not wrong to hate when we hate what is wrong."

IV. In Closing. David Roper⁹⁵ writes about attempting to make the most of evil days. He writes:

"We tend to read Ephesians 5:16 as if Paul is calling believers to action because the days are short, but that's not what he meant. He said we are to make the most of time "because the days are evil." Evil days are days of opportunity. The more evil our culture becomes, the more opportunities there will be to show and share our faith.

God controls human history—permitting the rise of nations, determining their geographical boundaries, and orchestrating their fall—so that men and women will "seek the Lord" (Acts 17:26-

⁹⁴ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-28-99.shtml>

⁹⁵ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-16-01.shtml>

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27). History is "His story" of providing salvation for a lost world and pointing people to the Lord. Even the forces of evil are used in such a way that "all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord, You alone" (Isaiah 37:20).

God may hold back His judgment for a time, allowing evil tyrants to have their day, upsetting people's well-ordered lives, presenting them with dilemmas beyond their understanding. Evil brings pain, but it is the genius of God to bring good out of evil (Romans 8:28). Evil times, therefore, are not to be feared. They are times of unparalleled opportunity. That's why we must make the most of them."

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November 28, 2007

Bible Commentary: The Birth of Jesus

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"THE BIRTH OF JESUS"
November 28, 2007

I. The Birth of Jesus. Matthew 1:18-24 (New International Version) tells us about the birth of Jesus. It reads:

18This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 19Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 22All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." 24When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife."

Luke 2:1-7 (New International Version) talks about the location of the birth of Jesus. It reads:

1In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3And everyone went to his own town to register.

4So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6While they were there,

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the time came for the baby to be born, 7and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

Luke 2:8-19 (New International Version) talks about the shepherds and the angels that appeared to the shepherds about the birth of Jesus. It reads:

“8And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ (Or Messiah, both meaning the Anointed One) the Lord. 12This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

15When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

16So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

17When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”

Matthew 2:1-23 (New International Version) talks about events surrounding King Herod and the birth of Jesus. It reads:

“1After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." 3When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4When he had called together all the people's chief priests

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and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: 6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.' "

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." 9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." 14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son." 16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17 Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: 18 "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20 and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." 21 So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land

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of Israel. 22But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

In sum⁹⁶,

“About 2000 years ago God sent an angel to Israel, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph, a carpenter. The angel told Mary that by God's power, she would conceive and bear a son.

When Joseph learned that she was pregnant, an angel instructed him to marry her. Joseph took her to Bethlehem to register for a census. While there, Mary gave birth to Jesus. She laid him in a manger because there was no room at the inn. Shepherds visited Jesus in Bethlehem.

Later, wise men brought gifts to Jesus. They told Herod the Great, a wicked king, that Jesus would rule Israel. So Herod sent soldiers to kill the children in Bethlehem. Warned by an angel, Joseph took his family to Egypt. After Herod died, they returned to Israel and raised Jesus in a town called Nazareth.”

II. Israel (near the time of Moses) vs. Judea (at the time of Jesus). Corne` J. Bekker⁹⁷ writes in *The Birth of Jesus in the New Testament: One Event – Four Narratives* that “It is Matthew that tells us about the wise men that came to worship, bringing gifts fit for a king; the murderous acts of the bad king Herod; records the journey of the holy family to and back from Egypt (in no small part to illustrate how Jesus’ life mirrors that of the people of Israel).”

For a moment, let’s focus on how Jesus’ life mirrored the people of Israel. Foremost, how can we describe King Herod? King Herod was jealous and fearful, much like whom? the King of Egypt, who oppressed the Israelites. How far did King Herod take his fear? To the point of mass slaughter of young boys. How far did the King of Egypt take his fear? To the point of mass slaughter of young boys. **Exodus 1:8-22 (New International Version)** reads:

⁹⁶ <http://www.lifeofchrist.com/life/lifescan/>

⁹⁷ http://www.cbn.com/special/TheNativityMovie/articles/Bekker_Birth_of_Jesus.aspx

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“8 Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. 9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. 10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." 11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites 13 and worked them ruthlessly. 14 They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.

15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, 16 "When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." 17 The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. 18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?" 19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive." 20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

22 Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

These mass killings of young boys were in order to prevent something that they could stop: Destiny. Moses arose out of the killings led by the Egyptians (Exodus 2:1-10) and Jesus arose out of the killings of the boys in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-23). Furthermore, Martin De Haan, in Mary & Joseph: Reflecting on the Wonder of Christmas, printed by RBC Ministries in 2007, also writes about King Herod. He writes:

“The magi’s visit alarmed Herod, who viewed the birth of a new king as a clear and present danger to stability and longevity in his own kingdom....(Furthermore) with Herod’s threats

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hanging over them, they could not stay in Bethlehem. In Egypt, they would be safe. And out of Egypt, Christ—like the Moses-led children of Israel hundreds of years before—would eventually return home to live and grow and prepare for His years of public ministry.”

III. In closing, Richard De Haan⁹⁸ writes about the birth of Jesus in context of his whole life. He writes:

“At this time of year we think about the birth of the Savior. The events of His birth are of vital importance, yet we would do well to reflect also on His earthly ministry, sacrificial death, resurrection, ascension, and promised return. Our redemption would be incomplete if any element were missing....

The One born in Bethlehem was none other than God in human flesh. Having lived a perfect life, He died an awful death to pay the price for the sins of mankind. Now He's in heaven, and any day He could return....”

⁹⁸ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-26-03.shtml>

		
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December 10, 2007

Bible Commentary: *Be A Star* A Commentary

James Curtis
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 “Be A Star”: A Commentary
 December 10, 2007

In today’s devotion, Julie Link⁹⁹ writes: “By turning others to righteousness, we, like Daniel, can become a star that will shine forever.” Furthermore, Anne Cetas writes about methods of sharing our faith to others. She states:

“Believers in Jesus have their own lingo as well. We use common jargon that nonbelievers may not comprehend. For instance, we use the words *grace*, *saved*, and *repentance*. These are all good words, but as we’re sharing our faith, it might be more helpful to say, “God’s gift of unearned forgiveness” instead of *grace*. Or “rescued from death and given eternal life” for *saved*. We could say, “to turn away from wrongs” for repentance. The apostle Paul was willing to be flexible in his ministry in order to reach as many as possible with the gospel of Christ (1 Cor. 9:19-23). That might have even included the words he used as he explained the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Explaining our faith in easy-to-understand terms may help someone to grasp the meaning of being born again—transformed by Jesus’ love and forgiveness¹⁰⁰.”

Vernon Grounds also writes about explaining our faith to others. He uses an example of a scientist and writes about the limitations of formal worldly education when trying to explain our faith to others. He writes:

“British scientist Thomas Huxley (1825-1895) vigorously supported the theory of evolution, which earned him the nickname “Darwin’s bulldog.” As an agnostic, he believed religion was a harmful superstition. One day Huxley asked a deeply committed Christian, “What does your faith mean to you?” Knowing Huxley’s skepticism, the man paused and then replied, “You are very educated, and you can dispute anything I say.” Huxley urged him to explain why he was a Christian. So from his heart the man told what Jesus meant to him. Huxley, deeply moved, didn’t argue. Wistfully he said, “I’d give my right hand for your faith in Jesus.” We can draw two lessons

⁹⁹ “Be A Star,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, December 10, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-10-07.shtml>)

¹⁰⁰ “The Lingo,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, August 27, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-27-07.shtml>)

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from this encounter. One is that while we may prize knowledge, we know that formal education is not necessary for the exercise of life-changing, saving faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). The second lesson is that a simple, straightforward testimony from the heart can often be more effective than a scholarly argument....Let's not hesitate to tell people what Jesus means to us personally¹⁰¹.”

I have come to a similar conclusion: explaining our faith simply with our testimony far outperforms explanations based on scholarly jargon. After all these years after investing in secular schooling (for instance, investing time and energy in being the best elementary school student, investing time and energy in being the best middle school student, investing time and energy in being the best high school student, investing time, money and energy in being the best college student, and investing in time, money and energy in being a top graduate school student, investing time and energy in learning musical instruments that I forgot how to play, investing time and energy in student government activities, and forgoing at least 10 to 15 years of substantial employment income), I have grown in my relationship with God to learn that my wisdom from secular education is minimally important relative to my wisdom from Biblical education. Moreover, my wisdom from secular education is minimally important relative to the power of my testimony of overcoming my downfalls in my life.

Today, we are going to talk about effectively sharing God's word or a term called evangelism. We will first define evangelism. Then we will discuss why we should engage in evangelism and how to be an evangelist.

Definition of evangelism. What is evangelism? Evangelism is defined as “(1) Zealous preaching and dissemination of the gospel, as through missionary work; (2) Militant zeal for a cause; and (3) zealous preaching and advocacy of the gospel¹⁰².” Note that zealous is defined as “Enthusiastic devotion to a cause, ideal, or goal and tireless diligence in its furtherance¹⁰³.” Therefore, evangelism is an ‘enthusiastic devotion’ to the ‘dissemination of the gospel.’ **Revelation 3:15-17 (New International Version)** warns us against having a lack of enthusiasm with regard to Him and His word. It reads: “15I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16So,

¹⁰¹ “A Powerful Witness,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries, November 9, 2002. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-09-02.shtml>)

¹⁰² <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/evangelism>

¹⁰³ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/zeal>

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because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” Based on this passage of Scripture, God wants us to tell the ‘good news’ with certain level of excitement.

Why Work as an Evangelist? We are to be evangelists because God commands it. Foremost, we are commissioned to be evangelists because we are commissioned by the Lord. For, the Great Commission in **Matthew 28:19-20 (New International Version)** reads what? “19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

Second, God’s word directly tells us to be ‘evangelists’: **2 Timothy 4:5 (New International Version)** reads: “But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”

Third, we are commissioned to be evangelists who are a light of righteousness in the darkness of sin. **Matthew 5:14-15 (New International Version)** reads:

“14You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Julie Link uses the example of lighthouses to explain why we are commissioned to evangelists. She writes

“Lighthouses were not built just to be admired; they were built to hold lights that guide sailors to safety. A lighthouse is most useful and appreciated when, in the darkness of night, only its light can be seen—not the structure itself. When Jesus sent out His disciples, He called them "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). He also indicated that their task was not to draw attention to themselves, but to do good works that would cause people to recognize God's goodness and glorify Him. Jesus said that just as a lamp's purpose is to give light, we also are to let our light shine (vv.15-16). We're most effective when we shine brightly in the darkness, guiding people who

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need to find safe harbor in Christ. For a light to be effective, it has to be shining in a dark place¹⁰⁴.”

Fourth, we are to be evangelists because the scripture was made to be taught and provide a living hope during times of duress. **Romans 15:4 (New International Version)** reads: “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Furthermore, God commands, in the New Testament, that we be prepared evangelists. **1 Peter 3: 15 (New International Version)** reads: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” God desires for us to be prepared evangelists no matter what the circumstances may be. **2 Timothy 4:1-2 (New International Version)** reads:

“1In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

Note that, we, believers in Christ, are God’s communicators and He takes responsibility for the results. For, David McCasland reads: “Through our words and actions, we testify of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. We are His messengers, but He is the message¹⁰⁵.” **Matthew 13:22-24 (New International Version)** reads:

“22The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. 23But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

How to be an evangelist? Henry Bosch, Haddon Robinson and Julie Link, of RBC Ministries, write about how to be effective evangelists. Foremost, Henry Bosch writes about methods of being more enthusiastic about evangelism by comparing evangelism to banking. He states:

¹⁰⁴ “This Little Light Of Mine,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, October 14, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-14-03.shtml>)

¹⁰⁵ “Just A Messenger,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, January 23, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-01-23-03.shtml>)

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"it's just like getting interest in a bank. You have to put in a little something first or you'll never have any! The more you put in, the more you'll get out of it. Try it." That philosophy is simple but true. If you lack interest in something, it is probably because you have put very little into it. You say you can find no pleasure in Bible study, but have you ever sat down with a concordance and looked up the Scripture references on a given subject? Have you ever read the Psalms until you came to some promise that comforted you, and then meditated on that truth until your heart overflowed with praise? Have you ever read a book of the Bible at one sitting so you could get the sense of its message? If not, no wonder you have no interest! The apostle Peter emphasized the effort we need to put into the Christian life if we are to be fruitful (2 Pet. 1:5-10). Perhaps you say you have little enthusiasm for evangelism or discipling others. Have you ever tried to speak to someone or volunteered for ministry? If not, it's time to invest some effort-then watch your interest grow^{106!}"

I propose that you need to be invested in the ministries of the church in order to gain a zeal for disseminating the gospel or evangelism. Once you have invested your money, time and energy in ministry, for instance, in the usher/greeter/security ministry or in the deacon ministry, it is only natural to desire to see the return in your life and the lives of others. Therefore, I argue that evangelism not requires not only investing time in learning God's word but effective evangelism also requires active participation in the aims of your church.

Haddon Robinson writes about removing the stereotypes of evangelism. He states:

"When you think of the term *evangelism*, what picture flashes onto the wall of your mind? A large stadium filled with people? A small booklet with a set of diagrams? A Christian wearing a pin with the symbol of a fish? A zealous believer playing intellectual chess with a pagan opponent? A salesman convincing a reluctant person to "try Jesus"? Evangelism is a 10-letter dirty word to some of us. While we think it's a dandy idea for others, we're sure it isn't for us. We're not cut out to sell, nor shrewd enough to play intellectual games with non-Christians. Evangelism, though, isn't about being a huckster who cons people into buying what they don't need. It has nothing to do with grabbing people by the lapels and shoving on them a faith that goes no deeper than the shirt

¹⁰⁶ "No Interest?," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, April 13, 1999. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-13-99.shtml>)

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pocket. What a grim indictment resides in the remark, "You could identify the people she had witnessed to by their haggard look." Evangelism is simply sharing with others what we know about Jesus. "We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Corinthians 4:5). No tricks. No deception. Speak the truth...in love. Then leave the results with God¹⁰⁷."

Julie Link writes about simply being yourself when engaging in evangelism. She writes:

"The authentic story of the work Christ has done in our lives is the best testimony we have. We don't need to doctor it or dramatize it. When we tell the truth about Christ's power to save us and keep us from sin, our testimony will be credible. If the thought of taking classes or memorizing plans has kept you from witnessing, try a different approach: be yourself¹⁰⁸!"

In closing, David Egener writes:

"Followers of Christ have a similar mission. We have a life-transforming message to proclaim to those who need to hear it (Romans 10:9-15). Every day, people all over the world are being saved from sin and its consequences through faith in the Lord Jesus. Our mission as His followers is to be messengers who "preach the gospel of peace" (v.15), telling others about the Savior, Jesus Christ. There is no more worthy mission, for "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (v.13). Are you doing your part to fulfill this mission?"

¹⁰⁷ "To Tell the Truth," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, October 14, 2005. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-14-05.shtml>)

¹⁰⁸ "Just Be Yourself," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, June 22, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-06-22-07.shtml>)

		
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December 17, 2007

Bible Commentary: Forever Joyful

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“Forever Joyful”: A Commentary
December 17, 2007

I. Introduction. In today’s devotion, Vernon Grounds¹⁰⁹ writes “our spiritual wealth in Jesus is immeasurably more valuable than any material possessions.” Today, we are going to talk about money. What is money? Money is defined¹¹⁰ as “A medium that can be exchanged for goods and services” and “Assets and property considered in terms of monetary value; (or) wealth.” First, we will talk about Man and Money, then, we will talk about the Church and Money, and, finally, we talk about the limitations of money.

II. Man and Money. God does not totally dismiss the importance of wealth. **Ecclesiastes 10:19 (New International Version)** reads: “19 A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes life merry, but money is the answer for everything.” **Matthew 25:15-23 (New International Version)** reads:

“15To one he gave five talents[a] of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' 21"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' 22"The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' 23"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'”

¹⁰⁹ Grounds, Vernon, “Forever Joyful,” RBC Ministries, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-17-07.shtml>)

¹¹⁰ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/money>

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Furthermore, God gave increase to the lives of Abraham and Joseph. One author¹¹¹ writes:

‘God is the one who blessed Abraham, father of the faithful, with abundance. Gen 12:1-3
 “Jehovah said to Abram, Get out of your country, get away from your relatives and from your father's house, into a land that I will show you. (2) And I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. (3) I will bless those that bless you and curse those who curse you. In you shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

God is (also) the one who blessed Joseph to become 2nd-in-command of Egypt and gain great wealth. Gen 39:1, 3 “Joseph was brought down to Egypt. And Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh, purchased Joseph from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. (3) Over time, Potiphar noticed that Jehovah was with Joseph, and that Jehovah made all Joseph did to prosper in his hand.” Gen 41:38-41 “Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find any man like Joseph, in whom the Spirit of God dwells? (39) Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God has shown you all this, no one is as discreet and wise as you. (40) You shall be over my house, and all my people shall kiss my hand at your word. Only in the throne will I be greater than you. (41) I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”

Instead the author reminds us that proper priorities should be the focus of man. Foremost, God does not condemn money but he condemns excessive desire for money. **Ecclesiastes 5:10 (New International Version)** reads: “Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.” One author¹¹² writes:

“Mt 6:19-34 says, in part, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth ... but lay up ... treasures in Heaven." "For where your treasure is there will be your heart also." "You cannot serve God and money." "Therefore, do not worry, saying 'what shall we eat?'" "For your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then all these things will be added". This passage is not an outright condemnation of amassing treasures, it is a condemnation of putting treasures before God – which is idolatry! Getting our priorities straight is the point of this passage.

¹¹¹ “Biblical Economics,” Christian Ambassadors, Inc. 2005, page 1, (<http://www.christianambassadors.org/literature/biblicaleconomics.html>)

¹¹² “Biblical Economics,” Christian Ambassadors, Inc. 2005, page 4, (<http://www.christianambassadors.org/literature/biblicaleconomics.html>)

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Mt 19:16-26 tells us the story of a rich young man who wanted to know what he needed to do to gain eternal life. Jesus said, "keep the commandments", to which the young man responded, "I have". Jesus then said, "If you will be perfect, sell what you have and give to the poor." "But when the man heard that he went away sorrowful because he had great possessions." "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle'. 'But with God all things are possible.'" Did you catch that? If God is first in a rich person's life then it is possible for him to inherit eternal life. Again, the point is properly prioritizing.

1 Tim 6:5-10 warns us about using any aspect of Christianity as a pretext for getting rich. "Men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth ... suppose that godliness is a means of gain." "Desiring to be rich, they fall into temptation and a snare." "For the love of money is a root of many evils, causing some to stray from the faith in their greediness." Greed is the problem. Contrast that with verses 17-19: "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor trust in riches but rather in the Living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life." Need I say it a third time? priorities, priorities, priorities; it's all about priorities!"

Another author¹¹³ writes ones priorities and money. Haddon Robinson writes:

"How we handle money reveals much about our priorities. That's why Jesus often talked about money. One-sixth of the Gospels' content, including one out of every three parables, touches on stewardship. Jesus wasn't a fundraiser. He dealt with money matters because money matters. For some of us, though, it matters too much.

¹¹³ Robinson, Haddon. "Money Matters," RBC Ministries, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-05-20-05.shtml>)

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Jesus warned that we can become slaves to money. We may not think that money means more to us than God does. But Jesus did not say we must serve God more than we serve money. The issue isn't what occupies first place in our life, but whether we serve money at all."

Christian Ambassadors¹¹⁴ write about developing pride based on possessions. They suggest it is the problem while being poor spirit develops meekness and poor in possessions allows you to focus on the goodness and grace of God:

'Rich people tend to glory in their riches instead of glorying in the God who made it possible for them to be rich, whereas poor people don't have anything physical to glory in, so they recognize that it's all about God. From that we might conclude that poverty is a good thing. Well it could be, but then again poverty can be a bad thing. It depends on two things: 1) how the poor person relates to God and his neighbors, and 2) why the person is poor in the first place.

If a person is poor because of poor character then his poverty is a bad thing. The book of Proverbs is littered with harsh words against lazy people. Prov 6:9,11 states, "How long will you slumber, O sluggard?" "Your poverty shall come upon you like a prowler." Prov 10:3,4 reads, "He who has a slack hand becomes poor", "He who sleeps in harvest time is a son who causes shame".

Given the right situations of good health, a good amount of time, and good economic opportunities, and if God doesn't will it otherwise, a good work ethic and good business sense should lead the poor person from poverty to prosperity. Prov 10:4 "The hand of the diligent makes him rich". Eccl 5:17-20 "It is good for one to eat, drink and enjoy the fruit of his labor all the days God gives him. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and give him power to eat of it, and rejoice in his labor – this is the gift of God."

III. The Church and Money. The Bible warns us not to turn the Church into a market places where money is exchanged for goods and services. **Matthew 21:12-13 (King James Version)** reads: 12And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew

¹¹⁴ "Biblical Economics," Christian Ambassadors, Inc. 2005, page 5, (<http://www.christianambassadors.org/literature/biblicaleconomics.html>)

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the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.”

Instead, the church is to be a storehouse for tithes and offerings. **Genesis 14:18b-20 (New International Version)** reads: “...He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator [e] of heaven and earth. 20 And blessed be [f] God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth (or tithe) of everything.”

Malachi 3:8-10 (New International Version) reads “"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings....Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.” **Leviticus 27:30-32 (New International Version)** reads “" 'A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.... the entire tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the LORD.” The Bible also discusses giving a tenth (or tithe) in the New Testament in **Luke 18:11-12 (NIV)** and **Hebrews 7:2-6 (NIV)**.

IV. Limitations of Money. What we really ought to be seeking is wisdom. **Ecclesiastes 7:11-13 (New International Version)** reads: “11 Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. 12 Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor.” Bill Crowder¹¹⁵ writes:

“Much of our living is spent acquiring and using money, which doesn’t last. The stock market crashes. Prices go up. Thieves steal others’ goods. Things wear out and break down, requiring the acquisition and expenditure of more money to replace what has been lost. The temporary nature of material wealth makes it a poor bargain in the search for security in an insecure world. Money is much better at saying goodbye than it is at sticking around.

Nowhere does the Bible say it’s wrong to have money or the things that money can buy. Where we lose our way is when money becomes the driving purpose of our lives...How tragic to live our entire lives, only to end them with nothing of eternal worth to show for our labors.”

¹¹⁵ Crowder, Bill, “Money Talks,” RBC Ministries, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-13-06.shtml>)

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V. Conclusion. An author¹¹⁶ writes about the importance of salvation and ‘what money can’t buy.’ He writes:

“Money is a necessary part of living. Without it, we couldn’t secure the necessities or luxuries of life. But there are things money can’t buy. As preacher W. A. Criswell said, “Money will buy luxuries, but it will not buy spiritual power. Money will buy advancement and preferment, but it will not buy the recognition of God. Money will buy . . . favor and accolades, but it will not buy soul respect.”

The greatest good—so great that it is in a category all by itself—cannot be bought. If the entire human race were to bankrupt its resources in an effort to buy forgiveness of sin and eternal life with Jesus, it would be infinitely insufficient. All the wealth of the whole world cannot purchase the supreme blessing of forgiveness and heaven.

We’ll never accumulate enough riches to purchase a place in the paradise of God.”

¹¹⁶ Grounds, Vernon, “What Money Can’t Buy,” RBC Ministries, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-26-07.shtml>)

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December 19, 2007

Leadership: State of the 8 AM Service Address

2007 Year-End Report
“State of the 8 AM Service Address”
 December 19, 2007
 James Curtis

1 Corinthians 9:16 (New International Version) reads: “Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” Good Evening. My name is James Curtis and I have assisted Pastor Tucker in coordinating the 8:00 AM—powerful one-hour service—otherwise known as the “Fire in the Hole” service. Over the course of this year, praise and worship has been ushered into the house of the Lord. While people were sleeping and others were snoring, some were ushering in the Holy Spirit at the crack of dawn so our prayers could be answered and new and old souls could be saved. Words of inspiration were delivered by ordained members of the body as well as by members-in-training for greater service. Finally, the preached word was delivered with conviction and authority by those anointed within our congregation.

And I would like to take this time to thank them all:

Foremost, Mother and Min. Essie Chapman, thank you.

Min, George Bartley, thank you.

Min. Nathaniel Harpe, thank you.

Min. Robyn Hill, thank you.

Min. Theodora Chapman, thank you.

Min. William Hill, thank you.

Min. Willie Hill, thank you.

And Min. Patricia Derricott, we look forward to your preached word in Jan. after returning from surgery.

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Furthermore, Deacon Allen Lemon, thank you....

Deacon Annie Ingraham

Deacon Eleanor Mitchell

Deacon Freddie Holman

Deacon Evelyn Holman

Deacon Joyce Milton

Deacon June McCloud

Deacon Lena Mead

Deacon Loria Weaver

Deacon Mary Cunningham

Deacon Mary Sanders

Deacon Roberta Tucker

Deacon Tina Buggs

Moreover, Sis. Bea Robinson, thank you....

Sis. Debbie Gordon

Sis. Etta Washington

Sis. Evelyn Younger

Sis. Gladys Hardy

Sis. Mary Hawes

Sis. Megan Hovis

Sis. Shirley Bynum

We look forward to experiencing the flame that you lit each and every Sunday morning. And I pray that it not only remains lit but continues to spread and overflow into the 11:00 AM worship and overflow into the lives of our church members, and overflow into the lives of visitors, and overflow into the lives of residents of Park-Morton, and overflow into the lives of residents of the District of Columbia, and overflow into the lives of residents of the Washington Metropolitan area; and, yes, overflow throughout this country and, even, into the lives of those around this world.

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January 31, 2008

Bible Commentary: Service

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"Service"
January 31, 2008

Our Purpose is service. Many of us are busy these days with things that occupy our time—such as watching television, and surfing the internet. Some of us justify ourselves with the sentence in the US Declaration of Independence, signed July 4, 1776, that states “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. “ Well I have a Bible that reads a little different than this sentence in the US Declaration of Independence. The Bible commands us to serve God. **Psalm 2:11 (New International Version)** reads: “Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.” **2 Peter 3:10-12 (Contemporary English Version)** reads:

“10The day of the Lord's return will surprise us like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a loud noise, and the heat will melt the whole universe. Then the earth and everything on it will be seen for what they are. 11Everything will be destroyed. So you should serve and honor God by the way you live.”

Out of the temptation of Christ we learn that service to God is the purpose of man. **Matthew 4:1-11 (New International Version)** reads:

“1Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" 5Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" 7Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"8Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."10Jesus said

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to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" 11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him." (This is stated again in the same manner in **Luke 4:1-13**).

Even Moses learned his purpose of service at the burning Bush. **Exodus 3:1-12 (New International Version)** reads:

'1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." 4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." 6 Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.'"

Definition of service: Dictionary. The Free Dictionary¹¹⁷ defines service as "Employment in duties or work for another; Work done for others as an occupation or business; Assistance; help; work done by

¹¹⁷ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/service>

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one person or group that benefits another; the activity of contributing to the fulfillment of a need or furtherance of an effort or purpose; a service that is performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions.” One author¹¹⁸ writes about service and defines service as:

“...the overflow which pours from a life filled with love and devotion. But strictly speaking, there is no *call* to that. Service is what I bring to the relationship and is the reflection of my identification with the nature of God. Service becomes a natural part of my life. God brings me into the proper relationship with Himself so that I can understand His call, and then I serve Him on my own out of a motivation of absolute love. Service to God is the deliberate love-gift of a nature that has heard the call of God. Service is an expression of my nature, and God’s call is an expression of His nature. Therefore, when I receive His nature and hear His call, His divine voice resounds throughout His nature and mine and the two become one in service. The Son of God reveals Himself in me, and out of devotion to Him service becomes my everyday way of life.”

As a program man in the mission or participant in ministry at church you are essentially serving God by doing the work of a missionary. The same author defines what it means to be in service to God as a missionary. He¹¹⁹ writes:

‘A missionary is someone sent by Jesus Christ just as He was sent by God. The great controlling factor is not the needs of people, but the command of Jesus. The source of our inspiration in our service for God is behind us, not ahead of us. The tendency today is to put the inspiration out in front— to sweep everything together in front of us and make it conform to our definition of success. But in the New Testament the inspiration is put behind us, and is the Lord Jesus Himself. The goal is to be true to Him— to carry out *His* plans.

Personal attachment to the Lord Jesus and to His perspective is the one thing that must not be overlooked. In missionary work the great danger is that God’s call will be replaced by the needs of the people, to the point that human sympathy for those needs will absolutely overwhelm the meaning of being sent by Jesus. The needs are so enormous, and the conditions so difficult, that every power of the mind falters and fails. We tend to forget that the one great reason underneath

¹¹⁸ Chamber, Oswald, “The Call of the Natural Life.” My Upmost for His Highest, January 17, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?day=17&month=01>)

¹¹⁹ Chamber, Oswald, “What is a Missionary?.” My Upmost for His Highest, October 26, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?day=26&month=10>)

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all missionary work is not primarily the elevation of the people, their education, nor their needs, but is first and foremost the command of Jesus Christ— "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . ." (Matthew 28:19).

When looking back on the lives of men and women of God, the tendency is to say, "What wonderfully keen and intelligent wisdom they had, and how perfectly they understood all that God wanted!" But the keen and intelligent mind behind them was the mind of God, not human wisdom at all. We give credit to human wisdom when we should give credit to the divine guidance of God being exhibited through childlike people who were "foolish" enough to trust God's wisdom and His supernatural equipment.'

Enthusiasm and service. Another author¹²⁰ writes about our enthusiasm for service. He writes:

'Sometimes when we're asked to serve the Lord in a particular way, we reluctantly accept, but we do so only out of a sense of obligation. When that happens, we need to pray for a willing spirit so that we can "serve the Lord with gladness" (Psalm 100:2).'

1 Peter 5:1-2 (New International Version) reads:

1To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

The former author¹²¹ recommends serving the Lord until you are physically exhausted serving him. He writes:

'Until others learn to draw on the life of the Lord Jesus directly, they will have to draw on His life through you. You must literally be their source of supply, until they learn to take their nourishment from God. We owe it to God to be our best for His lambs and sheep, as well as for Him.

Have you delivered yourself over to exhaustion because of the way you have been serving God? If so, then renew and rekindle your desires and affections. Examine your reasons for service. Is your

¹²⁰ Van Gorder, Paul, "Glad Service," Our Daily Bread, April 18, 2006, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-18-06.shtml>)

¹²¹ Chamber, Oswald, "Are You Exhausted Spiritually?" My Upmost for His Highest, February 9, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?day=09&month=02>)

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source based on your own understanding or is it grounded on the redemption of Jesus Christ?

Continually look back to the foundation of your love and affection and remember where your

Source of power lies. You have no right to complain, "O Lord, I am so exhausted." He saved and

sanctified you to exhaust you. Be exhausted for God.'

Leadership and Service. One author writes about our attitude when serving God as leaders. Herbert

Vander Lugt¹²² writes:

"Good leaders don't rely on domineering self-assertion—not at home, nor in church, nor in business. Rather, they balance self-assertiveness (which isn't wrong in itself) with the principle of submitting to one another (Ephesians 5:21). They listen respectfully, admit when they're wrong, show a willingness to change, and mix gentleness with firmness. That's submissive leadership—and it works!"

In order to lead you must first follow. David C. Egner¹²³ writes about the temptation of leaders to have selfish aims. He writes: "Two options come with leadership: the temptation to serve yourself, and the opportunity to serve the people you lead....If the Lord ever places you in a position of leadership, ask for His help to be a leader who serves." **Matthew 20:26-28 (New International Version)** reads "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (This is stated again in the same manner in **Mark 10:43-45**). Furthermore, **Ephesians 6:7-8 (New International Version)** reads: "7Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free."

In Closing. One author¹²⁴ writes: "In the believer's heart rages a spiritual war between sin and righteousness. We can obey the slave-master of sin, or we can say yes to the God of grace who has made us free (Romans 6:16; John 8:34). Our greatest liberty lies in serving the One who created and redeemed us." Even though one may be working in the clothing room and another intake and still another in the kitchen or at the front desk or in the laundry room, we are all providing service to the one God. 1

¹²² Vander Lugt, Herbert. "Submissive Leadership," Our Daily Bread, February 23, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-23-04.shtml>)

¹²³ Egner, David, "A Leader Who Serves," Our Daily Bread, June 17, 2002, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-06-17-02.shtml>).

¹²⁴ Fisher, Dennis, "A Tale Of Two Slaves," Our Daily Bread, December 20, 2005, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-20-05.shtml>).

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Corinthians 12:4-6 (New International Version) reads: “4There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.” **1 Peter 4:7-10 (New International Version)** reads:

“7The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. 8Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”

Furthermore, no matter what particular sin you came out of, God can still use you for service. 1

Timothy 1:12-13 (New International Version) reads: “12I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. 13Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy....;” Finally the Bible talks about the rewards for serving him. **Proverbs 22:4 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: “Respect and serve the LORD! Your reward will be wealth, a long life, and honor.” And **Psalms 135:14 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: ‘The LORD will bring justice and show mercy to all who serve him.’

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February 14, 2008

Bible Commentary: Love

James Curtis
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LOVE
February 14, 2008

Today is Valentine's Day. And today we take time to remember our loved ones. Some of us may not have loved ones at this to remember nor anyone to remember you. Well I'm here to inform you that you are remembered on this day of love. In today's devotion in Our Daily Bread, Anne Cestas¹²⁵ writes about searching for love in new places. She writes:

‘The best place to find love is not in another person but in a book, the Bible. The Bible tells of God's great love for us. This is expressed in what my friend called the best love note she had ever received. It's found in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten son that whoever believes In Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” God loves us like no one else ever could. He showed that love when He sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior.’

David Branon writes: “Jesus is the ultimate source of love and respect (Ephesians 5:25-33). True love is Christ-like love.¹²⁶” David McCasland reminds us of God's love for us. He writes:

“It's no accident that one of the best-known verses in the Bible is John 3:16. ... Could it be that the love we long for the most is God's love? Is Jesus Christ the special person we so eagerly seek to sweep us off our feet? If so, then accepting God's love in Christ could change our lives in remarkable ways. Hope, peace, and a zest for living—they all spring from being in love with Jesus.¹²⁷”

He goes on to write the infinite nature of God's love. He writes:

“God never changes, and neither does His love for us. We are recipients of a perfect love from our heavenly Father, who has loved us “with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3). We are called to accept His unfailing love, to allow it to shape our lives, and to extend it to others.¹²⁸”

Psalm 36:5-7 (New International Version) describes God's love as unfailing. It reads:

¹²⁵ “The Best Companion,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, February 14, 2008. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-14-08.shtml>)

¹²⁶ “True Love,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, December 4, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-04-03.shtml>)

¹²⁷ Looking For Love,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, November 2, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-02-03.shtml>)

¹²⁸ “Unchanging Love,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, July 30, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-07-30-07.shtml>)

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“Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O LORD, you preserve both man and beast. How priceless is your unfailing love! “

Today we are talking about love. We will define love both in terms of secular and spiritual definitions. Then, we are going to about the greatest commandment in the Bible. Then, we are going to talk about the benefits of displaying love.

Secular Definition of Love. Love is defined by the free dictionary¹²⁹ as “A deep, tender, ineffable¹³⁰ feeling of affection and solicitude¹³¹ toward a person, such as that arising from kinship, recognition of attractive qualities, or a sense of underlying oneness.” Vernon Grounds writes about an unemotional form of love. He states:

“From childhood on, we are urged to show love, whether it's for parents or pets or friends, and especially for Jesus. But what is love? We think of love as an emotion, a tender feeling, a positive reaction. So when Scripture *commands* us to love God and our neighbor, we may be confused about the meaning of love (Matthew 22:37-40). Feelings simply cannot be commanded. A mother can order her child to love spinach, but she can't compel him to react positively when faced with a helping of that green vegetable. So love must be more than an emotion. An old translation of our Lord's command may help us to understand love as an action that we choose: "Thou shalt love" It's choosing to be patient, kind, selfless, and humble (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). We can love others even though we may not like them....¹³²”

Vernon Grounds also writes about the love of God. He writes:

“Even the best of human love is insufficient to give us the security and significance we need. Why? One reason is that man's life is fleeting. People grow old and die, and love eventually comes to an end. Another reason is that in personal relationships, we know that people are sinful, fickle, and unfaithful. We need the eternal love of God, who is love. He views each of us as priceless.

¹²⁹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Love>

¹³⁰ “Incapable of being expressed; indescribable or unutterable,” according to the <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Love>

¹³¹ The state of being solicitous; care or concern, as for the well-being of another,” according to <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/solicitude>

¹³² “Love Goes Beyond Liking,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, November 25, 2005. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-25-05.shtml>)

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And the gospel reveals that we have such love in the Person of God's Son, Jesus Christ. His love will never let us go¹³³."

Biblical Definition of Love. Dave Branon writes about the Bible's persistent discussion of love. He writes:

"If there is one thing believers in Jesus should be known for, it is love. The word *love* appears in Scripture more than 500 times. The essence of the gospel is love, as we see in John 3:16. "For God so loved the world . . ." The epistle of 1 John 3:16 elaborates: "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us." Christians are to serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13), love their neighbors as themselves (Galatians 5:14), live a life of love (Ephesians 5:2), and love with actions and in truth (1 John 3:18)...¹³⁴."

The Biblical definition of love can be found where? **1 Corinthians 13 (New International Version)** reads:

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

¹³³ "Human Love Isn't Enough," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, December 11, 2002. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-11-02.shtml>)

¹³⁴ "Why Love Begets Hate," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 18, 2005. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-18-05.shtml>)

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So to recap, the Biblical definition of love is patient, kind (not rude), humble (not proud), selfless (not self-seeking), slow to anger (not easily angered), forgets wrongs, rejoices in truth, protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres, and always succeeds (never fails).

Verse 13 states that love is greater than faith and hope. To go on a tangent for just a moment, let's talk about faith versus love, and then hope versus love. Foremost, the biblical definition of faith is found where? **Hebrews 11:1 (King James Version)** reads "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Furthermore, **Hebrews 11:6 (King James Version)** reads: "But without faith it is impossible to please him." Therefore, if 1 Corinthians 13:13 says love is greater than faith and hope, Hebrews 11:6 says it is impossible to please God without faith, then it must be impossible to please God without love.

Moreover, let's talk about hope versus love. The Free Dictionary defines hope¹³⁵ as "A...desire accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment." God said he would give us hope. Do you know where in the Bible? **Jeremiah 29:11 (New International Version)** reads "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." If love is greater than faith and hope, God will not only prosper you with hope and a future, but He will prosper you with love.

The Greatest Commandment of God. Do you know what the greatest commandment of God is? love.

Where in the Bible does it state this? **Matthew 22:36-39 (New International Version)** reads:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

¹³⁵ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/hope>

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How does the greatest commandment and second greatest commandment relate to the 10 commandments? Foremost, where are the 10 commandments located? **Exodus 20:1-17 (New International Version)** reads:

“And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (1) "You shall have no other gods before me. (2)"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments. (3) "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. (4) "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

(5) "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. (6) "You shall not murder. (7) "You shall not commit adultery. (8) "You shall not steal. (9) "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. (10) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

How are the 10 Commandments related to the greatest commandment? Commandments 1-4 are commanding us to love who? God. Commandments 5-10 are commanding us to love who? each other. This command is confirmed in the Book of John. **John 13:34 (New International Version)** reads: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Displaying Love. One of the most familiar acts of love occurred in when a women washed Jesus' feet with where hair. **Luke 7:36-47 (New International Version)** reads what?

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“Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said. "Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much.”

Proverbs 10:12 (King James Version) reads: “Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.”

David Roper writes about God’s love found in the forgiveness of sins. He writes:

“We're forgiven for all our sins, held fast by God's love, and destined to enjoy eternal fellowship with Him, not because of anything we have done but because He has done everything for us. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John 4:10). That's perfect love!¹³⁶”

In Closing. Finally, Mart De Haan writes about God’s ability to love all of us. He writes:

“God has more than enough love to go around. Besides, those who are "well" and are not "lost" experience the Father's love as fully as those to whom He gives special attention (v.31). Father,

¹³⁶ “Perfect Love,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, February 13, 2004.(<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-13-04.shtml>)

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forgive us for feeling slighted when You shower Your love on needy sinners. Help us to see how needy we are and to abide in your boundless love.¹³⁷”

Psalm 33:5 (New International Version) reads “The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.” **Psalm 33:18 (New International Version)** reads: “But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love.” **Psalm 100:5 (New International Version)** reads: “For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.” **Psalm 103:8 (New International Version)** reads: “The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.” **Psalm 107:1 (New International Version)** reads: “Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.”

¹³⁷ “Who Gets the Love,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, September 23, 2004. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-09-23-04.shtml>)

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February 19, 2008

Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC
New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary

February 19, 2008

Attendees: Etta L. Washington, Debbie P. Gordon, Shirley B. Beynum, Janet Slaughter, Evelyn Younger, Michael Younger, Mary Hawes, Megan Hovis, Clarence Thomas, and James Curtis; and Deacons

Speaker: Deacon Roberta Tucker and Rev. Dr. Steven E. Tucker

1. Welcome: Deacon Roberta Tucker welcomed attendees at 7:30 PM

2. Minutes from Last Meeting: Minutes from November 2007 meeting were distributed.

3. Old Business: None

4. New Business: Devotion was led by Deacons. Deacon Roberta Tucker and Rev. Dr. Stephen Tucker presided over meeting with deacons and training of new elders and deacons.

A. Deacon Roberta Tucker provided handouts and presented the following:

i. “Deacon’s Ministry Meeting Tuesday, February 19, 2008-7:30 PM: Agenda”

ii. “New Commandment Baptist Church Deacon’s Communion Schedule-2008” & “New Commandment Baptist Church Deacon’s Devotional/Bible Study Baptismal Schedule-2008”

iii. “Through the Bible in a Year.” Deacons and Deacons-in-Training are to follow its reading guidelines.

B. Deacon Roberta Tucker led the Deacon’s Ministry Meeting and emphasized the importance of attending Bible Study, 8 AM Service, Evening Fellowships, Communion and Baptism.

C. Rev. Dr. Tucker discussed the limited number of male Deacons and that this was not limited to this church.

D. Rev. Dr. Tucker read from The Baptist Deacon; He noted the importance of the presence of the Deacons and the service of the Lord’s Supper is assigned to the Deacons. He stated you cannot do it if you are not here. We have people in need of examples. He also read from the book that “There is no substitute for faithful attendance.”

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E. Rev. Dr. Tucker discussed **ordination** of the new Deacons. He stated ordination is one of the most holy acts; you have to be selected to do His will. You cannot go back and do what you used to do.

i. Trainees must pass an open book test followed by several closed book tests to be ordained (probably in the middle of this year). Ordained Deacons will be recertified through similar tests.

ii. Trainees will participate in Communion and Baptism. Wear black and white (with white gloves) for Communion. See "...Communion Schedule- 2008" and "...Baptismal Schedule-2008" for assigned dates.

iii. There is a monthly assessment of \$10.00.

iv. Trainees must attend the Deacon's Ministry Meetings held every Monday before the fourth Sunday.

v. Additional mentor/mentee relationships were assigned: Sister Megan Hovis was assigned to Deacon June McCloud and Brother Michael Younger was assigned to Deacon Billy High

5. Announcements: Rev. Dr. Tucker distributed a copy of letter from *Holland + Knight* dated February 11, 2008. He discussed building plans and hired a tax lawyer regarding existing properties.

6. Date and Time of Next Meeting: (Deacon's Ministry Meeting) Monday, March 17, 2008 at 7:00 PM

7. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

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February 28, 2008

Bible Commentary: Manhood

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
MANHOOD
February 28, 2008

Welcome: (name, assistant bookkeeper and an assistant in the maintenance department, hold 3 college degrees (HU, OSU) was working on fourth, also studied at UMCP and UT, taught college for a living, had a nice car, rented a townhome, productive member of the community who was yet a functional alcoholic (10 years).

THEN after experiencing emotional trauma, became separated from my family, homeless 3 years, jobless 4 years, substantial debt for 7 years - more than 100K.

BUT NOW - after participating in the STP program (intake, clothing room, kitchen, maintenance admin), and graduated in 2006 and growing in a strong church, I have some housing (at least temporarily), 1st job since teaching college in 2002 (held it for almost 2 years), have gone 7 years without a drink, less than 15K indebt, and an active member of NCBC (culinary ministry volunteer, anniversary committee member, greeter, 8 AM Service coordinator, Men's Ministry co-leader, DIT).

ESSENTIALLY, I am a former sinner that is under the grace of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 [KJV] reads "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." To make it personal...a fornicator and a drunkard and slanderer, and such was I. But I am washed, I am sanctified, and I am justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of my God. And I have become a child of God. For John 1:12: Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (KJV - sons of God)

Introduction. Today we are going to talk about manhood. Dr. Albert Mohler¹³⁸ writes: "When does a boy become a man? The answer to this must go far beyond biology and chronological age." Through scriptures throughout Genesis chapter 1 and 2, we can answer the: who, how, when, where,

¹³⁸ "For Guys Only: The Marks of Manhood," [Boundless Webzine](http://www.boundless.org/2005/articles/a0001093.cfm), Printed by Focus on the Family, (<http://www.boundless.org/2005/articles/a0001093.cfm>).

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and what for /why questions about man. Then we will look at 10 types of maturity that a man should display. Foremost, the who question.

7. **WHO:** **Genesis 1:27** answers the who question: Who formed man? (TIME TO RESPOND)

“God created man.” **Psalm 139:13** confirms our origin from God: the NIV reads “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb.”

Even when talking to Jeremiah, the Lord said “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart” (**Jeremiah 1:5**). Furthermore, **1 Peter 2:9** confirms our selection from God. The NIV states what: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.” So when you are down and out, and you are ready to give up and leave the program, remember that God is your maker and he selected you to be his people.

8. **HOW:** **Genesis 2:7** answers the how question: How did God form man? (TIME TO

RESPOND) ...“the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”. This is conformed in **Genesis 3:19b** which states “for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

9. **WHEN:** **Genesis 1:24-31** answers the when question: When did God create man? (TIME TO

RESPOND) Man was created on the sixth day (and so were ‘living creatures’ on the land created). “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (**Genesis 1:1**). On the first day, God created light and darkness; day and night (**Genesis 1:3-5**); On the second day, God created separation in the water (**Genesis 1:6-8**); On the third day, God created the land, seas and ‘vegetation’ (**Genesis 1:9-13**); On the fourth day, God created separation between the day and night ‘to mark seasons, days and years’ and ‘two great lights’ what is believed to be sun and the moon (**Genesis 1:14-19**); On the fifth day, God created water creatures and birds (**Genesis 1:20-23**).

10. **WHERE:** **Genesis 1:1** and **Genesis 2:8-15** answer the where question: Where did God keep

man¹³⁹? (TIME TO RESPOND) “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”...(and **Genesis 2:8-15** reads) “God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden¹⁴⁰; and

¹⁴⁰ 1. Note: According to SundaySchoolResources.com :“Genesis 2:8 (expresses) The garden was in the east. Since the author was probably in the land of Israel at the time, this indicates the garden was east of the land of Israel. A river divided into four rivers at the garden. Genesis 2:11. The location of the Pishon river is not known today. Neither is the location of the land of Havilah.

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there he put the man he had formed.” 9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 10 A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. 11 The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) 13 The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. 15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

11. WHAT/WHY: **Genesis 2:15** and **Genesis 1:26** answer the what and why questions: What did God create man for? Why did God create man? (TIME TO RESPOND) ...Specifically, ”The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Taking care of a garden that God prepared for you cannot be but so difficult. This would indicate that God intended for work to be simplistic for man. Note that when man sinned in the Garden of Eden, work became more challenging. **Genesis 3:17b** (NIV) reads “through painful toil will you eat of it” and **Genesis 3:19a** (NIV) reads by the sweat of your brow you will eat your food.” In general, **Genesis 1:26** (NIV) states that God create man (to) “rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” **Psalms 8:6-8** (NIV) reads “6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.”

Note: Be not confused, God is Lord over the earth: **Psalms 24:1** [KJV] states “The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof.” Furthermore, **Psalms 47:2** [NIV] states “How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!” **Psalms 47:7** [NIV] states “For God is the King of all the earth.” **Genesis 1:26** essentially states that God gave man dominion over a planet that was already prepared for man to occupy. Similarly, in **Genesis 2:8**, God gave the

Genesis 2:13. The location of the Gihon river is not known today. Neither is the location of the land of Cush. Genesis 2:14. The Tigris river and the Euphrates river flows through modern day Iraq.”

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man or Adam a garden he already planted. Looking ahead a little further, God gives Israel land that has already been prepared for living. **Joshua 24:12b-13** reads “You did not do it with your own sword and bow. So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.” Consistently, we see in the Bible that God equipped man and his chosen people with all that they needed. Central Union Mission is our garden planted for men in need of rescue. CUM has supplied us with shelter, food, clothing, new work skills, social workers, spending money, and Christian counseling and Christian education. We can rewrite **Genesis 2:15** in terms our experiences to state that the LORD God took the program man and put him in the Garden of CUM to work it and take care of it.

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Maturity. Dr. Albert Mohler¹⁴¹ writes: “As defined in the Bible, manhood is a functional reality, demonstrated in a man's fulfillment of responsibility and leadership. With this in mind, (he) suggest(s) (several) marks of biblical manhood. The achievement of these vital qualities marks the emergence of a man who will demonstrate true biblical masculinity.” Here, Dr. Mohler describes different forms of maturity that man should achieve. He suggests man should achieve physical, economic, and Worldview maturity, as well as moral, ethical, and character maturity, in addition to relational, social, and verbal maturity, and, finally, Biblical maturity. Foremost, he writes about:

“1. Physical maturity sufficient to work and protect a family.

... Of course, men come in many sizes and demonstrate different levels of physical strength, but common to all men is a maturity, through which a man demonstrates his masculinity.... A man must be ready to put his physical strength on the line ...to fulfill his God-assigned tasks.... Adult strength is to be combined with adult responsibility and true maturity.

2. Economic maturity sufficient to hold an adult job and handle money.

...A real man knows how to earn, manage and respect money. A Christian man understands the danger that comes from the love of money, and fulfills his responsibility as a Christian steward.

3. Worldview maturity sufficient to understand what is really important.

...The Christian man must understand how to interpret and evaluate issues across the spectrum of politics, economics, morality, entertainment, education and a seemingly endless list of other fields. The absence of consistent biblical worldview thinking is a key mark of spiritual immaturity.... He must learn how to defend biblical truth before his peers and in the public square, and he must acquire the ability to extend Christian thinking, based on biblical principles, to every arena of life.

4. Moral maturity sufficient to lead as example of righteousness.

As (one) grows into manhood, he must develop moral maturity as he aspires to righteousness, learning to think like a Christian, act like a Christian and show others how to do the same. The Christian man is to be an example to others.... Of course, this requires the

¹⁴¹ Mohler, Albert. “For Guys Only: The Marks of Manhood,” *Boundless Webzine*, Printed by Focus on the Family, (<http://www.boundless.org/2005/articles/a0001093.cfm>).

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exercise of responsible moral reasoning. True moral education begins with a clear understanding of moral standards, but must move to the higher level of moral reasoning by which a young man learns how biblical principles are translated into godly living and how the moral challenges of his day must be met with the truths revealed in God's inerrant and infallible word.

5. Ethical maturity sufficient to make responsible decisions.

To be a man is to make decisions. One of the most fundamental tasks of leadership is decision-making. The indecisiveness of so many contemporary males is evidence of a stunted manhood. Of course, a man does not rush to a decision without thought, consideration or care, but a man does put himself on the line in making a decision – and making it stick. This requires an extension of moral responsibility into mature ethical decision-making that brings glory to God, is faithful to God's word and is open to moral scrutiny....

6. Character maturity sufficient to demonstrate courage under fire.

The literature of manhood is (filled) with stories of courage, bravery and audacity.... At times, this quality of courage is demonstrated when a man risks his own life in defense of others. More often, this courage is demonstrated in taking a stand under hostile fire, refusing to succumb to the temptation of silence and standing as a model and example to others, who will then be encouraged to stand their own ground. In these days, biblical manhood requires great courage.... It takes great courage to say no to what this culture insists are the rightful pleasures and delights of the flesh.... It takes courage to maintain personal integrity in a world that devalues the truth, disparages God's word....A man's true confidence is rooted in the wells of courage, and courage is evidence of character. In the end, a man's character is revealed in the (trial)of everyday challenges. For most men, life will also bring moments when extraordinary courage will be required, if he is to remain faithful and true.

7. Relational maturity sufficient to understand and respect others.

...Individuals who lack the ability to relate to others are destined to fail at some of life's most significant challenges and will not fulfill some of their most important responsibilities and roles.... While a man is to demonstrate emotional strength, constancy and steadfastness,

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he must be able to relate to ...a host of others in a way that demonstrates respect, understanding and appropriate empathy.

8. Social maturity sufficient to make a contribution to society.

While the arena of the home is an essential and inescapable focus of a man's responsibility, he is also called out of the home into the workplace and the larger world as a witness, and as one who will make a contribution to the common good. God has created human beings as social creatures, and even though our ultimate citizenship is in heaven, we must also fulfill our citizenship on earth.... The Christian man bears a civilizational responsibility.... Similarly, a Christian man must learn how to relate to unbelievers, both as witness and as fellow citizens of an earthly kingdom.

9. Verbal maturity sufficient to communicate and articulate as a man.

A man must be able to speak, to be understood and to communicate in a way that will honor God and convey God's truth to others. Beyond the context of conversation, (one) must learn how to speak before larger groups, overcoming the natural intimidation and fear that comes from looking at a crowd, opening one's mouth, and projecting words. Though not all men will become public speakers, every man should have the ability to take his ground, frame his words, and make his case when truth is under fire and when belief and conviction must be translated into argument.

10. Biblical maturity sufficient to lead at some level in the church.

A close look at many churches will reveal that a central problem is the lack of biblical maturity among the men of the congregation and a lack of biblical knowledge that leaves men ill equipped and completely unprepared to exercise spiritual leadership. (One) must know their way around the biblical text, and feel at home in the study of God's Word. They must stand ready to take their place as leaders in the local church. While God has appointed specific officers for his church—men who are specially gifted and publicly called — every man should fulfill some leadership responsibility within the life of the congregation. ... In any event, a man should be able to teach someone, and to lead in some ministry, translating his personal discipleship into the fulfillment of a godly call. There is a role of leadership for every man in every church, whether that role is public or private, large or small, official or unofficial.

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A man should know how to pray before others, to present the Gospel, and to stand in the gap where a leadership need is apparent.”

In Closing. Ephesians 4:12-16 (Amplified) reads:

“12His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), [that they should do] the work of ministering toward building up Christ's body (the church), 13[That it might develop] until we all attain oneness in the faith and in the comprehension of the [full and accurate] knowledge of the Son of God, that [we might arrive] at really mature manhood (the completeness of personality which is nothing less than the standard height of Christ's own perfection), the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ and the completeness found in Him. 14So then, we may no longer be children, tossed [like ships] to and fro between chance gusts of teaching and wavering with every changing wind of doctrine, [the prey of] the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men, [gamblers engaged] in every shifting form of trickery in inventing errors to mislead. 15 Rather, let our lives lovingly express truth [in all things, speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly]. Enfolded in love, let us grow up in every way and in all things into Him Who is the Head, [even] Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One). 16For because of Him the whole body (the church, in all its various parts), closely joined and firmly knit together by the joints and ligaments with which it is supplied, when each part [with power adapted to its need] is working properly [in all its functions], grows to full maturity, building itself up in love.”

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February 28, 2008

Leadership: The Men's Ministry

The Men's Ministry of the New Commandment Baptist Church

Purpose

The purpose of NCBC Men's Ministry is:

- A. To empower men by employing the inspirational Word of God to become godly influences:
 - a. in the Church, and
 - b. in neighboring community; and
- B. To build genuine relationships:
 - a. with God, in the name of Jesus Christ,
 - b. with men in NCBC,
 - c. with other men in other churches,
 - d. with community leaders, and
 - e. with other men in the community,

Methodology

The method of achieving the purposes of the NCBC Men's Ministry will be:

- (1) To employ the gifts of male ministers and deacons to deliver a brief sermon, inspired by God, to men attending each Men's Ministry meeting,
- (2) To integrate new male members into the ministries of NCBC (as well as integrating existing male members, who are not involved in ministry, into the ministries of NCBC) via:
 - a. Coordinating welcome sessions and accountability partners, for instance, by interviewing such men at their initial Men's Ministry meetings and pairing them with a man functioning in the ministries of NCBC, and
 - b. A personal introduction of new male members (and existing male member not involved in ministry) to ministry leaders (after an appropriate ministry is identified)
- (3) To coordinate a set of activities consistent with the purposes of the NCBC Men's Ministry, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Participating in the male chorus
 - b. Delivering flowers to the women of NCBC on Valentine's Day
 - c. Preparing and serving breakfast at the annual NCBC Women's all-night session
 - d. Participating bowling outings
 - e. Coordinating Fundraisers, such as a car wash and/or barbeque
 - f. Coordinating an annual Men's Day

Men's Day

The purpose of the Men's Day celebration is to:

- (1) Emphasize the need for men in the effective execution of the mission of NCBC and affirm the role of men in the mission of NCBC
- (2) Recruit men to become active in ministry
- (3) Recognize the service and contribution of men to poor and/or black disenfranchised men during the past year
- (4) Organize a worship service designated to inspire, challenge and motivate men

The method of achieving the purposes of the Men's Day celebration is to:

- (1) Have the Men's Ministry participate in year-round coordination of Men's Day
- (2) Invite a guest speaker and/or guest preacher to participate in the Men's Day celebration
- (3) Invite a visiting male chorus and/or male usher board to serve at Men's Day
- (4) Decide on and provide an award to a man and young man for their outstanding service to NCBC, the community at-large, and/or disenfranchised men

March 20, 2008

Bible Commentary: Joy

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James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"JOY"
March 20, 2008

Today we are going to talk about joy. We will define joy based on the Old Testament and New Testament, compare joy to happiness, discuss the source of joy, discuss facing difficulties with joy and choosing to be joyful.

Foremost, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines joy based on the Old Testament and New Testament. In terms of the Old Testament¹⁴²:

"Besides joy in a general sense, as the response of the mind to any pleasurable event or state (1 Ki 1:40; Est 8:17, etc.), joy as a religious emotion is very frequently referred to in the Old Testament. Religion is conceived of as touching the deepest springs of emotion, including the feeling of (jubilant) gladness which often finds outward expression in such actions as leaping, shouting, and singing. Joy is repeatedly shown to be the natural outcome of fellowship with God. God is at once the source (Ps 4:7; 51:12) and the object (Ps 35:9; Isa 29:19) of religious joy. The phrase "rejoice (be glad)..." and similar expressions are of frequent occurrence (e.g. Ps 97:12; 149:2; Isa 61:10; Zec 10:7). Many aspects of the Divine character call forth this emotion, such as His lovingkindness (Ps 21:6,7; 31:7), His salvation (Ps 21:1; Isa 25:9; Hab 3:18), His laws and statutes (Ps 12; 119 passim), His judgments (Ps 48:11), (and) His words of comfort in dark days (Jer 15:15,16). The fundamental fact of the sovereignty of God, of the equity of the Divine government of the world, gives (those who are religious) a joyous sense of security in life (Ps 93:1 f; 96:10; 97:1) which breaks forth into songs of praises (Ps 96:11-13; 98:4-9). In the case of those who held such views of God, it was natural that the service of God should elicit a joyous spirit (...Ps 27:6; compare 1 Ch 29:9), a spirit which is abundantly manifest in the jubilant shouting with which religious festivities were celebrated,...(2 Sam 6:15; Ps 33:1-3; Nu 10:10; 2 Ch 29:27), and especially in psalms of praise, thanksgiving and adoration (Psalms 47; 81; 100, etc.).

.... But joy is a Divine, as well as a human, emotion; for God Himself is represented in the Old Testament, not as a rigid, impassible Being, but as susceptible to pleasure and pain. (For instance)

¹⁴² Edwards, D. Miall; Orr, James, M.A., D.D. General Editor. "Definition for 'JOY'". International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. bible-history.com - ISBE; 1915. (<http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/J/JOY/>)

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God...(consider) "rejoicing in his works" (**Ps 104:31**; compare Gen 1:31), and over His people "for good" (**Dt 30:9**). "He will rejoice over thee ...he will joy over thee with singing" (**Zeph 3:17**). ...

In terms of the New Testament:

"The element of joy in religion is still more prominent in the New Testament. It is the appropriate response of the believer to the "good tidings of great joy" which constitute the gospel (Lk 2:10). ...(Joy) is both exemplified in the life and character, and set forth in the teaching of Jesus. ...In spite of the profound elements of grief and tragedy in His life, His habitual demeanor was gladsome and joyous, certainly not gloomy ... such as, ... His "rejoicing in the Holy Spirit" (**Lk 10:21**); ... His mention of "my joy" (**Jn 15:11; 17:13**). ... Jesus confers on His followers not only peace (Jn 14:27; 16:33), but participation in His own fullness of joy (Jn 15:11; 16:24; 17:13), a joy which is permanent, in contrast to the sorrow which is transient (Jn 16:22). This joy is associated with faith (Phil 1:25), hope (Rom 5:2; 12:12), brotherly fellowship and sympathy (Rom 12:15; 2 Cor 7:13; Phil 2:1 f). To rejoice in the Lord is enjoined as a Christian duty (Phil 3:1; 4:4; compare 2:17 f; 1 Thess 5:16). In Christ, the Christian "rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet 1:8), in spite of his temporary afflictions (1 Pet 1:6). Christian joy is no mere gaiety that knows no gloom, but is the result of the triumph of faith over adverse and trying circumstances...(Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3 f; Jas 1:2,12; 5:11; 1 Pet 4:13; compare Mt 5:11,12)."

Joy versus Happiness. Joanie Yoder¹⁴³ writes about joy verse happiness. She writes:

"Mark was 21 and dependent on drugs. Finding happiness was his big goal in life, a goal that had eluded him. Once, while talking with our family, his frustration erupted: "Look, all I want in life is happiness. I want to feel happy. Is that asking too much?" Sadly, Mark was asking far too little of life. What he really was seeking, but hadn't realized, was not happiness but joy. He couldn't accept that real joy is a fruit of something, or Someone, much greater than happiness. He came very close to Jesus Christ-close enough to taste the life that results in the joy he so deeply craved. But eventually he walked away, only to remain unhappy. According to Bible scholar Ian Barclay, "Happiness is not a biblical word at all. It is derived from the root to happen. Clearly, what happens to us will affect our happiness." Joy, on the other hand, is a fruit of God's Spirit and is not affected by good or bad happenings. Joy is not dependent on our circumstances. It is

¹⁴³ Yoder, Joanie, "Better than Happiness," Our Daily Bread, December 26, 1996. (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/1996/12/26/devotion.aspx>)

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dependent, as we ourselves need to be, on God Himself who dwells within us. We should desire to have this joy in our lives, without chasing after it. Let's live and walk in the Spirit so that the fruit of joy will naturally burst forth.”

The Source of Joy. Who is the source of all joy? God. God can fill us joy. **Romans 15:13 (New King James Version)** reads: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” And God will fill us with joy. **Psalms 16:11 (New International Version)** reads: “11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” Furthermore, **Psalms 5:11 (New International Version)** reads: “11 But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.” This verse tells us that God will protect us and fill you with joy if you abide in him. Moreover, **Psalms 43:4 (New International Version)** reads: “Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.” We ought to be joyful that God oversees all because his judgments are righteous. **Psalms 67:4 (King James Version)** reads: “O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.” When we think of God, joy should be in our hearts and our mouths. **Psalms 71:23a (King James Version)** reads: “23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee.” The Israelites owe a special place for God in their hearts. **Psalms 105:42-44 (New International Version)** reads:

“42 For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham. 43 He brought out his people with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy; 44 he gave them the lands of the nations, and they fell heir to what others had toiled for”

Does any remember what one of the fruits of the Spirit are? Joy. **Galatians 5:22-23 (New King James Version)** reads: “22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” Essentially, joy is the result of the Holy Spirit resting in you. This is further confirmed in **Romans 14:17**. The New King James Version reads: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

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For the righteous and just, they also ought to be joyful. **Psalm 32:11 (King James Version)** reads: “Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.” **Psalm 35:27 (New King James Version)** reads: “Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, “Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.” **Proverbs 23:24 (New International Version)** reads: “The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.” **Ecclesiastes 2:26 (New King James Version)** reads: “For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight.” **Proverbs 21:15a (New King James Version)** reads: “It is a joy for the just to do justice.” **Proverbs 12:20 (New King James Version)** reads: “Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of peace have joy.”

Facing Difficulties with Joy. In the Bible, psalmists speak of difficult situations transformed into joy. **Psalm 30:5 (King James Version)** reads: “For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Cindy Kasper¹⁴⁴ writes about a similar act of turning sorrow into joy. She writes:

“There are some whose souls are locked in winter. The hardness of life has frozen their hearts. Disappointed with life, they find that each day is filled with despair.... In the darkest times of our lives, God longs to turn our “mourning into dancing” (Ps.30:11). David wrote, “In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul” (Ps. 94:19). If you cry out to God in the midst of your “winter,” you can experience the joy of the Christ...today.”

Leviticus describes the different offerings required by the Israelites. Here, in Psalm 27, the psalmist offers a different type of sacrifice: joy, in spite of his circumstances. **Psalm 27:6 (King James Version)** reads: “And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.” **Psalm 132:9 (King James Version)** reads: “9Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.”

Furthermore, **Psalm 126:5 (King James Version)** reads: “5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

Sometimes we lose our joy, particularly, when we sin and are trying to re-establish a joyful relationship

¹⁴⁴ Kasper, Cindy, “Always Winter,” Our Daily Bread, November 29, 2006. (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2006/11/29/devotion.aspx>)

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with God. In **Psalm 51 (New King James Version)** David expresses himself when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had an unholy union with Bathsheba. It reads:

“1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”

Joanie Yoder¹⁴⁵ writes about things that take away our joy. She writes:

“Why do many Christians fail to experience real joy, which is listed as a fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22? In his book *Laugh Again*, Charles Swindoll suggests three common "joy stealers"—worry, stress, and fear. He defines worry as "an inordinate anxiety about something that may or may not occur." (And it usually doesn't.) Stress, says the author, is "intense strain over a situation we can't change or control." (But God can.) And fear, according to Swindoll, is a "dreadful uneasiness over danger, evil, or pain." (And it magnifies our problems.) Swindoll says that to resist these "joy stealers" we must embrace the same confidence that Paul expressed in his letter to the Philippians. After giving thanks for the Philippian believers (1:3-5), the apostle assured them "that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (v.6). Whatever causes you worry, stress, and fear cannot ultimately keep God from continuing His work in you. With this confidence we can begin each day knowing that He is in control. We can leave everything in His hands. Resist those "joy stealers" by renewing your confidence in God each morning. Then relax and rejoice.”

¹⁴⁵ Yoder, Joanie, "Joy Stealers," *Our Daily Bread*, February 17, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2003/02/17/devotion.aspx>)

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James 1:2-4 (New King James Version) reads: “2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” **Psalm 118:24 (New King James Version)** reads: "This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." David McCasland¹⁴⁶ writes about having joy each day, even during challenging times. He writes:

“During difficult times, we are tempted to become passive while waiting for a storm of life to pass. But God invites us to actively pursue the opportunities at hand instead of lamenting over what we don't have. Because the Lord has made this day, we can look past the closed doors to see people and opportunities we had previously overlooked. In celebrating their value, we will discover joy and gladness from God.”

In Closing, **Habakkuk 3:18 (New King James Version)** writes: “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Joanie Yoder¹⁴⁷ writes about the choice to rejoice or have joy. She writes:

“The words "I will" revealed Habakkuk's belief that he could choose his response to loss--either to sink into despair or to rejoice in God's redeeming power. His decision to rejoice wasn't a denial of the pain. It was a decision of trust based on the truth that God would remain with him to be his strength and enabler (v.19). The choice to rejoice is with us every day. To refuse to choose is itself a choice. It's an unconscious consent to be overcome rather than to be an overcomer.’

¹⁴⁶ McCasland, David, “Be Glad for Today,” Our Daily Bread, August 31, 2004 (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2004/08/31/devotion.aspx>).

¹⁴⁷ Yoder, Joanie, “The Choice To Rejoice,” Our Daily Bread, October 3, 1998. (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/1998/10/03/devotion.aspx>).

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March 27, 2008

Bible Commentary: Reconciliation

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"RECONCILIATION"
March 27, 2008

In a devotional reading, in Our Daily Bread, written by Joe Stowell, reads:

"Just as we need trucks to pick up the garbage that accumulates in our homes, we need to let Jesus remove the "trash" that inevitably accumulates in our hearts. When we forget to take out the trash, it's not a pretty picture. Jesus wants us to dump it regularly at the foot of the cross. In fact, He has promised to remove it and forget it.... Taking out the trash begins with confession, and then counting on Jesus to get rid of it."

Reconciliation. Today we are talking about getting rid of sin in our lives and reconciling our relationship with God after we have sinned. When we were younger, some of us may remember arguing with a parent or sibling. And after the argument, the feelings of one of the persons in the argument may have been hurt by the other in the argument. But we may also remember not allowing the conflict to stop at hurt feelings, possibly because there was a blood, time-tested relationship with the person we argued with. For, one of us felt compelled to apologize to other so the relationship to endure. This apology and the acceptance of the apology is a form of reconciliation.

Definition. To reconcile means "To reestablish a close relationship ... (or) to settle or resolve¹⁴⁸." I like the first part of the definition of reconcile: to reestablish a close relationship, not a distant relationship. In order re-establish, we have an initially established relationship. Then something must happen in order for re-establishment to occur.

For, we have a close, even a blood, relationship with God that established in the beginning. For, God is the maker of man. That is our relationship established by God. **Genesis 1:26-30 (New International Version)** reads:

'Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>

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that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so."

Then God noticed what he made and was more than satisfied with his creations. **Genesis 1:31 (New International Version)** reads "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." These passages describe how God gave man dominion over his earth and how God was pleased with his creations, which included man. For, he described them all as 'very good'. The latter passage suggests that the relationship between man and God was indeed 'close'.

However, when sin entered the world, the close relationship we had with God had to be reestablished. For sin breaks the relationship we have with God. Only God's mercy via God accepting our repentance and via us accepting his Son Jesus could reestablish a close relationship with God.

Sin has been with us since the creation of man. **Genesis 2:16-18 (New International Version)** reads: 'And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.'" Then, **Genesis 3:6 (New International Version)** reads "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."

And God has had to punish us for sin since the creation of man, in order to maintain that 'close relationship'. **Genesis 5:5 (New International Version)** reads: "Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died." **Romans 5:12 (New International Version)** reads "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—" Even in the New Testament, the Lord sustained a penalty for sin. **Romans 6:23 (New International Version)** reads "For the wages of sin is death."

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The death mentioned in **Romans 6:23** is a physical death. If we are not careful to do God's commandments, we may find us experiencing a second death, which is spiritual death. **Revelations 20:11-15 (New International Version)** reads:

“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

Man as reconciler. Note that in the Old Testament, God used Moses to attempt to reconcile his chosen people among each other and with God. **Acts 7:23-28 (New International Version)** reads:

“When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?' "But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'”

In this passage, Moses attempts to protect a fellow Israelite from an Egyptian but goes too far and kills the Egyptian. Moses also attempts to stop two Israelites from fighting but is pushed aside by his fellow Israelites. Later, despite his history of murder, God uses Moses to guide the Israelites out of enslavement by the Egyptians. The Lord spoke to Moses in **Exodus 3:10 (New International Version)**, saying “So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” (Notice the Lord did not say he will use Moses to bring the Israelites into the Promised Land. This may be a prophetic moment where God intentionally omits this, knowing Moses would sin and, therefore, not be

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usable for second stage of the plight of the Israelites). For, Moses sinned (again) against the Lord by (this time) showing a lack of sufficient faith and, therefore, could not be used to bring the Israelites into the land God would give to the Israelites. **Numbers 20:7-12 (New International Version)** reads:

“The LORD said to Moses, Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink.” So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

Moses did a lot of good for his people by obeying God's commands. But Moses was a just a man, unlike the Son of God. Time after time—way after the days of Moses and Joshua—the Israelites continued to sin before the Lord. The book of Judges concludes by stating, “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.” (**Judges 21:25 - New International Version**). For, men continued to sin, and priests had to make amends for their sin. **Leviticus 4:27-28 (New International Version)** reads “ 'If a member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the Lord's commands, he is guilty. When he is made aware of the sin he committed, he must bring as his offering for the sin he committed...'” **Leviticus 4:31 (New International Version)** reads “In this way the priest will make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.” For, men could not go to God for reconciliation until God sent a Savior.

Jesus as reconciler. Only a close relationship with Jesus can reestablish a close relationship with God. **John 3:35-36 (New International Version)** reads “The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life (that is, life eternal), for God's wrath remains on him.” **John 5:24 (New International Version)** reads "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

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God sent his son, Jesus the Christ, through his shed blood, death, burial and resurrection, to reconcile man with God so man would not have to go to another man in order to re-establish a close relationship with God. **Romans 5:6-11 (New International Version)** reads:

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Furthermore, **Colossians 1:13-20 (New International Version)** reads:

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

God has expectations on us (as believers) now that we are reconciled to him through Jesus. 2

Corinthians 5:14-21 (New International Version) reads:

“For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is

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in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

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March 31, 2008

Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons

**Minutes from Deacons Meeting
(and Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC)
New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary**

March 31, 2008

Attendees: Gladys Hardy, Shirley B. Beynum, Megan Hovis, Debbie P. Gordon, Etta L. Washington, Mary Hawes, Evelyn Younger, Michael Younger, B. Robinson, Clarence Thomas, and James Curtis; and Deacons

Speaker: Deacon Roberta Tucker

1. **Welcome:** Deacon Roberta Tucker welcomed attendees at 7:30 PM
2. **Minutes from Last Meeting:** Minutes from November 2007 meeting were distributed.
3. **Old Business:** None
4. **New Business:** Devotion was led by Deacon Mary Cunningham. Deacon Roberta Tucker presided over meeting with deacons and training of new elders and deacons.
 - A. Deacon Roberta Tucker provided handouts and presented the following:
 - i. "Deacon's and Deacon in-Training Ministry Meeting Monday, March 31, 2008-7:00 PM: Agenda"
 - ii. "New Commandment Baptist Church Deacon's and Deacon in-Training Holly Communion, Devotions, and Baptismal Schedule-2008"
 - iii. "Now That You're A Deacon/Deacon-in-Training"
 - B. Deacon Tucker emphasized the importance of attending Bible Study, 8 AM Service, Church Anniversary services, and second services.
 - C. Deacon Roberta Tucker discussed assignments (to be completed with Deacon partners) that will be distributed in preparation for ordination.
 - D. Deacon Roberta Tucker discussed the importance of the end-of-the-year gift to Pastor Tucker (\$1 a day)
 - E. Deacon Tucker handed out the new schedule for devotions, Communion, and Baptism. She recommended that Deacons and Deacons-in-Training responsible for setting up Communion on Communion Sunday ought to arrive between 9:15 AM and 9:30 AM. She stated that the devotion leader assignments are for Bible Study on Wednesdays. If you cannot be at a meeting, call Deacon Tucker. Furthermore, Deacons and Deacons in-Training are to open the doors of the church and stand up-front for the invitation (based on the schedule).
 - F. Deacon Tucker stated that all Deacons and Deacons-in-Training ought to have their own hymn book to practice hymns. Deacons should also participate in praise and worship.
 - G. Deacon Mary Sanders collected \$10 per Deacon and Deacon-in-Training (for monthly Deacon financial responsibility; some paid for the whole year). She collected a total of \$345.00.
 - H. Deacons and Deacons-in-Training ought to remember the "10 Fold Path"
 - I. Deacons and Deacons-in-Training must wear white on Communion Sunday beginning in May.
5. **Announcements:** none
6. **Date and Time of Next Meeting:** To Be Announced
7. **Meeting adjourned** at 8:30 PM.

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5. Name the first five persons in the Bible:

6. Who is the father, grandfather and great grandfather of the twelve tribes?

7. What are the names of the twelve tribes?

8. Who are the Israelites? _____

9. How many plagues struck Egypt prior to Pharaoh freeing his slaves?

10. What is the name of the last plague prior to Pharaoh freeing his slaves?

11. Who led the Israelites out of Egypt? _____

12. What is the name of the book AND chapter where the Ten Commandments are located?

13. Who are the Levites? _____

14. Who led the Israelites into their land? _____

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15. Who is the first, second and third King of Israel?

16. What is presented in the first chapter of Matthew? _____

17. What does John 3:16 state? _____

18.A. If someone wants to be saved, what Scripture in Romans should be cited? _____

B. Write down the Scripture: _____

19. What does John 3:16 (King James Version) state? _____

20. What does 2 Timothy 2:15 (King James Version) state? _____

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April 3, 2008

Bible Commentary: Stimulating Stewardship

James Curtis
New Commandment Baptist Church
“Stimulating Stewardship”
April 3, 2008

I. Introduction. I am here before you to discuss the theme of our revival, “Stimulating Stewardship through Service and Sharing.” The free dictionary defines stewardship as the management of “another's property, finances, or other affairs.” And, to simulate is defined by the free dictionary as “To rouse to activity or heightened action;” or “to excite or invigorate.” So today I am here to rouse and invigorate your efforts to manage resources which, essentially, belong to someone else. These resources include your Church and even your money. And the ‘someone else’ is God. One author¹⁴⁹ writes about ones priorities and our stewardship of money. He writes:

“How we handle money reveals much about our priorities. That's why Jesus often talked about money. One-sixth of the Gospels' content, including one out of every three parables, touches on stewardship. Jesus wasn't a fundraiser. He dealt with money matters because money matters. For some of us, though, it matters too much. Jesus warned that we can become slaves to money. We may not think that money means more to us than God does. But Jesus did not say we must serve God more than we serve money. The issue isn't what occupies first place in our life, but whether we serve money at all.”

II. Limitations of Money. Another author¹⁵⁰ writes about the limitations of money. He writes:

“Much of our living is spent acquiring and using money, which doesn't last. The stock market crashes. Prices go up. Thieves steal others' goods. Things wear out and break down, requiring the acquisition and expenditure of more money to replace what has been lost. The temporary nature of material wealth makes it a poor bargain in the search for security in an insecure world. Money is much better at saying goodbye than it is at sticking around. Nowhere does the Bible say it's wrong to have money or the things that money can buy. Where we lose our way is when money becomes the driving purpose of our lives...How tragic to live our entire lives, only to end them with nothing of eternal worth to show for our labors.”

¹⁴⁹ Robinson, Haddon. “Money Matters,” RBC Ministries, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-05-20-05.shtml>)

¹⁵⁰ Crowder, Bill, “Money Talks,” RBC Ministries, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-13-06.shtml>)

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Instead, what we really ought to be seeking is wisdom. **2 Chronicles 1:7-12 (New International Version)**

reads:

"That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." 8 Solomon answered God, "You have shown great kindness to David my father and have made me king in his place. 9 Now, LORD God, let your promise to my father David be confirmed, for you have made me king over a people who are as numerous as the dust of the earth. 10 Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?" 11 God said to Solomon, "Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, 12 therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have."

This principle of seeking wisdom and seeking God prior to seeking needs and wants is confirmed in **Matthew 6:33 (New International Version)** which reads "33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

III. The Church and Money. Note that the Bible warns us not to turn the holy Church into a secular market place where money is exchanged for goods and services. **Matthew 21:12-13 (King James Version)** reads: 12And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, 13And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Instead, the church is to be a storehouse for tithes and offerings. **Genesis 14:18b-20 (New International Version)** reads: "...He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth (or tithe) of everything." **Malachi 3:8-10 (New International Version)** reads "'Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you

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ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings....Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house."

IV. Conclusion. In conclusion, one author¹⁵¹ writes about the importance of salvation and 'what money can't buy.' He writes:

"Money is a necessary part of living. Without it, we couldn't secure the necessities or luxuries of life. But there are things money can't buy. As preacher W. A. Criswell said, "Money will buy luxuries, but it will not buy spiritual power. Money will buy advancement and (preferential treatment), but it will not buy the recognition of God. Money will buy . . . favor and accolades, but it will not buy soul respect." The greatest good—so great that it is in a category all by itself—cannot be bought. If the entire human race were to bankrupt its resources in an effort to buy forgiveness of sin and eternal life with Jesus, it would be infinitely insufficient. All the wealth of the whole world cannot purchase the supreme blessing of forgiveness and heaven. We'll never accumulate enough riches to purchase a place in the paradise of God."

Therefore, I impress upon you, even unto excitement, that you become faithful stewards through your service and sharing of your increase that our God has provided you. AMEN.

¹⁵¹ Grounds, Vernon, "What Money Can't Buy," RBC Ministries, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-26-07.shtml>)

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April 17, 2013

Bible Commentary: Suffering

**James Curtis
Central Union Mission
“SUFFERING”
April 17, 2008**

Today, we are going to talk about suffering. We will define suffering. Then we will talk about the suffering of Job and how suffering for a little while can lead to positive outcomes.

Definition of Suffering. Suffering is defined by the free dictionary¹⁵² as “the bearing of pain or distress; misery resulting from affliction; a state of ill-being due to affliction or misfortune; and emotional distress; a fundamental feeling that people try to avoid.” Now let’s consider (1) the purpose of, the motivation of and the development obtained as a result of suffering, and (2) the end result of the suffering of good people. Foremost, one author¹⁵³ writes about a possible purpose of suffering:

“Why is there suffering? You might ask that question when you hear of hurricanes, mudslides, earthquakes, and other disasters taking people's lives.... Why is there so much pain in God's world? Consider (the following reason): ... Suffering awakens compassion. Jesus told us to care for those who suffer in poverty. We are His partners in helping others (Luke 10:33-35).”

Another¹⁵⁴ writes about suffering as a form of motivation to obtain God’s will:

“Suffering and adversity become the means by which we’re made hungry and thirsty for God. Disappointments become the tools that wean us away from earthly occupations and move us toward a preoccupation with God alone. Even sin, when repented of, becomes a mechanism to push us closer to Him so that we can experience His love and forgiveness. All things become useful when viewed as the means to the highest good—drawing near to God. Like Paul, we may say, “I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me” (Philippians 3:12). How do we press on? With a humble and grateful response to His love. But it all begins with God. He seeks us so that we may seek Him alone.”

Furthermore, another author¹⁵⁵ also writes about the experience of suffering in terms of tribulation, and the need for development of patience and perseverance. He writes:

¹⁵² <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/suffering>

¹⁵³ Brannon, Dave. “Suffering: How Do We Respond?,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, October 10, 2006, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-10-06.shtml>).

¹⁵⁴ Roper, David. “Pressing On,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 18, 2006, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-18-06.shtml>).

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“A young Christian went to an older believer and asked, “Will you pray that I may be more patient?” So they knelt together and the man began to pray, “Lord, send this young man tribulation in the morning; send him tribulation in the afternoon; send him—” Just then the young believer blurted out, “No, not *tribulation!* I asked for *patience.*” “I know,” said the wise Christian, “but it’s through tribulation that we learn patience.” The word *perseverance* in today’s Scripture can mean the ability to remain steadfast under difficulties without giving in. John A. Witmer wrote, “Only a believer who has faced distress can develop steadfastness. That in turn develops character.” When the apostle Paul told the Christians in Rome that “tribulation produces perseverance” (Romans 5:3), he was speaking from personal experience. He had suffered beatings, whippings, stoning, shipwreck, and persecution. Yet he remained steadfast in his faith and did not shrink from his responsibility to preach the gospel. If you are facing a difficult test, praise God! Under His wise control, everything that happens to us—whether pleasurable or painful—is designed to develop Christ-like character. That’s why we can glory in tribulation.”

Yet another author¹⁵⁶ writes about the suffering of good people:

“(A young man) struggled with a question that theologians have wrestled with for centuries. For him the problem was not theoretical but practical. He was trying to understand why his mother had to have brain surgery. He asked, “Why do good people suffer, Mom?” She told him, “Suffering is part of living in a sin-cursed world, and good people suffer like anybody else. That’s why I’m glad we have Jesus. If I die, I’ll go to a better place, and I’ll long for the day when I can see you again.” She then said that she could understand his frustration, but she told him not to put the blame on God. If you and I are baffled by the suffering of good people, we can put the question squarely before God,... But let’s not blame Him ... He has assured us in His Word that Jesus suffered on our behalf, rose from the dead, and is now preparing a suffering-free place for us.”

The Suffering of Job. Job 1:1-3 (New International Version) discusses the great wealth of Job:

¹⁵⁵ De Haan, Richard. “Suffering’s Reward,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, September 14, 2003, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-09-14-03.shtml>).

¹⁵⁶ De Haan, Dennis. “An Age-Old Question,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, April 15, 2007, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-15-07.shtml>).

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“1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. 2 He had seven sons and three daughters, 3 and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.”

Job 1:6-22 (New International Version) talks about how Job was tested with multiple calamities:

6 One day the angels ^[a] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan ^[b] also came with them. 7 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." 8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." 9 "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10 "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." 12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. 13 One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 16 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 17 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" 18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 19 when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell

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you!" 20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship 21 and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." 22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing"

Job 2:1-10 (New International Version) talks about how Job was tested again, but this time with painful sores. It reads:

"1 On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." 3 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason." 4 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. 5 But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face." 6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life." 7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. 8 Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. 9 His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" 10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said."

Job 2:11-13 (New International Version) talks about friends who attempted to comfort Job. It reads:

"11 When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. 13 Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was."

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Job 42:10-17 (New International Version) talks about the healing of Job after time had passed. It reads:

“10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD made him prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before. 11 All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought upon him, and each one gave him a piece of silver ^[a] and a gold ring. 12 The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. 13 And he also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. 15 Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers. 16 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. 17 And so he died, old and full of years.”

Julie Link¹⁵⁷ summarizes the suffering and recovery of Job. She writes:

“In a short period of time, he (Job) lost his children, his health, his wealth, and his wife’s respect. Job’s distress was so great that he pleaded, “May the day perish on which I was born” (Job 3:3). Job wanted God to erase not just a year, but all memory of his existence! He had enjoyed years of success and respect. Now, he questioned the purpose of living (3:20). Job wanted to die and be forgotten, but instead God made sure his name and story would be remembered forever. Rather than give Job what he asked for, God gave future generations what they would need—an inside look at the spiritual battle between God and Satan. The result is a God-inspired document about suffering that has comforted countless people.”

Suffering and positive outcomes. Like the book of Job, **Romans 5:1-5 (New International Version)** talks about the positive results from suffering. It reads:

“1Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. 3Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4perseverance, character; and

¹⁵⁷ “Job’s Birthday,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, September 10, 2007, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-09-10-07.shtml>).

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character, hope. 5And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

Furthermore, in **Romans 8:16-18 (New International Version)**, we read about our future glory from our present sufferings. It reads:

“16The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. 18I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

In Closing. One author¹⁵⁸ writes: “When we see suffering, we can use it as an opportunity to serve God by helping others, to trust Him in spite of the difficulty, and to grow in our faith in Him. When trouble hits, let our first reaction be to trust the Lord and care for the needs of others.” **Psalm 119:50 (New International Version)** reads: “My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life.” **Psalm 22:23-24 (New International Version)** reads: “23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!... 24 For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.” For God is a good God and uses all the events of our earthly lives to for positive earthly and eternal outcomes. **Romans 8:28 (New International Version)** reads: “...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

¹⁵⁸ “Suffering: How Do We Respond?,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, October 10, 2006, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-10-06.shtml>).

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April 21-25, 2008

Syllabus: Old Testament RBC/Christian Courses

**CHRISTIAN COURSES
FASTRACK OLD TESTAMENT NOTES**

The Old Testament – Introduction (Dr. Sid Buzzell –RBC Christian Courses)

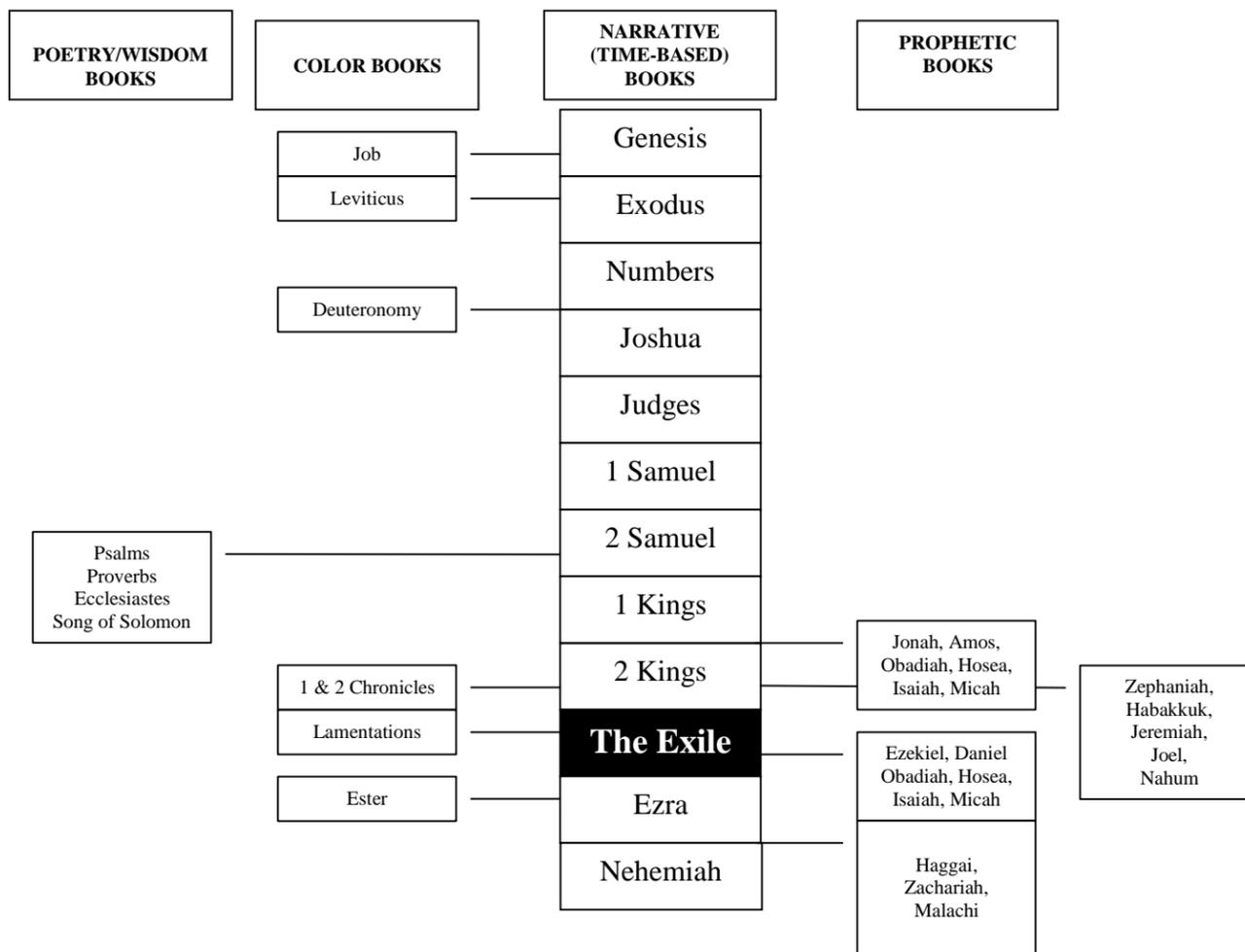
1. ...Tells about: God, Us, God's Creation, and Sin
2. The Bible is book that is a collection of 39 books in the Old Testament
3. ...Teaches us about what He's like, His love, His standards and Jesus.
4. **39 books:** 17 books (Genesis-Ester): Narrative Books; 5 Books (Job – Song of Solomon): Poetry and wisdom; 17 Books (Isaiah-Mal): Prophets.
5. **2 Timothy 3:16:** All Scripture is profitable...

The Old Testament – The Flow (Dr. Sid Buzzell –RBC Christian Courses)

1. **1st 17 books are chronological books;** 2 kinds: 11 books move the story forward and color books (Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Ruth, 1 & 2 Chronicles and Ruth) give us a snapshot of life
2. **4 Periods in the 11 Time Books:** Beginnings (Genesis - Numbers); Settlement period (Joshua-Judges); Kingdom Era (1 Samuel – 2 Kings); Exile (7 year period); Exile and Reconstruction period (Ester-Nehemiah)
3.
 - i. **Genesis:** Begins with creation and ends with the people of Israel living in Egypt as guests of Pharaoh
 - ii. 400 year period of silence between Genesis and Exodus.
 - iii. **Exodus:** Exodus presents the people of Israel as slaves, Moses the deliverer, the story of the Red Sea, and the Ten Commandments
 - iv. **Numbers:** Numbers describes the wanderings of the people of Israel, the dying off of a generation of Israelites, and their children who are allowed to enter the land.
 - v. **Joshua:** Joshua describes the people of Israel entering their land and how the land is divided among the twelve tribes.
 - vi. **Judges:** Judges describes how the people of God were punished by God allowing their enemies to oppress them for their rebellion against His laws.
 - vii. **I Samuel:** (The people of Israel ask for a King and get King Saul)
 - viii. **II Samuel:** II Samuel describes how King David established his kingdom
 - ix. **I Kings:** I Kings describes (how King Solomon established his Kingdom) and how the Kingdom splits into two kingdoms (Israel and Judah)
 - x. **II Kings:** II Kings describes how both kingdoms were defeated by their enemies and exiled from their land.
 - xi. **Ezra & Nehemiah:** These two books tell how the people of Israel were released and able to rebuild.

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The Old Testament – The Color Books, Poetry/Wisdom, and Prophets
(Dr. Sid Buzzell –RBC Christian Courses)



The Old Testament – The Beginnings (Dr. Sid Buzzell –RBC Christian Courses)

1. **The books of the Beginnings:** Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Job, Leviticus and Deuteronomy
2. Genesis 1-11 (specific period unknown)
3. Genesis 12 (Abraham: Jewish nation begins – 2100 BC)
4. Genesis 12 through the end of Numbers (700years)
5.
 - i. **First Beginnings:** Creation.
 - ii. **Second Beginnings:** Noah's family (God disappointed with man and starts again with Noah).
 - iii. **Third Beginnings:** The Jewish Nation (Abraham and Sarah: God says he will make a great nation from them). Their son Ishmael became father of 12 Arab nations and their son Isaac became the father of Jacob, the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. The story of Joseph begins, 'rising' three times. At the end of the book of Genesis, Joseph and his family live in Egypt. There is 400 year period (of silence). At the beginning of Exodus, The Israelites are slaves in Egypt. In the book of Exodus, Moses is born; he leads the Israelites out of Egypt via 10 plagues sent from God and the parting of the Red Sea. The 'high point' of the book of Exodus is when the Israelites stop at Mount Sinai and obtain the Ten Commandments from Moses. In the book of Numbers, (Israel sends spies into the land and they come back with a negative report) and God punishes the Israelites by allowing them to wander before they get into their land (Leading to death of a generation in the wilderness).

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Encouragement from The Holy Bible; James 1:1,12

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The Old Testament – The Settlement (Dr. Sid Buzzell –RBC Christian Courses)

1. The settlement period is about 350 years.
2. **Joshua:** Israelites invade the Promised Land (25 years); crossing of the Jordan River, Battle of Jericho, Caleb's story, and Joshua's story.
3. **Judges:** Israelites rebel against God (320 years); Gideon, Samson, Deborah, Ruth (Genealogy of Boaz, Jesse, David, which eventually leads to Jesus)

The Old Testament – The Kingdom (Dr. Sid Buzzell –RBC Christian Courses)

1. The kingdom period is about 460 years.
2. **The period of Preparation** (55 years). Samuel was a man of God. God tells Samuel to anoint Saul as the first King. *See 1 Samuel 1-10.*
3. **The period of the United Kingdom.** (Saul, David, and Solomon: 120 years). Each king reigned for approximately 40 years. Dr. Buzzell describes Saul was qualified physically for the kingship, but may not have been qualified mentally, emotionally and spiritually. David becomes king after the death of Saul. (David and Goliath; David and Bathsheba). God describes David as a man after his own heart and promises that one of David's descendants will be ruler of the world (Jesus). Solomon builds the temple for God in Jerusalem.
4. **The period of the Divided Kingdom** (Israel and Judah). Under Rehoboam, people ask for relief from taxes and denied them, and said he would tax them more. So Israel (10 northern tribes) divides itself from Judah and Benjamin (2 southern tribes: *See 1 Kings 12:21*). Israel makes Jeroboam King. But Jeroboam leads Israel to worship idols. The Kings of Israel that followed him were deemed evil in the eyes of God and led the Israelites to stray from God. Israel (10 northern tribes) lasted (210?) hundreds of years before the Assyrians annihilated Israel. Judah and Benjamin (2 Southern tribes) also lasted (135?) hundreds of years before the Babylonians annihilated Judah.

The Old Testament – The Exile and Reconstruction (Dr. Sid Buzzell –RBC Christian Courses)

1. The exile was about 70 years and the reconstruction was about 136 years (538 – 400 BC, where the Old Testament ends).
2. The books of Daniel, Ezekiel and Jeremiah describe the exile and destruction of Jerusalem. The Assyrians defeat the Israel . Dr. Buzzell states that "Their policy was to destroy their culture, nationalism and religion." But "God (supernaturally) preserves Jerusalem from being defeated by the Assyria...until the Babylonians...(allowed them to keep their culture, nationality and religion)...but (moved) everybody in mass over to the city of Babylon. When the Persians came into power, they allowed the people to move back home and rebuild just as long as they paid a tax to the Persians. Ezra, "the scribe," in the book of Ezra, tells us about the rebuilding the city and the temple but not the temple walls, due to possible military threat (according to Dr. Buzzell). The book of Nehemiah talks about the rebuilding of the city walls, with God's divine help. Note that the book of Ester tells about the people that did not return to their land.

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The Old Testament – The Prophets (Dr. Sid Buzzell –RBC Christian Courses)

1. The prophetic office was ordained in *Deuteronomy 18:18*
2. 6 groups of Prophets are
 - i. 3 Prophets spoke to **Gentiles** (Non-Israelites): Jonah (to Nineveh-capital Assyria); Obadiah; and Nahum
 - ii. 4 Prophets spoke to **Judah**: Joel, Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Habakkuk
 - iii. 2 Prophets spoke to **Israel**: Amos and Hosea
 - iv. 2 Prophets spoke to **Judah and Israel**: Isaiah and Micah
 - v. 2 Prophets spoke during the **Exile**: Ezekiel and Daniel
 - vi. 3 Prophets spoke during the **Reconstruction**: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi
3. The Major and Minor Prophets:
 - i. 4 **Major Prophets** (longer-writings): Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel;
 - ii. 12 **Minor Prophets**: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah. Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi
4. 3 periods of Prophets:
 - i. 11 **pre-exilic prophets** (pre exile); Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah. Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah
 - ii. 2 **exilic prophets** (during the exile): Ezekiel and Daniel
 - iii. 3 **post-exilic prophets** (post-exile): Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

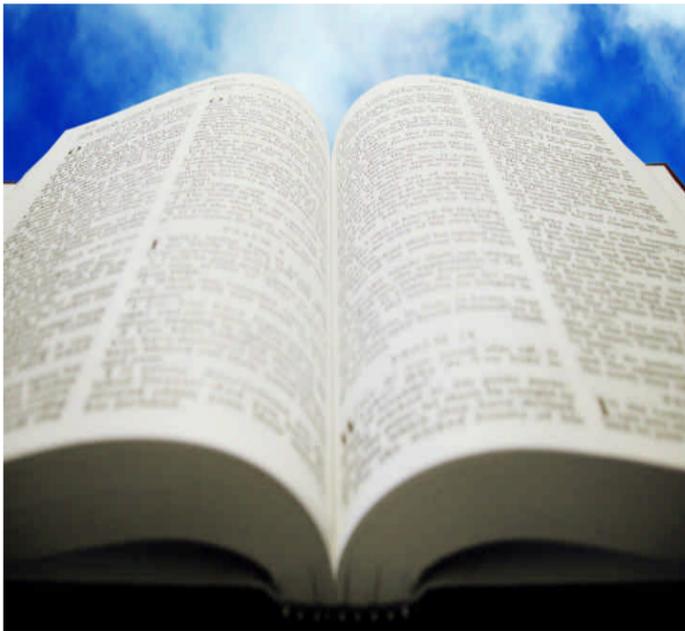
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June 15, 2008

Administration: Father's Day "Unleashing the Real You"

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Psalm 119:105



New Commandment Baptist Church

"A Church Where Love is Essential & Praise is Intentional"



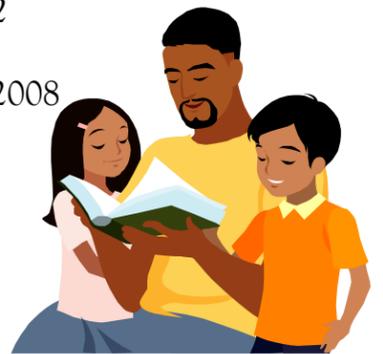
Father's Day

"Unleashing the Real YOU!!!"

Romans 7:19-22

Sunday, June 15, 2008

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Rev. Dr. Stephen E. Tucker, Pastor
Deacon Joyce Milton, Church Clerk

Radio Broadcast:
WYCB 1340 AM, Sundays @ 9:30 PM

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New Commandment Baptist Church
Sunday, June 15, 2008

Father's Day

8:00 AM Divine Order of Worship
Deacon Eleanor Mitchell, Inspirational
Worship Leader

8:00 AM.....Inspirational Praise & Worship

Morning Scripture and Prayer

Worship in
Song.....Congregational Hymn

Morning Inspiration.....Deacon Loria Weaver

The Inspirational Word...Minister Essie Chapman

Morning Offering
Offertory Prayer

Benedictio.....Minister Essie Chapman

11:00 AM Divine Order of Worship
Bro. James Curtis, Inspirational Worship
Leader

11:00 AM.....Devotional Praise and Worship

11:15 AM..Processional of the Father's Day Choir

Congregational Song of Praise
Moment of Fellowship

Worship in Song.....Father's Day Choir
Moment of Reaching

- Scripture...Romans 7:19-22...Bro. James Toney
- Prayer.....Rev. Willie Hill

Father's Day Theme.....Bro. Marlon Young

“Unleashing the Real YOU!!!”

The Value of Fatherhood....Deacon Freddie Holman

Worship in Song.....Father's Day Choir

The Value of Fatherhood....Deacon Billy High

Worship through Giving of God's Tithe &
Our Offering

Offertory Prayer.....Bro. Darone Derricott

The Value of Fatherhood...Bro. Clarence Thomas

Welcome.....June Month Ministry

Announcements.....Bro. Michael Younger

The Value of Fatherhood.....Bro. Sabu Waters

The Value of Fatherhood.....Bro. Eric Pierce

Children's Chat.....Minister George Bartley

“Kisses For The Fathers”

Song of Preparation.....Father's Day Choir

The Powerful Word from God...Pastor Stephen Tucker

Call to Discipleship

Benediction.....Pastor Stephen Tucker

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June 12, 2008

Bible Commentary: Service

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"Service"
June 12, 2008

Welcome: (name, assistant bookkeeper and an assistant in the maintenance department, hold 3 college degrees (HU, OSU) was working on fourth, also studied at RU, UMCP and UT, taught college for a living, had a nice car, rented a townhome, productive member of the community who was yet a functional alcoholic (10 years).

THEN after experiencing emotional trauma, became separated from my family, homeless 3 years, jobless 4 years, substantial debt for 7 years - more than 100K.

BUT NOW - after participating in the STP program (intake, clothing room, kitchen, maintenance admin), and graduated in 2006 and growing in a strong church, I have some housing (at least temporarily), 1st job since teaching college in 2002 (held it for almost 2 years), have gone 7 years without a drink, less than 15K indebt, and an active member of NCBC (culinary ministry volunteer, anniversary committee member, greeter, 8 AM Service coordinator, Men's Ministry co-leader, DIT).

ESSENTIALLY, I am a former sinner that is under the grace of God. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11 [KJV]** reads "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." To make it personal...a fornicator and a drunkard and slanderer, and such was I. But I am washed, I am sanctified, and I am justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of my God. And I have become a child of God. For **John 1:12 (NIV)**: Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (KJV - sons of God)

Our Purpose is service. Many of us are busy these days with things that occupy our time—such as watching television, and surfing the internet. But the Bible commands us to serve God. **Psalm 2:11 (New International Version)** reads: "Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling." **2 Peter 3:10-12 (Contemporary English Version)** reads:

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“10The day of the Lord's return will surprise us like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a loud noise, and the heat will melt the whole universe. Then the earth and everything on it will be seen for what they are. 11Everything will be destroyed. So you should serve and honor God by the way you live.”

Out of the temptation of Christ we learn that service to God is the purpose of man. **Matthew 4:1-11**

(**New International Version**) reads:

“1Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" 5Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" 7Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"8Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."10Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" 11Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.” (This is stated again in the same manner in **Luke 4:1-13**).

Even Moses learned his purpose of service at the burning Bush. **Exodus 3:1-12 (New International Version)** reads:

‘1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.” 4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” 5 Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” 6 Moreover He said, “I am

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the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 And the LORD said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” 12 So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

Definition of service: Dictionary. The Free Dictionary¹⁵⁹ defines service as “Employment in duties or work for another; Work done for others as an occupation or business; Assistance; help; work done by one person or group that benefits another; the activity of contributing to the fulfillment of a need or furtherance of an effort or purpose; a service that is performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions.” One author¹⁶⁰ writes about service and defines service as:

“...the overflow which pours from a life filled with love and devotion. But strictly speaking, there is no *call* to that. Service is what I bring to the relationship and is the reflection of my identification with the nature of God. Service becomes a natural part of my life. God brings me into the proper relationship with Himself so that I can understand His call, and then I serve Him on my own out of a motivation of absolute love. Service to God is the deliberate love-gift of a nature that has heard the call of God. Service is an expression of my nature, and God’s call is an expression of His nature. Therefore, when I receive His nature and hear His call, His divine voice resounds throughout His nature and mine and the two become one in service. The Son of God reveals Himself in me, and out of devotion to Him service becomes my everyday way of life.”

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/service>

¹⁶⁰ Chamber, Oswald, “The Call of the Natural Life.” My Upmost for His Highest, January 17, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?day=17&month=01>)

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As a program man in the mission or participant in ministry at church you are essentially serving God by doing the work of a missionary. The same author defines what it means to be in service to God as a missionary. He¹⁶¹ writes:

‘A missionary is someone sent by Jesus Christ just as He was sent by God. The great controlling factor is not the needs of people, but the command of Jesus. The source of our inspiration in our service for God is behind us, not ahead of us. The tendency today is to put the inspiration out in front— to sweep everything together in front of us and make it conform to our definition of success. But in the New Testament the inspiration is put behind us, and is the Lord Jesus Himself. The goal is to be true to Him— to carry out *His* plans.

Personal attachment to the Lord Jesus and to His perspective is the one thing that must not be overlooked. In missionary work the great danger is that God’s call will be replaced by the needs of the people, to the point that human sympathy for those needs will absolutely overwhelm the meaning of being sent by Jesus. The needs are so enormous, and the conditions so difficult, that every power of the mind falters and fails. We tend to forget that the one great reason underneath all missionary work is not primarily the elevation of the people, their education, nor their needs, but is first and foremost the command of Jesus Christ— "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . ." (Matthew 28:19).

When looking back on the lives of men and women of God, the tendency is to say, "What wonderfully keen and intelligent wisdom they had, and how perfectly they understood all that God wanted!" But the keen and intelligent mind behind them was the mind of God, not human wisdom at all. We give credit to human wisdom when we should give credit to the divine guidance of God being exhibited through childlike people who were "foolish" enough to trust God’s wisdom and His supernatural equipment.’

Enthusiasm and service. Another author¹⁶² writes about our enthusiasm for service. He writes:

¹⁶¹ Chamber, Oswald, "What is a Missionary?." My Upmost for His Highest, October 26, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?day=26&month=10>)

¹⁶² Van Gorder, Paul, "Glad Service," Our Daily Bread, April 18, 2006, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-18-06.shtml>)

		
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‘Sometimes when we’re asked to serve the Lord in a particular way, we reluctantly accept, but we do so only out of a sense of obligation. When that happens, we need to pray for a willing spirit so that we can "serve the Lord with gladness" (Psalm 100:2).’

1 Peter 5:1-2 (New International Version) reads:

1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;

The former author¹⁶³ recommends serving the Lord until you are physically exhausted serving him. He writes:

‘Until others learn to draw on the life of the Lord Jesus directly, they will have to draw on His life through you. You must literally be their source of supply, until they learn to take their nourishment from God. We owe it to God to be our best for His lambs and sheep, as well as for Him.

Have you delivered yourself over to exhaustion because of the way you have been serving God? If so, then renew and rekindle your desires and affections. Examine your reasons for service. Is your source based on your own understanding or is it grounded on the redemption of Jesus Christ? Continually look back to the foundation of your love and affection and remember where your Source of power lies. You have no right to complain, "O Lord, I am so exhausted." He saved and sanctified you to exhaust you. Be exhausted for God.’

Leadership and Service. One author writes about our attitude when serving God as leaders. Herbert Vander Lugt¹⁶⁴ writes:

“Good leaders don't rely on domineering self-assertion—not at home, nor in church, nor in business. Rather, they balance self-assertiveness (which isn't wrong in itself) with the principle of submitting to one another (Ephesians 5:21). They listen respectfully, admit when they're wrong,

¹⁶³ Chamber, Oswald, “Are You Exhausted Spiritually?” My Upmost for His Highest, February 9, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?day=09&month=02>)

¹⁶⁴ Vander Lugt, Herbert. “Submissive Leadership,” Our Daily Bread, February 23, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-23-04.shtml>)

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show a willingness to change, and mix gentleness with firmness. That's submissive leadership—and it works!”

In order to lead you must first follow. David C. Egner¹⁶⁵ writes about the temptation of leaders to have selfish aims. He writes: “Two options come with leadership: the temptation to serve yourself, and the opportunity to serve the people you lead....If the Lord ever places you in a position of leadership, ask for His help to be a leader who serves.” **Matthew 20:26-28 (New International Version)** reads “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (This is stated again in the same manner in **Mark 10:43-45**). Furthermore, **Ephesians 6:7-8 (New International Version)** reads: “7Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.”

In Closing. One author¹⁶⁶ writes: “In the believer's heart rages a spiritual war between sin and righteousness. We can obey the slave-master of sin, or we can say yes to the God of grace who has made us free (Romans 6:16; John 8:34). Our greatest liberty lies in serving the One who created and redeemed us.” Even though one may be working in the clothing room and another intake and still another in the kitchen or at the front desk or in the laundry room, we are all providing service to the one God. 1 **Corinthians 12:4-6 (New International Version)** reads: “4There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.” 1 **Peter 4:7-10 (New International Version)** reads:

“7The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. 8Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”

Furthermore, no matter what particular sin you came out of, God can still use you for service. 1

Timothy 1:12-13 (New International Version) reads: “12I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given

¹⁶⁵Egner, David, “A Leader Who Serves,” *Our Daily Bread*, June 17, 2002, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-06-17-02.shtml>).

¹⁶⁶Fisher, Dennis, “A Tale Of Two Slaves,” *Our Daily Bread*, December 20, 2005, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-20-05.shtml>).

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me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. 13Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy....;" Finally the Bible talks about the rewards for serving him. **Proverbs 22:4 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: "Respect and serve the LORD! Your reward will be wealth, a long life, and honor." And **Psalm 135:14 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: 'The LORD will bring justice and show mercy to all who serve him.'

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July 3, 2008

Bible Commentary: Worry

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"WORRY"
July 3, 2008

I. Introduction. In today's Our Daily Bread, Cindy Kasper writes about worrying and being anxious. She writes "When your mind turns to anxious thoughts about the future, remember that 'your heavenly Father knows' (Matt. 6:32) and will give you what you need."

In the daily devotional, Our Daily Bread, dated June 25, 2007, Anne Cetas writes:

"The number of ways people try to deal with serious stresses in life are as numerous as there are people. Having a drink. Blaming God. Stuffing ourselves with food. Keeping our feelings inside. Blaming others. These responses might calm us, but they're just a temporary means of escaping our problems. No product we reach for can take them away."

This particular devotion is hard-hitting and convicting. It describes me and how I used to respond to stress... "Having a drink." (Describe drinking habit) It even describes how I have recently responded to stress when it talks about "Stuffing ourselves with food." Such responses to stress can be described as anxiety and worry about the things of life. I believe anxiety and worry steal the joy out of our lives that God intended for us to have.

II. Defining the Problem. Anxiety is defined as "a state of apprehension, uncertainty, and fear resulting from the anticipation of a realistic or fantasized threatening event or situation, often impairing physical and psychological functioning¹⁶⁷." Worry is similar to anxiety. Worry is defined as "to feel uneasy or concerned about something; be troubled¹⁶⁸." Anxiety describes the condition of an individual while worry describes an action of an individual. Basically, anxiety and worrying are unhealthy forms of fear.

II.A. Healthy Fear. Note while anxiety is discouraged, a healthy form of fear is the fear of the Lord. In this instance, fear is defined as "Extreme reverence or awe, as toward a supreme power¹⁶⁹."

[Proverbs 1:7](#) (New International Version) reads "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of

¹⁶⁷ thefreedictionary.com

¹⁶⁸ thefreedictionary.com

¹⁶⁹ thefreedictionary.com

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knowledge...” David feared the lord. [Psalm 16:1](#) (New King James Version) reads “Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.”

II.B. Unhealthy Fear. But the unhealthy form of fear or anxiety can lead to a condition called generalized anxiety disorder:

“Given the stresses of modern life, it is normal to experience occasional anxiety. However, people with generalized anxiety disorder, or GAD, suffer from persistent worry and tension that is much worse than the anxiety most people experience from time to time. The high level or chronic state of anxiety associated with GAD can make ordinary activities difficult or even impossible.

The main symptom of GAD is an exaggerated or unfounded state of worry and anxiety, often about such matters as health, money, family, or work. Although people with GAD may realize that their anxiety is excessive or unwarranted, they are unable to simply “snap out of it.” For them, the mere thought of getting through the day can provoke anxiety.

The persistent worrying characteristic of GAD is hard to control and interferes with daily life. Many GAD sufferers seem unable to relax and may startle easily. In addition, GAD is often accompanied by physical symptoms, such as fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, and gastrointestinal problems¹⁷⁰.”

II.C. Biblical Definition of the Problem. The Bible describes anxiety adds unnecessary pressure on a man. **Proverbs 12:25** (New International Version) reads “An anxious heart weighs a man down....” Furthermore, anxious efforts are not productive. **Ecclesiastes 2:22-23** (New International Version) reads, “What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.”

III. Solution to the Problem.

III.A. Pray. [Philippians 4:6](#) (New International Version) reads “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” In

¹⁷⁰ Retrieved June 22, 2007 from: http://www.lexapro.com/understand_condition/anxiety_symptoms.aspx?prevNav=nav2

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Our Daily Bread, dated September 1, 2006, Bill Crowder writes about the steps necessary for replacing anxiety with peace:

“It’s comforting to know that such things (things that cause stress and anxiety) are in our Father’s hands. My inability to do anything about the problem was more than matched by my confidence in God, for whom all things are possible. As I prayed about the situation, my anxiety was replaced by His peace (Phil. 4:6-7).

III.B. Trust in God. Both, anxiety, the condition, and worry, the act, are based on a lack of trust in God. Trust is defined as “firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of (an individual) a person or thing¹⁷¹.” If you are overanxious or a worrier, then you are possibly over-dependent on your own strength and not firmly relying on the ability of the Lord or trusting on the Lord. Instead of engaging in anxiety and worry, trust in God in order to relieve your anxiety. **Jeremiah 17:7-9 (New King James Version)** reads:

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit.”

We need to learn to reduce our stress and anxiety by practicing patience and trust in the Lord. **Psalm 40:1-3 (New International Version)** reads:

“I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD.”

Furthermore, [1 Peter 5:7](#) reads “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” **Ecclesiastes 11:9-10 (New International Version)** reads “So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body.”

III.C. God will fulfill our needs that we are anxious about. We should not worry about our needs.

We are given two accounts of the same basic instructions on anxiety in **Luke 12** and **Matthew 6**. **Luke 12:22-29 (New King James Version)** reads:

¹⁷¹ thefreedictionary.com

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Then He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do *the* least, why are you anxious for the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He* clothe you, O *you* of little faith? “And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.”

The same account is given in **Matthew 6** but slightly altered at the ending. **Matthew 6:33-34 (New King James Version)** reads: “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

Here, at Central Union Mission, we are given everything that we need: food (3 meals a day plus snacks, if you are fortunate to work in the kitchen or unload the food truck), clothing (an opportunity to rebuild our wardrobe via donations to clothing room and suits that Ms. Johnson brings from time to time), shelter, new/refreshed job skills, pocket change/spending money, a social worker, nurturing to restore or initiate interaction with family and church members, quality Christian education, and opportunity to restart our lives again. It is because we sought the latter (Christian education) and our conforming to a Christian way of life at a Christian mission, God provided the rest.

III.D. God Gives You Peace. By engaging in closer walk with God, we worry less and gain peace. **Psalm 55:18 (New King James Version)** reads “He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me.” [Psalm 4:8 \(New International Version\)](#) reads “I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.” Note that it is God that heals you from anxiety. Psalm 94:19 (New International Version) reads “When anxiety was great within me, your consolation¹⁷² brought joy to my soul.” [Psalm 29:11 \(New International Version\)](#) reads “The LORD gives strength to

¹⁷² comfort

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his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.” [Psalm 85:8](#) **New International Version (NIV)** reads “I will listen to what God the LORD will say; he promises peace to his people, his saints.”

IV. In Closing: A man in right standing with God does not have to worry about his future. [Psalm 37:37](#) (**New International Version**) reads “Consider the blameless, observe the upright; there is a future for the man of peace.” Furthermore, **Proverbs 23:17-19** (**New International Version**) reads “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off. God has good future plans for you.” Additionally, [Jeremiah 29:11](#) (**New International Version**) reads “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

And, in Our Daily Bread, dated September 1, 2006, Bill Crowder writes:

The problems of life can be taxing on us—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Yet, as we learn to trust in the Father’s care, we can have the peace that not only surpasses all understanding but also overcomes our anxiety. We can be at rest, for we are in God’s hands.”

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July 10, 2008

Bible Commentary: Grace

**James Curtis
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"GRACE"
July 10, 2008**

I. Introduction. Today's Devotion in Our Daily Bread, written by Herbert Vander Lugt, reads:

"Do you sometimes feel guilty and unworthy because of something you did years ago? You have confessed it and asked God to forgive you, but the memory of it still haunts you. I empathize with you....God, who is greater than our heart and knows us thoroughly (1 John 1:9), has forgiven us..."

This forgiveness is a form of grace from God. Today, we will focus on the subject of Grace. The devotion, dated October 24, 2005, from Our Daily Bread, written by Richard De Haan, reads:

"We are saved by grace, and by grace alone (Rom. 3:24). We can do nothing to earn it (v.28). Our redemption is a gift from God. Our part is to acknowledge our sinfulness and inability to save ourselves. We must place our trust in Jesus, believing that He died on the cross for our sins. God has provided salvation for you-that's His part. Receiving it by faith-that's yours."

Today, we will (1) define grace, (2) discuss the source of grace, (3) discuss the beneficiaries of grace, and (4) discuss salvation through grace.

II.A. Dictionary Definition of Grace. Grace is defined as "A favor rendered by one who need not do so¹⁷³." Imagine if God had not 'rendered' us the favor of forgiveness. Where would we be?

II.B. Joanie Yoder: An RBC Author's Definition of Grace. The devotion, dated June 12, 2004, from Our Daily Bread, written by Joanie Yoder, reads:

"Many non-Christians know the hymn "Amazing Grace" but may not know what *grace* means. One day when evangelist D. L. Moody was studying the meaning of God's grace, he dashed into the street and shouted to the first man he saw, "Do you know grace?" Mystified, the man replied, "Grace who?" No doubt Moody then explained *grace* –that God has compassion on sin-sick people and freely offers them forgiveness and new life through faith in Christ."

¹⁷³ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/grace>

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The devotion, dated December 7, 1999, from Our Daily Bread, written by Joanie Yoder, reads:

‘But what is grace?

(1) Paul summed up its countless virtues by calling them "exceeding riches" (Eph. 2:7). He spelled out some of those riches in Ephesians 2. *Grace is:*

(1.1) *God's favor bestowed on undeserving people (v.1);*

(1.2) *God's instrument for bringing salvation to each believer (v.8);*

(1.3) *God's provision of spiritual fellowship with others (vv.5-6); and*

(1.4) *God's creative influence, equipping the believer to fulfill His purposes (v.10).* God's grace is not only amazingly rich, it's also free. Yancey points out, "Grace is free only because the giver Himself has borne the cost."

II.C. David McCasland: AN RBC Author's Definition of Grace. The devotion, dated September 5, 2006, from Our Daily Bread, written by David McCasland, reads: "God offers to give us what we can't buy—*mercy, pardon, and a changed life infused with His presence....By God's grace, we can freely receive His something—for nothing.*"

The devotion, dated September 9, 2003, from Our Daily Bread, written by David McCasland, reads:

"By God's *grace—His unmerited love and favor*—we have been forgiven in Christ. God tells us that instead of relating to others from a position of superiority, we must put others ahead of ourselves. We should wear the clothes of humility because He "resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5). When "the God of all grace" (v.10) controls our lives, He can transform interruptions into opportunities, mistakes into successes, pride into humility, and suffering into strength. That's the amazing power of God. That's the evidence of His grace!"

II.D. Dennis Fisher: An RBC Author's Definition of Grace. The devotion, dated November 27, 2005, from Our Daily Bread, written by Dennis fisher, reads: "*God's Spirit convicts us of sin and gives us the*

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power to forsake it. When we receive Christ as our Savior, He does for us what we are powerless to do in our own strength. That's amazing grace."

III. The Source of Grace. God has abundant grace to bestow upon us through His Son Jesus. For, **John 1:14-17 (New International Version)** reads:

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of **grace** and truth.... From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

IV.A. The Beneficiaries of Grace. The Followers of Jesus. Grace was given to those who told of the goodness of Jesus the Christ. **Acts 4:33 (New International Version)** reads: "With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all."

IV.B. The Beneficiaries of Grace. The Righteous. Psalm 84:11 (New King James Version) reads: "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly." This is confirmed in [Proverbs 3:34 \(King James Version\)](#) which reads: "Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth **grace** unto the lowly."

IV.C. The Beneficiaries of Grace. The Biblical Example of Noah. God's grace flowed to Noah. **Genesis 6:5-9 (New King James Version)** reads:

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God."

IV.D. The Beneficiaries of Grace. The Biblical Example of Joseph. Furthermore, Joseph was a man who received grace from God on four different occasions. First, Joseph found grace from his Father. **Genesis 37:3-5 (King James Version)** reads:

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“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.”

Genesis 37:26-28 (King James Version) reads:

“And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.”

Secondly, Joseph also obtained grace from an official of Egypt. **Genesis 39:1-4 (King James Version)** reads:

“And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.”

But Joseph was falsely accused of attempting to have an affair with Potiphar’s wife (Gen. 39:7-19).

Joseph was put into prison (vs. 20). While in prison, this was the third occasion Joseph obtained grace from the Lord. **Genesis 39:21-23 (King James Version)** reads:

“But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.”

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While in prison, Joseph met the chief cupbearer and chief baker, Joseph interpreted their dreams, and Joseph's interpretations became reality (Gen. 40:8-22). After two years (Gen. 41:1), the cupbearer told Pharaoh about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams and "Pharaoh sent for Joseph" (Gen. 41:14) to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. And, on a fourth occasion, Joseph was given grace by God. **Genesis 41:39-40 (King James Version)** reads: "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou."

V. Salvation comes by Grace. For, **Ephesians 2:8-9 (New International Version)** reads: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast." For, we are now eligible for salvation because a form of righteousness, based on faith in Jesus Christ, has emerged. **Romans 21-24 (New International Version)** reads:

"But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

The New Testament uses the example of circumcision to explain God's grace. **Acts 15:1-11 (New International Version)** reads:

'Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the

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message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

This is confirmed in **Galations 5:3-4 (New International Version)** which reads: “Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.” **Romans 6:13-15 (New International Version)**: “For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.” **Romans 5:19-21 (New International Version)** reads:

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. ...But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

VI. Closing. The devotion, dated January 18, 2002, from Our Daily Bread, written by Herbert Vander Lugt, reads: “As we consider what Jesus did for us on the cross, taking the full punishment for all our sins, then we will be overwhelmed with the wonder of grace.” The devotion, dated October 20, 2004, from Our Daily Bread, written by David McCasland, reads: “Christ left His glory in heaven and died on the cross for our sin so that we could be forgiven through faith in Him. His sacrifice was based on His love, not on our merit. All we are and all we have are the Savior's loving gifts of grace to us.”

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July 17, 2008

Bible Commentary: Prayer

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"PRAYER"
July 17, 2008

How is your prayer life? Today we are going to talk about prayer. We are going to consider the *How* and the 5 *Ws* of prayer: *What, Why, When, Who and Where*.

I. What is prayer? One dictionary¹⁷⁴ defines prayer as "A reverent petition made to God;...A fervent (or earnest) request;...and a thanksgiving or an appeal spoken to one's God."

II. Why pray? In today's devotion, the author writes about why we should pray. He¹⁷⁵ writes:

'...In prayer I am approaching the Creator of all that is—Someone who makes me feel immeasurably small. How can I do anything but fall silent in such presence? How can I believe that whatever I say matters to God? The Bible sometimes emphasizes the distance between humans and God and sometimes the closeness. Without question, though, Jesus Himself taught us to count on the closeness. In His own prayers He used the word *Abba* (Daddy), an informal address that Jews had not previously used in prayer. A new way of praying was born. Jesus understood better than anyone the vast difference between God and human beings. Yet He did not question the personal concern of God, who watches over sparrows and counts the hairs on our heads. He valued prayer enough to spend many hours at the task. If I had to answer the question "Why pray?" in one sentence, it would be, "Because Jesus did."

Another author tackles the issue of why we should pray. He¹⁷⁶ writes: 'Jesus said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). Christian prayer is effective because God is the living and true God who hears and answers according to His will. And His will is always good.' In the Bible, **Colossians 1:10 (New International Version)** reads: "And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/prayer>

¹⁷⁵ Yancey, Philip. "Why Pray?" Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries. July 17, 2008 (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2008/07/17/devotion.aspx>).

¹⁷⁶ Grounds, Vernon. "Effective Praying" Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries. October 22, 2003 (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2003/10/22/devotion.aspx>)

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fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.” Therefore, we should pray so our efforts will not be in vain, but rather be productive.

III. How to pray. Jesus instructs us how to pray. Foremost, in one of Jesus’ prayers, we can see that Jesus prayed for himself, the disciples and the believers. **John 17:1 (New International Version)** states: “After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: ‘Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you’.” Then he prays for his disciples in versus 6 through 19. Then, **John 17:20 (New International Version)** reads: “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.” In sum, Jesus prays for himself, leaders of faith in Christ, and believers in Christ. This ought to be in our prayers as well. We ought to pray for ourselves, faith-based leaders, and believers in Christ. One author writes about the importance of praying for others. He¹⁷⁷ writes:

‘When we pray for others, we become partners with God in His work of salvation, healing, comfort, and justice. God can accomplish those things without us, but in His plan He gives us the privilege of being involved with Him through prayer. When we intercede for a grandson in trouble, a mother having surgery, a neighbor who needs Christ, or a pastor who needs strength, we are asking God to provide for that person what we can't provide. We are acting as go-betweens, asking God to direct His power in a specific direction. In his classic book titled Prayer, Olan Hallesby described how it works: "This power is so rich and so mobile that all we have to do when we pray is point to the person or thing to which we desire to have [God's] power applied, and He, the Lord of this power, will direct the necessary power to the desired (person or) place.”

Luke 11:1-4 (King James Version) describes the model prayer. It reads:

“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.”

¹⁷⁷ Egner, David. “Our Prayer & God’s Power,” *Our Daily Bread*, RBC Ministries. July 26, 2000 (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2000/07/26/devotion.aspx>)

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One author writes about the model prayer and four principles within that model prayer. He¹⁷⁸ writes:

Jesus used the example method when His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. Instead of going into a long dissertation on the subject, He said, "When you pray, say, . . ." and He gave them a pattern that also included prayer principles. That prayer has at least four elements we can learn to use when we pray: Adoration, Confession, Temptation protection, and Supplication (or ACTS). Let's consider the ACTS of prayer. Adoration: "Hallowed be Your name." We need to give allegiance and respect to our great and awesome God. Confession: "Forgive us our sins." God is "faithful and just to forgive us" (1 Jn. 1:9). Temptation protection: "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Ask for help to say no to sin. Supplication: "Give us day by day our daily bread." We should not be afraid to ask God for His provisions. There's the example. It's up to us to follow it.

IV. When should we pray? **Ephesians 6:18 (New International Version)** reads: "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." David committed himself to prayer. **Psalm 55:17 (King James Version)** reads: "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud." Even Daniel prayed three times a day.

Daniel 6:1-23 (New International Version) reads:

"It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps¹⁷⁹ to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. (KJV – Daniel had an Excellent Spirit) At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God." So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever!

The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king

¹⁷⁸ Branon, Dave. "ACTS of Prayer," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries. March 29, 1995 (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/1995/03/29/devotion.aspx>)

¹⁷⁹ A governor of a province in ancient Persia (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/satraps>)

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should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." So King Darius put the decree in writing.

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, "Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep.

At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den.

When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done

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any wrong before you, O king." The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Daniel should probably be considered one of the greatest evangelists that ever lived because he allowed people to witness his faith in God through semi-public prayer (because he prayed where the windows were opened, therefore making a public confession of faith despite any worldly decrees stating otherwise).

In **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, the Lord instructs in the Bible to “pray without ceasing” (**King James Version**) or “pray continually” (**New International Version**). One author writes about how to develop the habit of praying continually. He¹⁸⁰ writes:

“...Before we leave the driveway, we always stop and pray—asking God for safety and for family unity on our trip. It's a habit. Prayer habits are helpful tools to remind us of our dependence on God. Perhaps you have some habits of your own. Before you eat, you pray. (If you have kids) Maybe before the kids leave for school, you pray. Before they go to bed, you pray. Developing prayer habits can be of tremendous help to those of us who want to develop a close relationship with the Lord but find that the busyness of the day squeezes out the time we had hoped to spend with Him. When we designate different activities of the day before or after which we always pray, we'll help to assure ourselves of regular communication with our Creator...it can be a time of rich fellowship with our Lord.”

V. Who should we pray? Psalm 32:6 (**New International Version**) reads: “Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found (or the New Living Translation states while there is still time).” What does it mean to be godly? One dictionary¹⁸¹ defines godly as “Having great reverence for God.” Therefore, if you claim to be a child of God, you ought to be praying.

¹⁸⁰ Branon, Dave. “Getting into the Habit” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries. August 30, 2000, (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2000/08/30/devotion.aspx>).

¹⁸¹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/godly>

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VI. Where should pray? The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, stating that men should pray everywhere.

I Timothy 2:8 (King James Version) reads: “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” In closing, one author¹⁸² writes:

“We can pour out our hearts to the Lord anytime, anywhere. It’s easy to lose the wonder of that because it has become so familiar. Paul always seemed to marvel at the door opened wide into the presence of God. “In Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ,” he wrote. “For through Him we both [Gentiles and Jews] have access by one Spirit to the Father” (Eph. 2:13,18). The door is open for everyone. God welcomes all who come by faith. Through Christ we can enter His presence— anytime, anywhere.”

¹⁸² McCasland, David, “Anytime, Anywhere” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, June 25, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2008/06/25/devotion.aspx>)

		
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New Commandment Baptist Church

8:00 AM Divine Order of Worship

_____, Inspirational Worship Leader*

8:30 AM.....Inspirational Praise, Worship & Testimonies
(Led by Worship Leader - 3 to 5 songs)

8:45 AM.....Morning Scripture & Morning Prayer
(Chosen by Worship Leader)

8:50 AM.....Worship in Song
(Led by Worship Leader)

8:55 AM.....Morning Inspiration
(_____, Speaker)

9:00 AM.....Worship in Song
(Led by Worship Leader)

9:05 AM.....The Inspirational Word
(_____, Preacher)

9:20 AM..... Morning Offering & Worship in Song
(Led by Worship Leader & Ushers Ministry)

9:25 AM.....Offertory Prayer
(Chosen by Worship Leader)

9:30 AM.....Benediction
(_____, Preacher)

* The Inspirational Worship Leader should be prepared to lead (or chose someone to lead) the congregation in 6 to 8 songs throughout the program!

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for the Socially Marginalized*

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Encouragement from The Holy Bible: James 1:1,12

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July 24, 2008

Bible Commentary: Hope

James Curtis
Central Union Mission
"HOPE"
July 24, 2008

Welcome: (name, assistant bookkeeper and an assistant in the maintenance department, hold 3 college degrees (HU, OSU) was working on fourth, also studied at RU, UMCP and UT, taught college for a living, had a nice car, rented a townhome, productive member of the community who was yet a functional alcoholic (10 years).

THEN after experiencing emotional trauma, became separated from my family, homeless 3 years, jobless 4 years, substantial debt for 7 years - more than 100K.

BUT NOW - after participating in the STP program (intake, clothing room, kitchen, maintenance admin), and graduated in 2006 and growing in a strong church, I have some housing (at least temporarily), 1st job since teaching college in 2002 (held it for almost 2 years), have gone 7 years without a drink, less than 15K indebt, and an active member of NCBC (culinary ministry volunteer, anniversary committee member, greeter, 8 AM Service coordinator, Men's Ministry co-leader, DIT).

ESSENTIALLY, I am a former sinner that is under the grace of God. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11 [KJV]** reads "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." To make it personal...a fornicator and a drunkard and slanderer, and such was I. But I am washed, I am sanctified, and I am justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of my God. And I have become a child of God. For **John 1:12 (NIV)**: Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (KJV - sons of God)

Introduction. In the daily devotional, Our Daily Bread, written August 24, 2007, Julie Link writes: "God has something for each of us to do, despite our limitations. Rise up and ask what He might want to do through you." This is equivalent to saying that there is hope despite our situations. **Jeremiah 29:11** reads what?

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I remember many days sitting in transitional housing thinking and worrying about my next step in life. You see, I have obtained a lot of education but it is almost worthless without continuous study and a mentor who helps place you after your studies are complete. When I became homeless, my studies became discontinued due to lack of funds and lack of guidance by my mentors. Furthermore, since my studies and mentors were concentrated in Ohio and I was homeless in DC, Maryland and Atlanta, I became separated from my mentors. The mentors, that invested time and energy in me, were too distant for an effective relationship and my resources for further education were exhausted.

But thank God for Central Union Mission and my church, New Commandment Baptist Church. There, I began to re-educate myself based on the Bible and develop a new talent of teaching scripture. Now, I have been asked to teach at my church and at Central Union Mission. And the rewards to teaching God's word have overflowed to benefits on my job, enhanced responsibilities at my church, and a better personal financial condition. And this hope in Christ I have can be developed in you.

Definition. The Free Dictionary defines hope as (1) "A wish or desire accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment;" and (2) "The theological virtue defined as the desire and search for a future good, difficult but not impossible to attain with God's help." The second definition implies a little work on behalf of the person with hope. It states: 'the desire and search for a future good.' Therefore, if our hope is in God, we must be active seekers of Him. This is confirmed in **Hebrews 11:6 (New International Version)** reads "...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

Commentary. First, Dennis De Haan¹⁸³ writes:

"It's when we can't do anything that *God does everything*. And herein lies a profound paradox of the Christian's experience. Faith is simultaneously an exercise of our will and the impartation of divine strength. And from that marvelous mixture spring joy and peace and an abundance of hope.

¹⁸³ "New Hope," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, May 21, 2004 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-06-07.shtml>)

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Are you in a totally helpless situation? Strength gone? All options exhausted? If you have trusted Jesus as your Savior, God will strengthen you to keep on believing. As you trust Him, He'll give you not only joy and peace, but also hope when all hope is gone.”

Second, Haddon Robinson¹⁸⁴ writes:

“Anticipating what God has in store for us can put a smile in our heart. Hope gives us poise and lets us live with inner strength, because we know that one day we will be dramatically different than we are now.

If you are in some way damaged by past abuse or feeling defeated by sin, or if you feel so inferior to others that you walk with your eyes to the ground, take heart in what God has in store for you. Live today with the courage God gives you. Make what you can of your afflictions. But rejoice, because all that degrades and limits you is only temporary. It will be gone—some of it sooner rather than later.

If you have a living hope in Christ, you can deal with your past because of your future. God’s glorious best for you lies ahead”

Third, David McCasland¹⁸⁵ writes:

“The Bible is far more than a book of wishful thinking; it is a book of well-founded confidence in God's purpose and plan for us as believers. Whatever we are like today, we know that in Christ we have a living hope, and it will not end in disappointment.”

Fourth, Dave Branon¹⁸⁶ writes:

“Promises are the hope of our heart. A child's security depends on a parent's promise to keep him or her safe. A spouse can live with confidence because of a mate's promise of fidelity, loyalty, and love. Businesses depend on promises from employees, vendors, and clients. Countries remain safe when neighbors keep their promise to honor their borders.

¹⁸⁴ “A Living Hope,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, March 8, 2006 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-08-06.shtml>)

¹⁸⁵ “The Book Of Hope,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, March 19, 2002 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-19-02.shtml>)

¹⁸⁶ “The Hope Of The Heart,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, October 15, 2001 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-10-15-01.shtml>)

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Unfortunately, hearts and relationships are broken in all of those situations by unkept promises. There is one Promise-Maker, though, who can be trusted completely and without fear. That one is God. He has given us hundreds of promises in His Word, and He keeps every one of them....

Are you looking for hope? Then search the Scriptures diligently and claim the promises of God that apply to you. Promises truly are the hope of the heart, and God always keeps His word.”

Fifth, David Egener writes:

“Think of what it would be like if we went to bed some night knowing that the sun would not rise again the next morning. Think of the coldness, the unending darkness, the inescapable fingers of death that would gradually move across the earth. Plants would wither, flowers would wilt, trees would die, and all of life would perish for lack of sunlight.

But praise God, the sun does rise every day. Its warm, life-giving light floods the earth. The "death" of a sunset each day is followed by the "resurrection" of a sunrise the next day—and our hope is renewed. Every morning the rays of the sun remind us that the long night of sin and darkness will give way to eternal day in heaven.

Even more sure than the rising of the morning sun is the certainty of our resurrection in Jesus Christ. The dark night of death came upon Him, and His lifeless body was laid in the tomb. But He arose! And in His resurrection is the promise of our own resurrection to life. The apostle Paul declared, "Even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

The next time you see the sun rise and watch its rays brighten the morning sky, let hope fill your heart.”

Bible. If you are low on hope and here at the mission because you are need of food, clothing, shelter, and/or spiritual guidance, please be informed that you have come to the right place. The mission does provide those things. But more importantly God knows and hears your needs. **Psalm 9:17-19 (Amplified Bible)** reads: “18For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the expectation and hope of the meek and the poor shall not perish forever.” Furthermore, **Psalm 10:17 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: “You listen to the longings of those who suffer. You offer them hope, and you

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pay attention to their cries for help.” But **Matthew 6:33 (New International Version)** reminds us to:

“33...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

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August 3, 2008

Bible Commentary: Joy

James Curtis
New Commandment Baptist Church
"JOY"
August 3, 2008

One of our daily devotion discussed the human's search for joy. It¹⁸⁷ reads:

"Our search for joy takes us many different directions—dream holidays, shopping, food, clothes, friends, cars—the list is almost endless. My guess is that if you perked up at the mention of shopping, holidays, or cars, you might have felt a twinge of guilt. We often view the joy of temporal things as less than spiritual and show our discomfort by apologizing for nice things: "I wouldn't have bought this, but someone gave me a wonderful deal." As if real Christians never eat quiche, drive cool cars, or wear designer clothes! No doubt God's greatest gift to us is our relationship with His Son Jesus. It's a gift beyond comparison. Jesus promised that when we abide in Him we will experience the fulfillment of His joy (John 15:11), and without that kind of deep, abiding joy the rest of life is mundane at best.

But Scripture also casts the joy of the Lord in terms of temporal things. The enjoyment of "things" can be a positive spiritual experience. When we recognize that He "gives us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17) and that "every good gift . . . is from above" (James 1:17), our hearts should be full of thankfulness and praise. This, in and of itself, is an act of worship! Enjoy the Giver and the gifts."

Today we are going to talk about joy. We will define joy based on the Old Testament and New Testament, compare joy to happiness, discuss the source of joy, discuss facing difficulties with joy and choosing to be joyful.

Foremost, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines joy based on the Old Testament and New Testament. In terms of the Old Testament¹⁸⁸:

"Besides joy in a general sense, as the response of the mind to any pleasurable event or state (1 Ki 1:40; Est 8:17, etc.), joy as a religious emotion is very frequently referred to in the Old Testament.

Religion is conceived of as touching the deepest springs of emotion, including the feeling of

¹⁸⁷ Stowell, Joe, "Joyful Living," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, July 1, 2008. (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2008/07/01/devotion.aspx>)

¹⁸⁸ Edwards, D. Miall; Orr, James, M.A., D.D. General Editor. "Definition for 'JOY'". International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, bible-history.com - ISBE; 1915. (<http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/J/JOY/>)

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(jubilant) gladness which often finds outward expression in such actions as leaping, shouting, and singing. Joy is repeatedly shown to be the natural outcome of fellowship with God. God is at once the source (Ps 4:7; 51:12) and the object (Ps 35:9; Isa 29:19) of religious joy. The phrase "rejoice (be glad)..." and similar expressions are of frequent occurrence (e.g. Ps 97:12; 149:2; Isa 61:10; Zec 10:7). Many aspects of the Divine character call forth this emotion, such as His lovingkindness (Ps 21:6,7; 31:7), His salvation (Ps 21:1; Isa 25:9; Hab 3:18), His laws and statutes (Ps 12; 119 passim), His judgments (Ps 48:11), (and) His words of comfort in dark days (Jer 15:15,16). The fundamental fact of the sovereignty of God, of the equity of the Divine government of the world, gives (those who are religious) a joyous sense of security in life (Ps 93:1 f; 96:10; 97:1) which breaks forth into songs of praises (Ps 96:11-13; 98:4-9). In the case of those who held such views of God, it was natural that the service of God should elicit a joyous spirit (...Ps 27:6; compare 1 Ch 29:9), a spirit which is abundantly manifest in the jubilant shouting with which religious festivities were celebrated,...(2 Sam 6:15; Ps 33:1-3; Nu 10:10; 2 Ch 29:27), and especially in psalms of praise, thanksgiving and adoration (Psalms 47; 81; 100, etc.). But joy is a Divine, as well as a human, emotion; for God Himself is represented in the Old Testament, not as a rigid, impassible Being, but as susceptible to pleasure and pain. (For instance) God...(consider) "rejoicing in his works" (Ps 104:31; compare Gen 1:31), and over His people "for good" (Dt 30:9). "He will rejoice over thee ...he will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph 3:17). ...

In terms of the New Testament:

"The element of joy in religion is still more prominent in the New Testament. It is the appropriate response of the believer to the "good tidings of great joy" which constitute the gospel (Lk 2:10). ...(Joy) is both exemplified in the life and character, and set forth in the teaching of Jesus. ...In spite of the profound elements of grief and tragedy in His life, His habitual demeanor was gladsome and joyous, certainly not gloomy ... such as, ... His "rejoicing in the Holy Spirit" (Lk 10:21); ... His mention of "my joy" (Jn 15:11; 17:13). ... Jesus confers on His followers not only peace (Jn 14:27; 16:33), but participation in His own fullness of joy (Jn 15:11; 16:24; 17:13), a joy which is permanent, in contrast to the sorrow which is transient (Jn 16:22). This joy is associated with faith (Phil 1:25), hope (Rom 5:2; 12:12), brotherly fellowship and sympathy (Rom 12:15; 2 Cor 7:13; Phil 2:1 f). To rejoice in the Lord is enjoined as a Christian duty (Phil 3:1; 4:4;

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compare 2:17 f; 1 Thess 5:16). In Christ, the Christian "rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet 1:8), in spite of his temporary afflictions (1 Pet 1:6). Christian joy is no mere gaiety that knows no gloom, but is the result of the triumph of faith over adverse and trying circumstances...(Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3 f; Jas 1:2,12; 5:11; 1 Pet 4:13; compare Mt 5:11,12)."

Joy versus Happiness. Joanie Yoder¹⁸⁹ writes about joy verse happiness. She writes:

"Mark was 21 and dependent on drugs. Finding happiness was his big goal in life, a goal that had eluded him. Once, while talking with our family, his frustration erupted: "Look, all I want in life is happiness. I want to feel happy. Is that asking too much?" Sadly, Mark was asking far too little of life. What he really was seeking, but hadn't realized, was not happiness but joy. He couldn't accept that real joy is a fruit of something, or Someone, much greater than happiness. He came very close to Jesus Christ-close enough to taste the life that results in the joy he so deeply craved. But eventually he walked away, only to remain unhappy. According to Bible scholar Ian Barclay, "Happiness is not a biblical word at all. It is derived from the root to happen. Clearly, what happens to us will affect our happiness." Joy, on the other hand, is a fruit of God's Spirit and is not affected by good or bad happenings. Joy is not dependent on our circumstances. It is dependent, as we ourselves need to be, on God Himself who dwells within us. We should desire to have this joy in our lives, without chasing after it. Let's live and walk in the Spirit so that the fruit of joy will naturally burst forth."

The Source of Joy. Who is the source of all joy? God. God can fill us joy. **Romans 15:13 (New King James Version)** reads: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." And God will fill us with joy. **Psalms 16:11 (New International Version)** reads: "11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." Furthermore, **Psalms 5:11 (New International Version)** reads: "11 But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you." This verse tells us that God will protect us and fill you with joy if you abide in him. Moreover, **Psalms 43:4 (New International Version)** reads: "Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God." We ought to be joyful that God oversees all because his

¹⁸⁹ Yoder, Joanie, "Better than Happiness," Our Daily Bread, December 26, 1996. (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/1996/12/26/devotion.aspx>)

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judgments are righteous. **Psalm 67:4 (King James Version)** reads: “O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.” When we think of God, joy should be in our hearts and our mouths. **Psalm 71:23a (King James Version)** reads: “23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee.” The Israelites owe a special place for God in their hearts. **Psalm 105:42-44 (New International Version)** reads:

“42 For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham. 43 He brought out his people with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy; 44 he gave them the lands of the nations, and they fell heir to what others had toiled for”

Does any remember what one of the fruits of the Spirit are? Joy. **Galatians 5:22-23 (New King James Version)** reads: “22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” Essentially, joy is the result of the Holy Spirit resting in you. This is further confirmed in **Romans 14:17**. The New King James Version reads: “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

For the righteous and just, they also ought to be joyful. **Psalm 32:11 (King James Version)** reads: “Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.” **Psalm 35:27 (New King James Version)** reads: “Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, “Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.” **Proverbs 23:24 (New International Version)** reads: “The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.” **Ecclesiastes 2:26 (New King James Version)** reads: “For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight.” **Proverbs 21:15a (New King James Version)** reads: “It is a joy for the just to do justice.” **Proverbs 12:20 (New King James Version)** reads: “Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of peace have joy.”

Facing Difficulties with Joy. In the Bible, psalmists speak of difficult situations transformed into joy. **Psalm 30:5 (King James Version)** reads: “For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life:

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weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” Cindy Kasper¹⁹⁰ writes about a similar act of turning sorrow into joy. She writes:

“There are some whose souls are locked in winter. The hardness of life has frozen their hearts. Disappointed with life, they find that each day is filled with despair.... In the darkest times of our lives, God longs to turn our “mourning into dancing” (Ps.30:11). David wrote, “In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul” (Ps. 94:19). If you cry out to God in the midst of your “winter,” you can experience the joy of the Christ...today.”

Leviticus describes the different offerings required by the Israelites. Here, in Psalm 27, the psalmist offers a different type of sacrifice: joy, in spite of his circumstances. **Psalm 27:6 (King James Version)** reads: “And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.” **Psalm 132:9 (King James Version)** reads: “9Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.”

Furthermore, **Psalm 126:5 (King James Version)** reads: “5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

Sometimes we lose our joy, particularly, when we sin and are trying to re-establish a joyful relationship with God. In **Psalm 51 (New King James Version)** David expresses himself when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had an unholy union with Bathsheba. It reads:

“1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do

¹⁹⁰ Kasper, Cindy, “Always Winter,” *Our Daily Bread*, November 29, 2006. (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2006/11/29/devotion.aspx>)

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not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.”

Joanie Yoder¹⁹¹ writes about things that take away our joy. She writes:

“Why do many Christians fail to experience real joy, which is listed as a fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22? In his book *Laugh Again*, Charles Swindoll suggests three common "joy stealers"—worry, stress, and fear. He defines worry as "an inordinate anxiety about something that may or may not occur." (And it usually doesn't.) Stress, says the author, is "intense strain over a situation we can't change or control." (But God can.) And fear, according to Swindoll, is a "dreadful uneasiness over danger, evil, or pain." (And it magnifies our problems.) Swindoll says that to resist these "joy stealers" we must embrace the same confidence that Paul expressed in his letter to the Philippians. After giving thanks for the Philippian believers (1:3-5), the apostle assured them "that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (v.6). Whatever causes you worry, stress, and fear cannot ultimately keep God from continuing His work in you. With this confidence we can begin each day knowing that He is in control. We can leave everything in His hands. Resist those "joy stealers" by renewing your confidence in God each morning. Then relax and rejoice.”

James 1:2-4 (New King James Version) reads: “2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” **Psalm 118:24 (New King James Version)** reads: "This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." David McCasland¹⁹² writes about having joy each day, even during challenging times. He writes:

“During difficult times, we are tempted to become passive while waiting for a storm of life to pass. But God invites us to actively pursue the opportunities at hand instead of lamenting over what we don't have. Because the Lord has made this day, we can look past the closed doors to see people and opportunities we had previously overlooked. In celebrating their value, we will discover joy and gladness from God.”

¹⁹¹ Yoder, Joanie, “Joy Stealers,” *Our Daily Bread*, February 17, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2003/02/17/devotion.aspx>)

¹⁹² McCasland, David, “Be Glad for Today,” *Our Daily Bread*, August 31, 2004 (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2004/08/31/devotion.aspx>).

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In Closing, Habakkuk 3:18 (New King James Version) writes: “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” Joanie Yoder¹⁹³ writes about the choice to rejoice or have joy. She writes:

‘The words "I will" revealed Habakkuk's belief that he could choose his response to loss—either to sink into despair or to rejoice in God's redeeming power. His decision to rejoice wasn't a denial of the pain. It was a decision of trust based on the truth that God would remain with him to be his strength and enabler (v.19). The choice to rejoice is with us every day. To refuse to choose is itself a choice. It's an unconscious consent to be overcome rather than to be an overcomer.’

¹⁹³ Yoder, Joanie, “The Choice To Rejoice,” Our Daily Bread, October 3, 1998. (<http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/1998/10/03/devotion.aspx>).

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August 3, 2008

Bible Commentary: Hope A Summary

James Curtis
 New Commandment Baptist Church
 "HOPE"
 August 3, 2008

Introduction. In the daily devotional, Our Daily Bread, written August 24, 2007, Julie Link writes: "God has something for each of us to do, despite our limitations. Rise up and ask what He might want to do through you." This is equivalent to saying that there is hope despite our situations.

I remember many days sitting in transitional housing thinking and worrying about my next step in life. You see, I have obtained a lot of education but it is almost worthless without continuous study and a mentor who helps place you after your studies are complete. When I became homeless, my studies became discontinued due to lack of funds and lack of guidance by my mentors. Furthermore, since my studies and mentors were concentrated in Ohio and I was homeless in DC, Maryland and Atlanta, I became separated from my mentors. The mentors, that invested time and energy in me, were too distant for an effective relationship and my resources for further education were exhausted.

But thank God for Central Union Mission and my church, New Commandment Baptist Church. There, I began to re-educate myself based on the Bible and develop a new talent of teaching scripture. Now, I have been asked to teach, on several occasions, at my church and at Central Union Mission. And the rewards to teaching God's word have overflowed to benefits on my job, enhanced responsibilities at my church, and a better personal financial condition. And this hope in Christ I have can be developed in you. **Jeremiah 29:11 (New International Version)** reads "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." This is confirmed in **Proverbs 23:18**. The New International Version reads "There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off."

Definition. The Free Dictionary defines hope as "The theological virtue defined as the desire and search for a future good, difficult but not impossible to attain with God's help." This definition implies a little work on behalf of the person with hope. It states: 'the desire and search for a future good.' Therefore, if our hope is in God, we must be active seekers of Him. This is confirmed in **Hebrews 11:6**

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(**New International Version**) reads “...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

Commentary. First, Dennis De Haan¹⁹⁴ writes:

“It's when we can't do anything that *God does everything*. And herein lies a profound paradox of the Christian's experience. Faith is simultaneously an exercise of our will and the impartation of divine strength. And from that marvelous mixture spring joy and peace and an abundance of hope.

Are you in a totally helpless situation? Strength gone? All options exhausted? If you have trusted Jesus as your Savior, God will strengthen you to keep on believing. As you trust Him, He'll give you not only joy and peace, but also hope when all hope is gone.”

Bible. If you are low on hope, please be informed that you have come to the right place. God knows and hears your needs. **Psalm 9:17-19 (Amplified Bible)** reads: “18For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the expectation and hope of the meek and the poor shall not perish forever.” Furthermore, **Psalm 10:17 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: “You listen to the longings of those who suffer. You offer them hope, and you pay attention to their cries for help.” But **Matthew 6:33 (New International Version)** reminds us to: “...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

¹⁹⁴ “New Hope,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, May 21, 2004 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-06-07.shtml>)

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August 7, 2008

Bible Commentary: Overcoming

James Curtis
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"OVERCOMING"
August 7, 2008

Question. Has anyone overcome anything in here? Is anybody trying to overcome anything in here? What does it mean to overcome? Today I want to talk about being an overcomer. I will provide 3 definitions and illustrations of being an overcomer. Then we talk about how to overcome evil with good.

First definition of overcome. The Free Dictionary defines overcome as to defeat (another) in competition or conflict; conquer; David McCasland¹⁹⁵ writes overcoming personal circumstances leading victories in sports competitions and victories in life. He writes:

“In 2005, the surprising Boys Town High School Cowboys carried a perfect record into a Nebraska state semifinal football game. But more important, the players had taken giant strides toward overcoming their family backgrounds of ... abandonment, and neglect that had brought them to the safe, caring environment of Boys Town.

Their coach, Kevin Kush, believes that football is a way to build character, and says: “Victories at Boys Town are not won on a present-day athletic field. They are won years from now in cities and towns across this country when our players become productive citizens.” His team plays to win while pursuing higher goals of sportsmanship, discipline, and teamwork.

Paul held a similar long-range view of our experience as followers of Christ. In the midst of personal setbacks, he urged the Corinthians not to lose heart (2 Cor. 4:17). In spite of loss, we are to pursue the higher goals of God’s kingdom now, anticipating our eternal triumph in Christ.”

Mart De Haan¹⁹⁶ writes about the inspiration of overcomers in competitions and compares this to Jesus overcoming sin. He writes:

“Who is not inspired by the competitor who makes a comeback after being down and seemingly out of the running! The runner who stumbles while coming off the starting blocks but moves

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-13-06.shtml>

¹⁹⁶ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-16-06.shtml>

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gradually into the lead stirs the imagination of us all. The team that can come from behind in the last moments to win excites us even more than the team that constantly wins by scoring big in the first part of the game.

Jesus made the most amazing comeback the world has ever seen. After being humiliated, insulted, spit upon, whipped, beaten, and nailed to a cross, His executioners claimed victory and declared Him dead. A military guard secured His tomb. How could anyone be more down and out than that?

Yet the struggle was not over; it was only the beginning. Three days later, He rose from the grave and reappeared as the victor over sin, death, and hell—a comeback like no other in all of history.

Are you feeling out of the running today? Have you stumbled badly? Think about Jesus' suffering. Ponder His resurrection. Ask Him to give you the victory. Just imagine what He has to offer you, no matter how far down you are now!

No one has overcome like our Lord.”

Second definition of overcome. The Free Dictionary also defines overcome as to overpower; surmount opposition; be victorious; Recall the experiences of Joshua and Caleb. Remember again that Moses was chosen by the Lord to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to a land flowing with milk and honey (**Exodus 3:7-10**). The Lord commanded Moses to “send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which (he is) giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders” (**Numbers 13:1-2**). Caleb was chosen from the tribe of Judah (**Numbers 13:6**) and Joshua was chosen from the tribe of Ephraim (**Numbers 13:8, 16**). After forty days of exploring the land, they returned to the community of Israelites (**Numbers 13:25**) and confirmed that “it does flow with milk and honey” (**Numbers 13:27**). But 10 of 12 men sent to explore the land stated: “the people who live there are powerful” (**Numbers 13:28**)... and “they are stronger than we are” (**Numbers 13:31**). “And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored” (**Number 13:32**). Only Joshua and Caleb gave a good report of the land (**Numbers 14:6-9**). **Numbers 13:30 (New King James Version)** reads: “Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are

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well able to overcome it.” Here, the word, overcome means, although the obstacles seem large, the victory is still possible.

Third definition of overcome. The Free Dictionary defines overcome as to prevail over; **Genesis 32:24-28 (New International Version)** reads:

“So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.”

The **Amplified Bible** reads:

“And Jacob was left alone, and a Man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when [the Man] saw that He did not prevail against [Jacob], He touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with Him. Then He said, Let Me go, for day is breaking. But [Jacob] said, I will not let You go unless You declare a blessing upon me. [The Man] asked him, What is your name? And [in shock of realization, whispering] he said, Jacob [supplanter, schemer, trickster, swindler]!

And He said, Your name shall be called no more Jacob [supplanter], but Israel [contender with God]; for you have contended and have power with God and with men and have prevailed.”

Jacob is initially remembered as a trickster. What did Jacob do to Esau? In **Genesis 25:29-34**, Jacob tricked his brother Esau into selling his birthright from his father. What does Jacob owe to his father? In **Genesis 27:1-40**, Jacob tricks his father Isaac and gets Esau's blessing. But, now, after wrestling with God, he is not remembered in God's eyes as being a trickster. Instead, **Genesis 32:28 (New International Version)** says it best: “you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome” (or prevailed). One way to interpret this act of overcoming is that Jacob has overcome his bad name and is

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now known by a new name, Israel, which would eventually be remembered as the head of the twelve tribes of God's chosen people. Instead of relying on our own strength, Joanie Yoder¹⁹⁷ writes about being such an overcomer through Jesus. She writes:

"Jesus gave us grounds for good cheer and confidence by declaring, "I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33). He accomplished this by His death and resurrection, and secured the victory for all generations. Preacher and author Watchman Nee (1903-1972) wrote, "Oh, that we might learn the undefeatedness of God!"

According to Jesus, it's possible to experience His "undefeatedness" in every adversity. Paul testified, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37). And the apostle John wrote, "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world-our faith" (1 Jn. 5:4).

How are you facing life's trials these days? As a defeated victim? Or as an overcoming victor? Hear Jesus lovingly say, "Be of good cheer!" (Jn. 16:33). He has overcome all these things, and so can you-through Him!"

Overcoming Evil with Good. David McCasland¹⁹⁸ recalls Columbine and writes about overcoming evil with good. He writes:

"For most of my life the word *columbine* brought to mind the beautiful state flower of Colorado. But all that changed on April 20, 1999, with the tragic shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. The violent actions of two hate-filled students changed the meaning of the word for me, and for countless others.

Evil can hang a shroud of despair over any word in our lives. It may be the name of a person who has deeply hurt us, or a place where we failed, or a time when we were rejected. But God's love has dynamic power to redefine the most painful words.

In Romans 12, God gives us the antidote for the poison of evil so prevalent in our hearts and in the world around us: "Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (v.9). "Repay no one evil for evil"

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-15-99.shtml>

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-08-02.shtml>

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(v.17). "Do not avenge yourselves" (v.19). "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink" (v.20). "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (v.21).

Everything in our lives that has been defined by evil is an opportunity to seek the Lord's power to overcome it with good. There is no painful word that cannot be redefined by the goodness of God."

David Roper¹⁹⁹ also writes about overcoming evil with good. He writes:

"It is not our business to judge God's enemies. "'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Our business is to tell the world, and even those who oppose us, about His offer of salvation.

Paul gave us these instructions: "'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (vv.20-21). We must overwhelm evil opponents with love if we can, bring them to Jesus if they will come, and leave judgment with God."

Mart De Haan²⁰⁰ writes about overcoming evil with good, especially as a Christian. He writes:

"For the Christian...there are problems with trying to "get back" at someone. We lower ourselves to the level of the person who irritates us. This makes us vulnerable because we violate the principles of faith and love. Revenge appeals to our lower instincts rather than to the high strategy of goodness found in Christ.

The Word of God is clear: Getting even is never the answer. "'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Rom. 12:19). So what are we to do when someone offends us? We must continue doing good, and let God handle vengeance in His perfect time and way. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (v.21)."

In Closing. The reason we can overcome evil with good is because the good within us is greater than evil within the world. **1 John 4:1-6 (New International Version)** reads:

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-15-02.shtml>

²⁰⁰ <http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-11-22-98.shtml>

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“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them (*which is ‘every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus’*), because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.”

Therefore, we overcome or subdue evil in the spirit realm and not in the natural.

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August 14, 2008

Bible Commentary: Faith

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"FAITH": A Commentary
August 14, 2008

Today, we are going to talk about faith. First, we will consider some commentary on faith. Then we will define faith according to the dictionary and according to the Bible. Then, we will observe how several persons mentioned in the Bible displayed their faith.

Commentary. In the daily devotional, Our Daily Bread, David McCasland writes about having faith in God. He writes:

'Hudson Taylor, pioneer missionary to China, said that Jesus' words in Mark 11:22, "Have faith in God," could be translated, "Hold on to the faithfulness of God." D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, former pastor of London's Westminster Chapel, appreciated Taylor's insight and said: "Faith is holding on to the faithfulness of God and, as long as you do that, you cannot go wrong. Faith does not look at the difficulties. . . . Faith does not look at itself or at the person who is exercising it. Faith looks at God Faith is interested in God only, and it talks about God and it praises God and it extols the virtues of God. The measure of the strength of a man's faith, always, is ultimately the measure of his knowledge of God²⁰¹. . . .'

Cindy Hess Kasper, also an RBC author, encourages us to take a step out on faith. She writes:

'While we stretch our spiritual muscles, we may feel discomfort. But God assures us, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Our adequacy—our sufficiency—is found in Him (3:5). When you boldly step out in faith and obedience to God, you may be surprised at how a "good stretch" can strengthen your spiritual life!²⁰²

Furthermore, Vernon Grounds suggests we should avoid unbelief by having faith:

"Instead of...bleak unbelief, we can open our hearts and minds to have faith in God as He has revealed Himself through His Son Jesus Christ. We can have forgiveness of our sin through His

²⁰¹ "The Faithfulness of God," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, September 19, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-09-19-07.shtml>)

²⁰² "A Good Stretch," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 6, 2007. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-06-07.shtml>)

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death on the cross. This not only assures us of a blessed eternity but also fills our here-and-now experience with measureless blessings of meaning and hope. We can know by the indwelling Holy Spirit that Jesus' words in John 8:12 are true: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." As we move along on our earthly pilgrimage, we don't need to stumble in the darkness of unbelief. Instead, we can walk confidently in the light toward an eternity of unending blessedness. That's the difference faith in Jesus Christ makes²⁰³."

Dictionary Definition of Faith. The Free Dictionary defines faith as "(1) Confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or thing; (2) Belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence...[and] (3) ...The theological virtue defined as secure belief in God and a trusting acceptance of God's will²⁰⁴." Several authors compare faith based in feelings to faith based in the confidence of our salvation. Joanie Yoder, another RBC Ministries author, writes about the misguidance of 'feelings-centered faith':

"Some Christians try to live from one dramatic mountaintop experience to another. Their relationship with the Lord is based on their feelings at the moment. They go from Bible conferences to seminars to Bible studies, trying to maintain an emotional high....What's an effective antidote for a feelings-centered faith? According to the apostle Paul in Colossians 2, being Christ-centered is the answer. Having received Christ Jesus by faith, we are instructed to continue to "walk in Him" by faith (v.6) through both the highs and lows of life. By walking in close fellowship with Him each day, we become "rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith" (v.7). We grow steadily into maturity as we focus on Christ and what He has done for us, and not on our feelings. Mountaintop experiences can be beneficial, but nothing is more profitable than an ongoing, Christ-centered life of faith.²⁰⁵"

²⁰³ "The Difference Faith Makes," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, January 20, 2006. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-01-20-06.shtml>)

²⁰⁴ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/faith>

²⁰⁵ "Christ-Centered Faith," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 25, 2003. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-25-03.shtml>)

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Herbert Vander Lugt also writes about the importance of salvation-based faith: “Genuine saving faith...is based on the truth of God's Word....A Bible-instructed faith focuses on Christ-His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Only that kind of faith can bring salvation and comfort²⁰⁶.”

Biblical Definition of Faith. Hebrews 11:1 (King James Version and New King Version) reads: “1Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” But what does that mean? Hebrews 11:1 (Amplified Bible) reads: “1NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]. Versus 1-3 of the New International Version reads:

“1Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. 2This is what the ancients were commended for. 3By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible....

Vernon Grounds, a RBC Ministries author, writes about faith in the unseen. He writes “Today, some are seeking high-voltage experiences to buttress their faith. But ..., blessed are those who believe without having seen (Jn. 20:29). Blessed are those for whom God's Word is sufficient²⁰⁷.”

Displaying Faith. Hebrews 11 talks about faithful men in the Bible—We will focus on the lives and faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob.

(1) Abel. Foremost, let's talk about Abel and Cain. Who are they? The sons (or the 1st generational descendent) of Adam and Eve. What did they do differently? Abel brought forth better offerings than Cain. Genesis 4:1-5 (New International Version) reads what?

“1 Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." 2 Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor.”

²⁰⁶ “An Instructed Faith,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, May 6, 2000. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-05-06-00.shtml>)

²⁰⁷ “Faith Now, Sight Later,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, March 13, 1999. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-03-13-99.shtml>)

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The Bible describes Abel as faithful. **Hebrews 11:4 (New International Version)** reads: “4By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings....”

(2) Enoch. Second, let’s talk about Enoch. Who is Enoch? Enoch is the name of a son of Cain (**Genesis 4:17**) and also the name a descendent of Seth. Who is Seth? Seth is the third son (but still the 1st generational descendent) of Adam and Eve. Enoch is the great, great, great grandson (or the 5th generational descendent) of Seth (or the 6th generational descendent of Adam and Eve). Who is the son of Enoch, Seth’s descendent, and why is he significant? Methuselah (**Genesis 5:21-27**). He lived longer than any other man. Getting back Enoch, Seth’s descendent, Enoch is the great, great, great grandson of Seth and the 6th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. What was special about Enoch? He never died. **Genesis 5:18-24 (New International Version)** reads:

“18 When Jared (the great, great grandson of Seth) had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. 19 And after he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. 20 Altogether, Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. 21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.”

The Bible describes Enoch as faithful. **Hebrews 11:5 (New International Version)** reads: “5By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.”

(3) Noah. Noah is the great (6 times) grandson (or 8th generational descendent) of Seth (or 9th generational descendent of Adam and Eve). Noah was special in the eyes of God. **Genesis 6:5-8,11-14 (New International Version)** reads:

“5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." 8 But

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Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD....11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. 14 So make yourself an ark...."

The Bible describes Noah as faithful. **Hebrews 11:7 (New International Version)** reads: "7By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."

(4) Abraham. What is the original name of Abraham? Abram. Abram is the 10th generational descendent of Noah (**Genesis 11:10-32**). Abram is also the 19th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. The Lord made him the father of many nations. **Genesis 12:1-4 (King James Version)** reads:

"1Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. 4So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran."

The Bible describes Abram or Abraham as faithful. **Hebrews 11:8 (New International Version)** reads: "8By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going."

For a long time, Abram had no children. **Genesis 16:1-4,15-16 (New International Version)** reads:

"1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian

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maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived...

15 So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.”

Genesis 17:1-8 (New International Version) reads:

‘1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. 2 I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 21:1-4 (New International Version) reads:

“1 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. 3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him.”

The Bible describes Abraham again as faithful. **Hebrews 11:11-12 (New International Version)** reads:

“11By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. 12And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.”

Who is Isaac again? The son Abraham and Sarah had at old age. Isaac is also the 20th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. What happened between Abraham and Isaac? God told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. **Genesis 22:1-18 (New International Version)** reads:

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“1 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" 8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together. 9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." 15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

For the 3rd time, the Bible describes Abraham as faithful. **Hebrews 11:17-19 (New International Version)** reads:

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“17By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."19Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.”

(5) Jacob. Who is Jacob? Jacob was the son of Isaac and the twin brother of Esau. Jacob is also the 21th generational descendent of Adam and Eve. **Genesis 25:21-27 (New International Version)** reads:

“21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." 24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. 27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.”

What did Jacob due to Esau? Jacob tricked his brother Esau into selling his birthright from his father (**Genesis 25:29-34**). What does Jacob due to his father? Jacob tricks his father Isaac and gets Esau’s blessing. Read **Genesis 27:1-40**. Note that an angel of God changed Jacob’s name to what? Israel. (**Genesis 32:24-28**). The sons of Jacob are the foundation of the tribes of Israel. Who are tribes of Israel? Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. **Genesis 49:1-28 (New International Version)** describes their blessings from Jacob. Jacob claims Joseph’s sons as his own, thereby; Joseph’s sons got blessings directly from Jacob as they would get from their own father (**Genesis 48:5**). The Bible describes Jacob as faithful. **Hebrews 11:21 (New International Version)** reads: “21By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.”

In Closing. Vernon Grounds writes about unfailling faith:

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“Many of us talk about loss and suffering and argue about why evil things happen to good people. But it's quite different to deal victoriously with the painful experiences that happen to us personally. What we really need in the teeth of affliction is not a plausible explanation but the ability to endure without emotional collapse or spiritual bitterness. We need the sustaining confidence that enables us to believe in God's love and wisdom (Job 1:21; 2:10). Pray for an unfaltering faith that stands strong under life's greatest pressures²⁰⁸.”

²⁰⁸ “Unfaltering Faith,” Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, August 25, 2000. (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-25-00.shtml>)

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August 27, 2008

Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons

**Minutes from Deacons Meeting
(and Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC)
New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary**

August 27, 2008

Attendees: Megan Hovis, Janet Slaughter, Clarence Thomas, Etta L. Washington, James Curtis, Mary Hawes, Debbie P. Gordon, Evelyn Younger, Beevenell Robinson, Shirley Beynum; and Deacons
Speaker: Pastor Stephen E. Tucker

1. **Welcome:** Pastor Stephen Tucker welcomed attendees at 7:10 PM.
2. **Minutes from Last Meeting:** Minutes from March 2008 meeting were distributed.
3. **Old Business:** None
4. **New Business:** Devotion was led by Deacon Mary Cunningham, Deacon Eleanor Mitchell, and Deacon Freddie Holman. Pastor Stephen Tucker presided over the meeting with Deacons and trainees.
 - A. Pastor Tucker asked for special prayer for Florence Tucker (seizure) and Jobs Partnership (house for sale withdrawn). Pastor Tucker also mentioned LaSharon Bartley was no longer working for Jobs Partnership or NCBC.
 - B. Pastor Tucker expressed that trainees would start journey toward ordination. Some trainees were sent ordination books.
 - C. Individual Deacons teamed up individual trainees to go over questions from the ordination book.
5. **Announcements:** Trainees should know the next 40 questions before the next meeting.
6. **Date and Time of Next Meeting:** To Be Announced
7. **Meeting adjourned** at 8:00 PM.

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September 24, 2008

Leadership: Training for New Elders and Deacons

The following are the **Worship Leaders, Speakers and Preachers** scheduled for the 8:30 AM Service on Sundays at New Commandment Baptist Church, October 5, 2008 through November 30, 2008:

October 5, 2008

Worship Leader: Loria Weaver
 Speaker: Joyce Milton
 Preacher: Willie Hill

October 12, 2008

Worship Leader: Mary Cunningham
 Speaker: Sandra Carter
 Preacher: Patsy Chapman

October 19, 2008

Worship Leader: Allen Lemon
 Speaker: Freddie Holman
 Preacher: George Bartley

October 26, 2008

Worship Leader: Joyce Milton
 Speaker: Loria Weaver
 Preacher: Nathaniel Harpe

November 2, 2008

Worship Leader: Gladys Hardy
 Speaker: Iva Harpe
 Preacher: Theodora Chapman

November 9, 2008

Worship Leader: Mary Sanders
 Speaker: Eleanor Mitchell
 Preacher: Robyne Hill

November 16, 2008

Worship Leader: Freddie Holman
 Speaker: Allen Lemon
 Preacher: George Bartley

November 23, 2008

Worship Leader: Sandra Carter
 Speaker: Mary Cunningham
 Preacher: Patsy Chapman

November 30, 2008

Worship Leader: Eleanor Mitchell
 Speaker: Mary Sanders
 Preacher: Willie Hill

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 257-9803 or jcurtis@missiondc.org. Thank you for your service and support of the 8:30 AM worship service.

Sincerely,
 James Curtis

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November 17, 2008:

Training: New Elders and Deacons

Minutes from Deacons Meeting
(and Training for New Elders and Deacons at NCBC)
 New Commandment Baptist Church Sanctuary

November 17, 2008

Attendees: Debbie P. Gordon, Janet Slaughter, Shirley B. Beynum, James Curtis, Mary Hawes, Clarence Thomas, Beevenell Robinson, Evelyn Younger; and Deacons: Mary C. Sanders, Allen Lemon, Freddie L. Holman, Mary G. Cunningham, Blanche L. Kinney, Roberta Tucker, Loria Weaver, Evelyn Holman, and Eleanor G. Mitchell

Speaker: Pastor Stephen Tucker and Deacon Roberta Tucker

1. Welcome: Deacon Roberta Tucker welcomed attendees at 7:35 PM

2. Old Business: None

3. New Business: Devotion was led by Deacon Allen Lemon, Trainee James Curtis, Trainee Debbie Gordon, and Deacon Mary Cunningham. Deacon Roberta Tucker and Pastor Stephen Tucker presided over the meeting with Deacons and trainees.

A. Deacon Roberta Tucker and Pastor Tucker provided the following handouts:

- i. "New Commandment Baptist Church Deacons/Officers Meeting November 17, 2008 Agenda"
- ii. "Government of the District of Columbia Real Property Tax Bill"
- iii.. "The Village Voice: Community News for the Park Morton Community, Volume 1, Issue I, November 4, 2008"

B. Deacon Tucker emphasized the importance of sitting together in the first three rows at meetings and at Sunday Services.

C. Deacon Roberta Tucker received updates on the sick and shut-in (Deacon L. Meade, Deacon A. Grant, Deacon J. Davis, and Deacon C. Derricott).

D. Pastor Stephen Tucker discussed the topic: "You are special."

- i. Pastor Tucker read from Matthew 5:43-45: love your enemies, bless them that curse you. God has called us to a higher level. We are here to set the direction of the church.
- ii. Note that when Pastor Tucker attends other churches, they are 'on automatic.' We are regarded by other churches as 'warm.' We have to be on our game.
- iii. We have to adopt a new attitude. We must show God we are willing to change: "Your greatest blessing comes from overcoming your greatest obstacle."

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E. Pastor Tucker discussed preparations for **Officer's Day on Sunday, December 7, 2008**. Note that there is a \$50.00 commitment for this year's Officer's Day and do not forget to bring a flashlight. Further note that there will be no second service for Officer's Day due to a walk-in day at Redeemer Church. However, there will be a one-day **Revival on Friday, December 5, 2008** and an **Ordination Service on Saturday, December 6, 2008**. Ordination will be for Billy High, John Davis and trainees, chosen based on the criteria of servanthood, faithfulness, commitment (attendance) and tests.

F. Pastor Tucker discussed financial stewardship. Based on minimum wage comparison, 40-45 members are tithing. Note this presents an area of concern when we consider pressing bills:

- i.** A mortgage has changed to \$700.00 a month (from 4 % to 6 % interest)
- ii.** Note that a "Real Property Tax Bill" has been voided (see handout). However, the attorney's fees are \$5000.00. A real property tax exemption has been given to the 650 Park Road property as of 2005 (We are requesting a refund for taxes paid)
- iii.** Other bills include an accountant's bill of \$4000.00.
- iv.** A balance \$108,000.00 is left on the 633 Park Road property.

G. Pastor Tucker discussed changes and challenges. Foremost, the morning service needs better attendance. Second, Tiffany is leaving to North Carolina in January 2009. A search for a Minister of Music is under way.

H. The first edition of the church newsletter (The Village Voice) has been printed (see handout).

I. For the Officer's Christmas Party on December 19, 2008, invitations will be distributed, a menu will be set, and we must bring a \$10 unisex gift.

J. A \$10.00 monthly assessment was collected from each Deacon and trainee who had not already paid. A total of \$140.00 was collected.

4. Announcements: Dates to remember include:

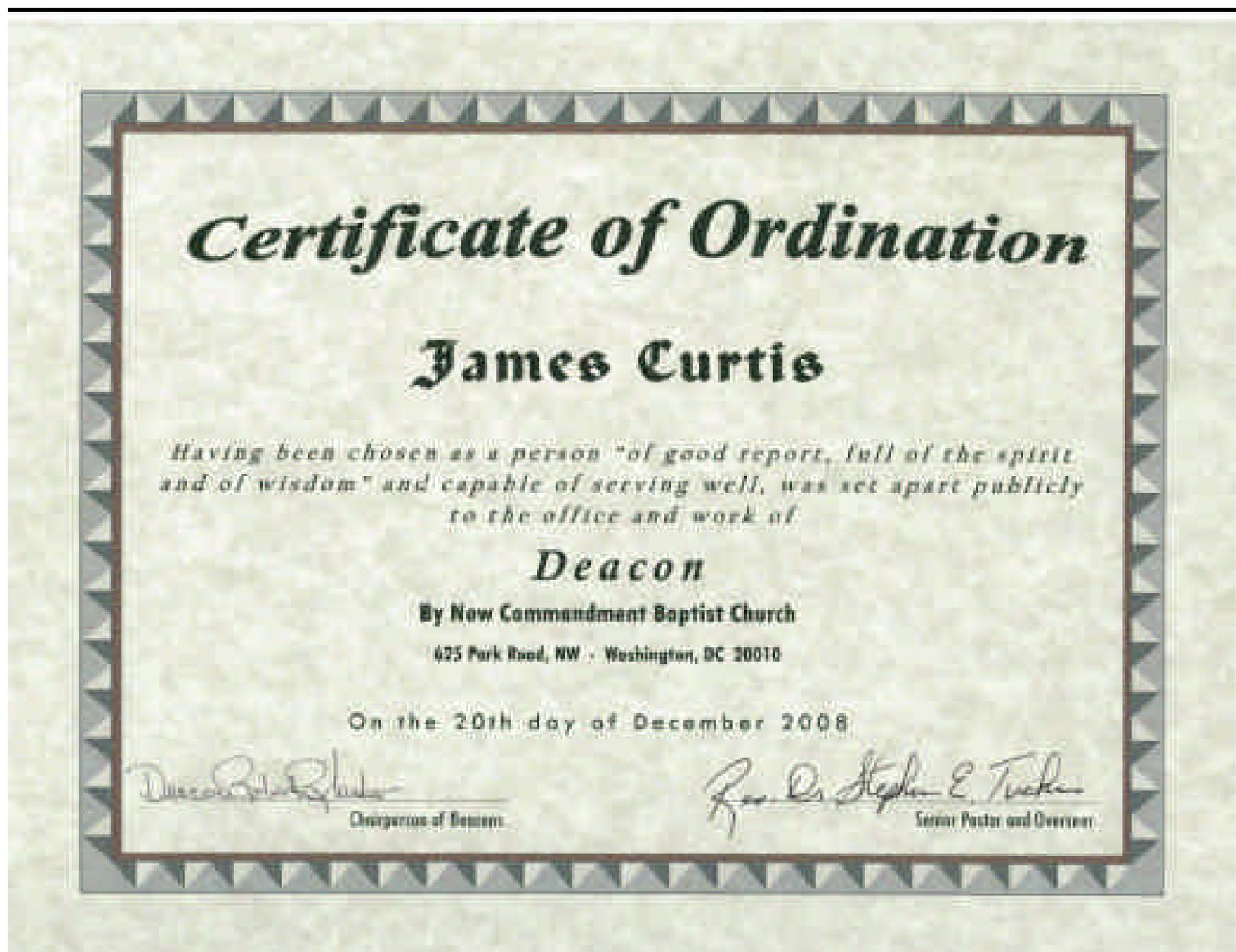
- A.** National Day of Care (February 5, 2009); the HIV ministry will be highlighted.
- B.** Trip to Richmond (April 22-24, 2009)
- C.** Month Ministry Birthday Party (December 13, 2008)
- D.** Officer's Christmas Party (December 19, 2008; 7 -10 PM)
- E.** Thanksgiving Service and Dinner (November 27, 2008)
- F.** Holy Communion (November 23, 2008). Please bring your gloves and wear black and white. Baptism will take place before Holy Communion.

5. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

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December 20, 2008

Leadership: Certificate of Ordination of James Edward Curtis Jr



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Encouragement from The Holy Bible: James 1:12 

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December 28, 2008

Bible Commentary: Service

James Curtis
NCBC Sunday School
"Service"
December 28, 2008

Welcome. (name, assistant bookkeeper at CUM, hold 3 college degrees (HU, OSU) was working on fourth, also studied at RU, UMCP and UT, taught college for a living, had a nice car, rented a townhome, productive member of the community.

THEN after experiencing emotional trauma, became separated from my family, homeless 3 years, jobless 4 years, substantial debt for 7 years - more than 100K.

BUT NOW - after participating in the STP program at CUM (intake, clothing room, kitchen, maintenance admin), graduating in 2006 and growing in a strong church, I have some housing (at least temporarily), 1st job since teaching college in 2002 (held it for over 2 years), less than 15K in debt, and an active member of NCBC (culinary ministry volunteer, greeter, 8 AM Service coordinator, Men's Ministry co-leader, and Deacon).

ESSENTIALLY, I am a former sinner that is under the grace of God. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (King James Version)** reads "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." To make it personal...a fornicator and a drunkard and slanderer, and such **was** I. But I am washed, I am sanctified, and I am justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of my God. And I have become a child of God. For **John 1:12 (New International Version)**: "Yet to **all** who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (KJV reads: sons of God). Moreover, I have accepted the calling of God to be in service to him as a Deacon. And I am humbled by this call. **1 Timothy 1:12 (New International Version)** reads: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service."

Today, I have four questions for you:

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1. Do you know your purpose? Do any of you have any responsibilities? If so, you have dominion or authority over the people and/or things you are responsible for. It is the same as saying God has given you dominion over a kingdom. Many of us look at the circumstances of where we were or where we are, and do not realize we are kings and queens, but **1 Peter 2:9 (New International Version)** reads “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.” Even though we are royal and chosen, the Bible says our purpose is to serve God. **Psalm 2:10-11 (New International Version)** reads: “Therefore, you kings (and queens), be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. *Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.*” Even though God has given you a divine appointment, he has commanded us to live a servant lifestyle.

Furthermore, in fear of the last days, we should serve him in the purest way of life that we can humanly achieve. **2 Peter 3:10-12 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: “The day of the Lord's return will surprise us like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a loud noise, and the heat will melt the whole universe. Then the earth and everything on it will be seen for what they are. Everything will be destroyed. *So you should serve and honor God by the way you live.*” Note that we are reminded about the power of our sinful nature in Romans. **Romans 7:21-23 (New International Version)** reads: “So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind.” But the next chapter of Romans declares we are more than conquerors of our sinful nature. **Romans 8:37-39 (New International Version)** reads:

“...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Therefore, we, who are imperfect yet a royal and chosen people, can effectively serve God by living on a Christ-centered life.

Furthermore, we learn that our purpose is service to God from the three accounts in the Bible when the devil tempted Christ. **Matthew 4:1-11 (New International Version)** reads:

“1Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of

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God, tell these stones to become bread." 4Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" 5Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" 7Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"8Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."10Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only." 11Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him." (This is stated again in the same manner in **Luke 4:1-13**).

Through the devil's temptation of Christ while He was hungry, the devil's test of Christ's power, and the devil's test of Christ's dominion and authority, that our duty is to serve God despite the circumstances.

Even Moses learned his purpose of service at the burning bush. **Exodus 3:1-12 (New International Version)** reads:

'1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." 4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." 6 Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing

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with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” 12 So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

Here, Moses learned of his purpose to deliver the Israelites out of bondage and to serve God at the holy mountain. Whether one is a king, queen, Moses—the deliverer of the Israelites out of bondage to the Egyptians—or even Jesus—the deliverer of man out of bondage of sin, we learn that our purpose is to serve God.

2. What is service? The Free Dictionary²⁰⁹ defines service as “Employment in duties or work for another; Work done for others as an occupation or business; Assistance; help; work done by one person or group that benefits another; the activity of contributing to the fulfillment of a need or furtherance of an effort or purpose; (something) performed for the benefit of the public or its institutions.”

Oswald Chamber²¹⁰ writes about service and provides a spiritual definition of service. He defines service as:

“...the overflow which pours from a life filled with love and devotion. But strictly speaking, there is no *call* to that. Service is what I bring to the relationship and is the reflection of my identification with the nature of God. Service becomes a natural part of my life. God brings me into the proper relationship with Himself so that I can understand His call, and then I serve Him on my own out of a motivation of absolute love. Service to God is the deliberate love-gift of a nature that has heard the call of God. Service is an expression of my nature, and God’s call is an expression of His nature. Therefore, when I receive His nature and hear His call, His divine voice resounds throughout His nature and mine and the two become one in service. The Son of God reveals Himself in me, and out of devotion to Him service becomes my everyday way of life.”

²⁰⁹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/service>

²¹⁰ Chamber, Oswald, “The Call of the Natural Life.” My Upmost for His Highest, January 17, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?day=17&month=01>)

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Missionary service. If you work at a mission, like me, or participate in ministry at church, you are essentially serving God by doing the work of a missionary. Do you agree or disagree? Oswald Chamber defines what it means to serve God as a missionary. He²¹¹ writes:

‘A missionary is someone sent by Jesus Christ just as He was sent by God. The great controlling factor is not the needs of people, but the command of Jesus. The source of our inspiration in our service for God is behind us, not ahead of us. The tendency today is to put the inspiration out in front— to sweep everything together in front of us and make it conform to our definition of success. But in the New Testament the inspiration is put behind us, and is the Lord Jesus Himself. The goal is to be true to Him— to carry out *His* plans.

Personal attachment to the Lord Jesus and to His perspective is the one thing that must not be overlooked. In missionary work the great danger is that God’s call will be replaced by the needs of the people, to the point that human sympathy for those needs will absolutely overwhelm the meaning of being sent by Jesus. The needs are so enormous, and the conditions so difficult, that every power of the mind falters and fails. We tend to forget that the one great reason underneath all missionary work is not primarily the elevation of the people, their education, nor their needs, but is first and foremost the command of Jesus Christ— "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . ." (**Matthew 28:19**).

When looking back on the lives of men and women of God, the tendency is to say, "What wonderfully keen and intelligent wisdom they had, and how perfectly they understood all that God wanted!" But the keen and intelligent mind behind them was the mind of God, not human wisdom at all. We give credit to human wisdom when we should give credit to the divine guidance of God being exhibited through childlike people who were "foolish" enough to trust God’s wisdom and His supernatural equipment.’

In summary, we have defined service as something done that benefits someone else, the work done after answering the call of God, and the work done on the missionary field.

²¹¹ Chamber, Oswald, "What is a Missionary?." My Upmost for His Highest, October 26, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?day=26&month=10>)

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3. What is your level of enthusiasm for service? Another author²¹² reminds us about the importance of enthusiasm for serving God. He writes:

‘Sometimes when we’re asked to serve the Lord in a particular way, we reluctantly accept, but we do so only out of a sense of obligation. When that happens, we need to pray for a willing spirit so that we can "serve the Lord with gladness" (Psalm 100:2).’

When you are called to serve in the Church of God, the Bible says that God desires a willing disposition of the mind. **1 Peter 5:1-2 (New International Version)** reads:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing...

Oswald Chamber²¹³ recommends serving the Lord until you are physically exhausted from serving him. He writes:

‘Until others learn to draw on the life of the Lord Jesus directly, they will have to draw on His life through you. You must literally be their source of supply, until they learn to take their nourishment from God. We owe it to God to be our best for His lambs and sheep, as well as for Him.

Have you delivered yourself over to exhaustion because of the way you have been serving God? If so, then renew and rekindle your desires and affections. Examine your reasons for service. Is your source based on your own understanding or is it grounded on the redemption of Jesus Christ? Continually look back to the foundation of your love and affection and remember where your Source of power lies. You have no right to complain, "O Lord, I am so exhausted." He saved and sanctified you to exhaust you. Be exhausted for God.’

Remember, God desires enthusiastic service. So serve him gladly, willingly, until exhaustion.

4. Are you a leader? If so, are you a servant leader? Another author writes about being an effective servant leader. Herbert Vander Lugt²¹⁴ writes:

²¹² Van Gorder, Paul, "Glad Service," Our Daily Bread, April 18, 2006, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-04-18-06.shtml>)

²¹³ Chamber, Oswald, "Are You Exhausted Spiritually?" My Upmost for His Highest, February 9, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/utmost/index.php?day=09&month=02>)

²¹⁴ Vander Lugt, Herbert. "Submissive Leadership," Our Daily Bread, February 23, 2008, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-02-23-04.shtml>)

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“Good leaders don't rely on domineering self-assertion—not at home, nor in church, nor in business. Rather, they balance self-assertiveness (which isn't wrong in itself) with the principle of submitting to one another (**Ephesians 5:21**). They listen respectfully, admit when they're wrong, show a willingness to change, and mix gentleness with firmness.”

In order to be a good servant leader, you must first follow. David Egner²¹⁵ writes about the temptation of leaders to have selfish aims. He writes: “Two options come with leadership: the temptation to serve yourself, and the opportunity to serve the people you lead....If the Lord ever places you in a position of leadership, ask for His help to be a leader who serves.” This is confirmed in **Matthew 20:26-28**. The New International Version reads “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (This is stated again in the same manner in **Mark 10:43-45**).

Consider the example of Elijah and Elisha. Elisha proved that, in order to be a good servant leader, you must first follow. But first, who is Elisha? Elisha was a man of God who became the attendant or understudy of Elijah. **1 Kings 19:15-21 (New International Version)** reads:

“The LORD said to him (Elijah), “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.” So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. “Let me kiss my father and mother good-by,” he said, “and then I will come with you.” “Go back,” Elijah replied. “What have I done to you?” So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his attendant”

²¹⁵Egner, David, “A Leader Who Serves,” *Our Daily Bread*, June 17, 2002, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-06-17-02.shtml>).

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Note that Baal, mentioned in verse 18, was a god of another nation and a false god for the people of Israel (**Numbers 25:3**)

Now, who is Elijah? Elijah was a powerful man of God or prophet. He prophesied a drought to the King of Israel (**1 Kings 17:1**). He heard from the Lord and was fed by ravens (**1 Kings 17: 2-6**). He fed a widow, her son and himself, everyday, with “only a handful of flour in a jar and little oil in a jug” (**1 Kings 17:12**). He revived the ill son of the widow after he stopped breathing (**1 Kings 17:17-23**). He commanded the slaughter of the prophets of Baal and Asherah (**1 Kings 18:19, 40**), which led to heavy rain and the end of drought (**1 Kings 18:41-45**). Note that it was while Elijah was fleeing Jezebel, the wife of the King of Israel who threatened his life after killing the false prophets, that the Lord commanded Elijah to anoint Elisha to succeed him as prophet (**1 Kings 19:15-21**).

Now that we know Elisha is the follower and successor of Elijah the prophet, we also know that Elisha became an excellent follower of Elijah. **2 Kings 2:11-15 (New International Version)** reads:

“As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart. He picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Then he took the cloak that had fallen from him and struck the water with it. “Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over. The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, “The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.” And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him.”

The accounts in the Bible of Elijah and Elisha demonstrate the importance of service, both, before obtaining leadership roles and when fulfilling leadership obligations.

Conclusion. In closing, we have learned that (1) our purpose is to serve God whether you are a king, queen, Moses or even Jesus; (2) service is something that benefits others in fulfillment of the call of God; (3) God requires enthusiastic service, which is done gladly, willingly, until near exhaustion; and (4) we are to be servant leaders.

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Dennis Fisher²¹⁶ writes: “In the believer's heart rages a spiritual war between sin and righteousness. We can obey the slave-master of sin, or we can say yes to the God of grace who has made us free (Romans 6:16; John 8:34). Our greatest liberty lies in serving the One who created and redeemed us.”

Whether you work for the government, a business, or a church, we are all providing service to the one God. **1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (New International Version)** reads: “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.” This is reiterated in **1 Peter 4:7-10**. The New International Version reads:

“The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”

And I will close with this good news: there are rewards for serving Him. **Proverbs 22:4 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: “Respect and serve the LORD! Your reward will be wealth, a long life, and honor.” **Ephesians 6:7-8 (New International Version)** reads: “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does...” **Psalm 135:14 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: ‘The LORD will bring justice and show mercy to all who serve him.’ The question that remains is: Will you serve Him today?

²¹⁶ Fisher, Dennis, “A Tale Of Two Slaves,” *Our Daily Bread*, December 20, 2005, (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-12-20-05.shtml>).

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January 19, 2009

Administration: National Day of Service

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August 3, 2009

Bible Commentary: The Good News

 The Good News

My situation is not in my control no matter how much one or some try to convince me otherwise

Genesis 1:27

2 Peter 2:9

Exodus 7 - 14

Proverbs 21:1

Romans 3:23-25

Ephesians 2:8

... I have played the fool...

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September 19, 2009

Bible Commentary: I am Growing in God

“I am Growing in God”
James Edward Curtis Jr.²¹⁷

Many people use [Exodus 20:1-17](#) or “The Ten Commandments” as a foundation for common moral conduct.

A person once said that the first four commandments describe the ways in which a man should honor God. He also said the latter commands are the way in which we should deal with fellow men. I believe I have attempted to honor God with my tithes and offerings ([Malachi 3:10](#); [Psalm 20:1-3](#)). I believe I have also attempted to honor God by attending Sunday morning service ([Hebrews 10:25](#)).

I also believe I have attempted to honor God in the way I deal with fellow man. I have attempted to assist my family members, non-family members and various ministries, financially, in their times of need ([Exodus 20:12](#)). I have paid my taxes ([Matthew 22:21](#)) and I have attempted to make payments on my financial debts ([1 Peter 4:10](#) NKJV). When experiencing difficulties, I have remained collected ([Luke 21:10, 16-19](#); [Matthew 10:17](#); [Matthew 18:15-17](#)) and sought the counsel of others ([Proverbs 11:14](#); [James 5:15](#)).

I was even found worthy to use my gifts to serve as a Deacon ([1 Timothy 3:8-9, 12](#)), along side other male and female Deacons.

In the end, it is the grace of God that will carry me through ([Romans 3:23-24](#); [Ephesians 2:8-9](#); [Revelations 22:21](#)).

²¹⁷ I, James Edward Curtis Jr, am the sole author of “I am Growing in God”

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September 2009 – April 2012

The Internet Church: The Enduring Faith Center
A Ministry of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation

<http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>

The Internet Site of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation®
James Edward Curtis Jr, 1st Official, Founder, Owner & President

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James Edward Curtis Jr

Growth in God @ Yahoo! Video

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The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
Dynamic & Divine Education & Service of the Generations

Preamble
Chronology
Scope & Faith
Mailing Address
Directory
Jesus Saves

Chronology of the James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation ©

Inspiration

In 1986, James Edward Curtis Jr (hereinafter "James") received formal baptism. In 1990, James Edward Curtis Jr was inspired by the Holy Ghost to etch several ideas concerning a vision of The Education Foundation ©, which currently functions under the titles of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation © & The James Edward Curtis Jr Foundation ©. The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation (currently functioning under the titles of The James Edward Curtis Jr Foundation & The Education Foundation) functions under the acronym of 'EF ©'.

Correspondence

In 1993, James hired a printing company to make some business cards & James began seeking counsel concerning James' vision. Simultaneously, while balancing the rigors of undergraduate educational pursuits, James diligently attended meetings & seminars with community leaders, including US Senators & national business leaders, in order to refine the plans for implementing James' vision. James also pursued graduate-level education to solidify James' capacity to implement the vision. Inspired by informal baptism of the Holy Ghost & advanced training in faith-based service, James released a strategic plan in 2001 & James began communicating revisions of strategic plans to associates, church leaders, government leaders & financial industry professionals.

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Furthermore, in 2002, James composed an internet site* dedicated to James' vision. In 2009, James composed a 2nd internet site** dedicated to describing the vision. Two videos***, created by James at 3rd & 4th internet sites, are linked to <http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>, which is the current internet site describing James' vision.

EF Refined

In 2009, James wrote his 1st comprehensive Potential Business Plan © for services & facilities of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation. James also entitled the financial support slogan as 'Help Me Help Us Help Others ©'.

In 2010, James was inspired to name the potential client services facilities The Enduring Faith Center © with the following service slogan: 'Divine Subsistence & Instruments for Ascension for the Socially Marginalized & Mentally Malnourished ©'. Furthermore, James reconfigured former strategic plans into a slide show entitled 'January 2010 Summary ©'.

Faith

By the power of the Holy Ghost & faith in Jesus, James is equipped with training concerning divinity, education credentials & fundamental wisdom concerning individuals in need. James remains grateful for the presence of the Holy Ghost & the goodness, grace & mercy of Jesus in the life of James. James prays daily for the faith condition and financial condition of individuals. James also prays for a significant impact of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation on the faith & social conditions of the community, the nation, the world & the eternal kingdom.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the scope of the faith of James Edward Curtis Jr

* In 2002, the 1st internet site of the James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation was launched due to the generous free internet space provided by Yahoo Geocities and was discontinued.
** In 2009, The 2nd and current internet site of the James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation was launched due to the generous free internet space of Microsoft Office Live.
*** In 2009-2010, The 1st video & 2nd video of the James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation were launched due to the high-quality software from Windows Movie Maker, AT&T wireless internet services, ACER computing hardware owned by James Edward Curtis Jr & generous free internet-video space provided by Yahoo Video.

Furthermore, the 1st video & 2nd video of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation are linked to the current internet site of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation due to the generous free internet space of Microsoft Office Live.

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Furthermore, the 1st video & 2nd video of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation are linked to the current internet site of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation due to the generous free internet space of Microsoft Office Live.

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Timeline of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation

- 1990 1st vision of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 1993 1st verbal communication of the vision of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2001 1st email communication of strategies of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2002 1st internet site* of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2009 2nd internet site** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2009 1st video*** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2009 1st Potential Business Plan of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 Titring the potential service facilities of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation as 'The Enduring Faith Center'
- 2010 2nd video*** of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
- 2010 Reconfiguration of the strategies of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation, entitled 'January 2010 Summary'
- ? The manifestation of the vision of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation? decide today! [Click here](#) & write James today!



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James Edward Curtis Jr
1st Official

Founder (1990 - present)
Owner (1990 - present)
President (1990 - present)

[Click here](#) to learn more about the scope of the faith of James Edward Curtis Jr

Testimony of the Scripture

³Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
⁴Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
⁵Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
⁶Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
⁷Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
⁸Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God...

¹¹Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you...

¹²Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven...

Matthew 5:3-12, The Holy Bible

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Jesus Saves

The Scope & Faith of James Edward Curtis Jr



James Edward Curtis Jr, President (1990 - present)
E-mail: firstcorinthians1313@officeliveusers.com

James Edward Curtis Jr was born February 14, 1973 and founded The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation 20 years ago with the following objectives in mind: to serve others (Galatians 5:13c); to be present in the kingdom, and see others present in the kingdom (Revelation 21:1a); to be filled by the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:4a); to be blessed with the wisdom of Solomon, and to bless others with divinely received wisdom (1 Kings 3:39a); to be blessed with divine gifts and to bless others with the fruits of divine gifts (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 1 Corinthians 14:1); to be constantly ascending in the grace and blessings of Jesus, and to witness others ascending in grace (Romans 3:23-24; Genesis 28:12b; Deuteronomy 28:3-12); and to be content with enduring forms of happiness (Philippians 4:12).

Through the blessings of the goodness, grace and mercy from Jesus, James Edward Curtis Jr developed an impressive credentials, which include: faith-based service (Hebrews 10:25; James 2:26); consistent faith offerings and tithing (Malachi 3:10; Psalm 20:1-3); faith-based education (2 Timothy 2:15); faith-based working papers and presentations (Exodus 34:27; Proverbs 11:14b); community service (Galatians 5:13c); employment experience (Genesis 2:15); academic education (2 Timothy 2:15a); academic working papers, publications and presentations (Exodus 34:27; Proverbs 11:14b); and numerous acknowledgements (Hebrews 11:6b).

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Through the blessings of the goodness, grace and mercy from Jesus, James Edward Curtis Jr developed an impressive credentials, which include: faith-based service (Hebrews 10:25; James 2:26); consistent faith offerings and tithing (Malachi 3:10; Psalm 20:1-3); faith-based education (2 Timothy 2:15); faith-based working papers and presentations (Exodus 34:27; Proverbs 11:14b); community service (Galatians 5:13c); employment experience (Genesis 2:15); academic education (2 Timothy 2:15a); academic working papers, publications and presentations (Exodus 34:27; Proverbs 11:14b); and numerous acknowledgements (Hebrews 11:6b).

The credentials of James Edward Curtis Jr include:

FAITH-BASED SERVICE*

2009, City of Zion Church, Laurel, MD
Tithing Associate

2006 - , SOGO Ministries, Washington, DC
Pastor's Assistant
Tithing Member

2004 - , New Commandment Baptist Church, Washington, DC
Ordained Deacon/Deacon Ministry Member
Scribe of Deacon Training Class
Trustee
Finance Committee Member
Morning Service Administrator
Greeter's Ministry Member
Men's Ministry Co-Chair
Anniversary Committee Member
Affordable Housing Committee Participant
Culinary Ministry Member
National Day of Service/Clothing Give-away Host
Assistant Sunday School Teacher
Worship Leader
Leadership Training Participant
Church Revival Participant
Church Vacation Bible School Participant



THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER

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Encouragement from The Holy Bible; James 1:1,12

James Edward Curtis Jr
PROJECT DIRECTOR

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2004 - , New Commandment Baptist Church, Washington, DC
 Ordained Deacon/Deacon Ministry Member
 Scribe of Deacon Training Class
 Trustee
 Finance Committee Member
 Morning Service Administrator
 Greeter's Ministry Member
 Men's Ministry Co-Chair
 Anniversary Committee Member
 Affordable Housing Committee Participant
 Culinary Ministry Member
 National Day of Service/Clothing Give-away Host
 Assistant Sunday School Teacher
 Worship Leader
 Leadership Training Participant
 Church Revival Participant
 Church Vacation Bible School Participant
 New Year's Revival Participant
 National Capital Area Baptist City-Wide Revival Participant
 National Capital Area Baptist Convention Presenter
 Tithing Member

2005-present, Central Union Mission, Washington, DC
 Employee
 Spiritual Transformation Program Graduate
 Senior Luncheon Volunteer
 Devotion Leader
 Overnight Guest Birthday Party Volunteer
 Veteran's Day Celebration Participant
 Radio-thon Participant
 120th Anniversary Participant
 TD Jakes/City-Wide Revival Participant
 Standing in the Gap Collaboration Participant
 City of Zion Church Bible Class Participant
 Fannie Mae Foundation Walkathon for the Homeless Participant
 Volunteer Financial Donor and Capital Campaign Participant

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2005; 2007, Jobs Partnership Greater Washington, Washington, DC
 Mentor Training Participant and Mentor

2003, World Changers Church, College Park, GA
 Volunteer Training Participant

2001; 2009, Metropolitan Baptist Church, Washington, DC
 Men's Ministry Member
 Tithing Member

1998 - , New Salem Baptist Church, Columbus, OH
 Holy Ghost Baptism
 Men's Ministry Member
 Tithing Member

1995, Israel Embassy – Howard University, Israel
 Student-Faculty Envoy to Israel
 Group studies of Jerusalem and Bethlehem
 Panelist, Tel Aviv University, Bar-Ilan University and the Knesset

1993 - 1996, Rankin Chapel – Howard University, Washington, DC
 Coordinated and attended Chapel services for new members of student organizations

1992, Gospel Choir – Rutgers University, Camden, NJ
 Community Gospel Choir Singer

1986 - 1989, Mount Olive Baptist Church, Manassas, VA
 Water Baptism

1975 - 1979, Vermont Ave Baptist Church, Washington, DC
 Sunday School Class Participant

* also attended churches in the Washington, DC area including: East Friendship Baptist Church, Paramount Baptist Church, and St. Charles Baptist Church; churches in Maryland including: Jericho City of Praise and For His Glory Church; and churches in Columbus, Ohio including: City of Refugee Church, Mount Olivet Baptist Church, and All Nations Baptist Church

12 Scope & Faith: Screen Print 5 of 21**PAST OFFERINGS & PAST TITHING TO FAITH-BASED MINISTRIES**

Andrew Wommack Ministries
 Anne Gimenez Ministries
 Benny Hinn Ministries
 Bill Winston Ministries
 Billy Burke Ministries
 Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
 Billye Brim Ministries
 Breakthrough Ministries
 Capitol Hill Ministry Group
 Catholic Charities
 Central Union Mission
 Charles Capps Ministries
 Charles Stanley Ministries
 Christian Broadcast Network
 Christian Courses/RBC Ministries
 City of Zion Church
 Clarence E. McClendon Ministries
 Cornerstone Peaceful Bible Baptist Church
 Creffo Dollar Ministries
 David Blunt Ministries
 David Jeremiah Ministries
 Daystar TV Network
 Dennis Leonard Ministries
 Don Wilton Ministries
 East Friendship Baptist Church
 Ebenezer AME Church
 Ever Increasing Faith
 First Baptist Church of Glenarden
 For His Glory Church
 Freedom Baptist Church
 From the Heart Ministries
 Good Success Church
 Greater Mount Calvary Holiness Church
 Gregory Dickow Ministries
 Harvest Life Changers Church

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Freedom Baptist Church
 From the Heart Ministries
 Good Success Church
 Greater Mount Calvary Holiness Church
 Gregory Dickow Ministries
 Harvest Life Changers Church
 Henry Fernandez Ministries
 Immanuel Bible Church
 Jack Hayford Ministries
 Jamal Bryant Ministries
 James Robinson Ministries
 Jentezen Franklin Ministries
 Jericho City of Praise
 Jerry Savelle Ministries
 Jesse Duplantis Ministries
 Jimmy and Karen Evans Ministries
 Joel Osteen Ministries
 John Hagee Ministries
 Joyce Meyers Ministries
 Juanita Bynum Ministries
 Karen Wheaton Ministries
 Kenneth Copeland Ministries
 Kerry Shook Ministries
 Larry Huch Ministries
 Larry Trotter Ministries
 Living Proof Ministries
 Louis Palau Association
 Marilyn Hickey Ministries
 McLean Bible Church
 Metropolitan Baptist Church
 Mt. Ararat Baptist Church
 New Birth Missionary Baptist Church
 New Commandment Baptist Church
 New Salem Baptist Church
 New Samaritan Baptist Church
 New Song Bible Fellowship Church
 Noel Jones Ministries

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Karen Wheaton Ministries
 Kenneth Copeland Ministries
 Kerry Shook Ministries
 Larry Huch Ministries
 Larry Trotter Ministries
 Living Proof Ministries
 Louis Palau Association
 Marilyn Hickey Ministries
 McLean Bible Church
 Metropolitan Baptist Church
 Mt. Ararat Baptist Church
 New Birth Missionary Baptist Church
 New Commandment Baptist Church
 New Salem Baptist Church
 New Samaritan Baptist Church
 New Song Bible Fellowship Church
 Noel Jones Ministries
 Paul Morton Ministries
 Paula White Ministries
 Ralph Douglas West Ministries
 Randy Morrison Ministries
 Ronnie Floyd Winners
 Sheryl Brady Ministries
 SOGO Ministries
 Spirit of Faith
 St. Paul Community Baptist Church (NY)
 TD Jakes Ministries
 Temple of Deliverance / Bountiful Blessings
 Temple of Praise (DC)
 The Urban Alternative
 The Wisdom Center
 Trinity Broadcasting Network
 University Park Baptist Church (NC)
 Vermont Avenue Baptist Church
 Victory Christian Church International
 VCM International
 Zachary Tims Ministries

15 Scope & Faith: Screen Print 8 of 21**FAITH-BASED EDUCATION**

November 2009 - present, City of Zion Church, Laurel, MD
General Training

September 2009- October 2009, Greater Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Washington DC
Holiness Church History Training
Weekly Bible Study

March 09, New Commandment Baptist Church, Washington, DC
Leadership Training
 "What are the Qualifications?" - Dr. Stephen Tucker

March 2009, ABCOTS America for Christ, Baltimore, MD
Stewardship Training
 "Reversing the Irreversible" - Dr. Emmett Burns Jr.

February 2009, New Commandment Baptist Church, Washington, DC
Faith-Based Web Hosting Training - Minister George Bartley

April 2008, Faith-Based Courses - RBC Ministries, online
Bible History Training (Pre-Certificate Program)
 "Old Testament Basics" - Dr. Sid Buzzell

October 2007, Regent University - Project Bridges, Landover, MD
Faith-Based Instruction Training
 "Building Successful Learning Environments in the Church, Home & School" - Dr. William Cox and Dr. Joan Johnson-Hoskins

February 2007-December 2008, New Commandment Baptist Church, Washington, DC
Deacon Training
 Ordained by Dr. Stephen Tucker and Deacon Ministry Chairwoman Roberta Tucker


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February 2009, New Commandment Baptist Church, Washington, DC
Faith-Based Web Hosting Training - Minister George Bartley

April 2008, Faith-Based Courses - RBC Ministries, online
Bible History Training (Pre-Certificate Program)
 "Old Testament Basics" - Dr. Sid Buzzell

October 2007, Regent University - Project Bridges, Landover, MD
Faith-Based Instruction Training
 "Building Successful Learning Environments in the Church, Home & School" - Dr. William Cox and Dr. Joan Johnson-Hoskins

February 2007-December 2008 ,New Commandment Baptist Church, Washington, DC
Deacon Training
 Ordained by Dr. Stephen Tucker and Deacon Ministry Chairwoman Roberta Tucker

October 2006-February 2009, New Commandment Baptist Church, Washington, DC
Weekly Bible study, weekly Sunday school, annual church revival and annual vacation Bible school

May 2006, McLean Bible Church-Men of Impact, Flintstone, MD
Discipleship Training
 "Core Values" - Lon Solomon
 "Your Attitude Towards Jesus" - Jerry Leachman
 "Men's Discipleship Ministry" - Glynn Ballew
 "Sleepwalking Through Life" - Jerry Leachman

January 2006-September 2006, SOGO Ministries, Washington, DC
Weekly Bible study and weekly Sunday school

September 2005-December 2005, City of Zion Church , Laurel, MD
Weekly Bible study

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June 2005-March 2006, Central Union Mission, Washington, DC
Spiritual Transformation Program

Phase IV Bible Classes - Elder Greg Strong

Phase III Bible Classes - Elder Donald Ross and Russell Sheppard
Overcomer's Handbook: A Practical Guide to Victory in Christ (M.L. Fear)
Discipleship (Dr. Robert Rich)
The Calling of the Twelve (Dr. Robert Rich)

Phase II Bible Classes - Dr. Robert Rich and Minister David Surles
Grace and Faith (Dr. Robert Rich)
Prayer (Dr. Robert Rich)
The Church (Dr. Robert Rich)
Judgments and Rewards (Dr. Robert Rich)
How to Cope (Dr. Robert Rich)
Sin (Dr. Robert Rich)
Repentance (Dr. Robert Rich)
The New Birth (Dr. Robert Rich)

Spring 2005 and Spring 2007, Jobs Partnership Greater Washington, Washington, DC
Mentor Training
Keys and Steps to Personal and Professional Success (Jobs Partnership Greater Washington)
What Color is Your Parachute? (Richard Nelson Bolles)

**** also purchased written and recorded teachings from Oswald Chamber (Prayer: A Holy Occupation), Zachary Tims ("I'm a Survivor"), TD Jakes ("Manpower", "Miracles along the Way", Positioning Yourself to Prosper and "You Don't Have to Believe in My Dream"); Tony Evans ("Secure Forever"); Joyce Meyer ("The Cause and Cure for Worry"), Jack Hayford ("Reading the Book of Revelation" and "The Parable of the Pennies"); Anne Gimenez ("Jesus the Storm Walker" and "The Land of Israel"); and Gloria Copeland ("Know Him as Healer").**

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FAITH-BASED WORKING PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Working Papers
 April 28, 2006 - "Adam to Noah"
 May 26, 2007 - "How to Respond to Leadership"
 June 15, 2007 - "God and Earth"
 June 25, 2007 - "Anxiety"
 July 2, 2007 - "Rejecting God"
 July 16, 2007 - "Reconciliation"
 July 23, 2007 - "Grace"
 July 30, 2007 - "Love"
 August 6, 2007 - "Faith"
 August 27, 2007 - "Evangelism"
 September 10, 2007 - "Suffering"
 September 24, 2007 - "Hope"
 October 8, 2007 - "Strength from God"
 October 15, 2007 - "Belief"
 October 22, 2007 - "Overcoming"
 November 28, 2007 - "Birth of Jesus"
 January 17, 2008 - "Money"
 January 31, 2008 - "Service"
 February 2, 2008 - "Manhood"
 March 20, 2008 - "Joy"
 April 4, 2008 - "Stewardship"
 April 10, 2008 - "Bible Fundamentals Diagnostics"
 April 17, 2008 - "Suffering"
 July 3, 2008 - "Worry"
 July 17, 2008 - "Prayer"
 August 3, 2008 - "Hope"
 March 27, 2009 - "Devotion Topics: A Model of Faith-Based Analysis"
 August 19, 2009 - "I am Growing in God"
 September 8, 2009 - "A Wholesome Objective"
 September 27, 2009 - "The Good News"

Presentations
 May 26, 2007 - "How to Respond to Leadership", New Commandment Baptist Church

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Presentations

May 26, 2007 - "How to Respond to Leadership", New Commandment Baptist Church
 June 25, 2007 - "Anxiety", Central Union Mission
 July 2, 2007 - "Rejecting God", Central Union Mission
 July 16, 2007 - "Reconciliation", Central Union Mission
 July 23, 2007 - "Grace", Central Union Mission
 July 30, 2007 - "Love", Central Union Mission
 August 6, 2007 - "Faith", Central Union Mission
 August 27, 2007 - "Evangelism", Central Union Mission
 September 2, 2007 - "Grace", Central Union Mission
 September 10, 2007 - "Suffering", Central Union Mission
 September 19, 2007 - "Faith", Central Union Mission
 September 24, 2007 - "Hope", Central Union Mission
 October 8, 2007 - "Strength from God", Central Union Mission
 October 15, 2007 - "Belief", Central Union Mission
 October 22, 2007 - "Overcoming", Central Union Mission
 November 19, 2007 - "Anxiety", Central Union Mission
 November 28, 2007 - "Birth of Jesus", New Commandment Baptist Church
 December 10, 2007 - "Evangelism", Central Union Mission
 January 17, 2008 - "Money", Central Union Mission
 January 31, 2008 - "Service", Central Union Mission
 February 14, 2008 - "Love", Central Union Mission
 February 2, 2008 - "Manhood", Central Union Mission
 March 20, 2008 - "Joy", Central Union Mission
 March 27, 2008 - "Reconciliation", Central Union Mission
 April 4, 2008 - "Stewardship", New Commandment Baptist Church
 April 10, 2008 - "Bible Fundamentals Diagnostics", Central Union Mission
 April 17, 2008 - "Suffering", Central Union Mission
 June 12, 2008 - "Service", Central Union Mission
 July 3, 2008 - "Worry", Central Union Mission
 July 10, 2008 - "Grace", Central Union Mission
 July 17, 2008 - "Prayer", Central Union Mission
 July 24, 2008 - "Hope", New Commandment Baptist Church
 August 3, 2008 - "Hope", Central Union Mission
 August 3, 2008 - "Joy", Central Union Mission
 August 7, 2008 - "Overcoming", Central Union Mission
 August 14, 2008 - "Faith", Central Union Mission

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May 26, 2007 - "How to Respond to Leadership", New Commandment Baptist Church
 June 25, 2007 - "Anxiety", Central Union Mission
 July 2, 2007 - "Rejecting God", Central Union Mission
 July 16, 2007 - "Reconciliation", Central Union Mission
 July 23, 2007 - "Grace", Central Union Mission
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 October 22, 2007 - "Overcoming", Central Union Mission
 November 19, 2007 - "Anxiety", Central Union Mission
 November 28, 2007 - "Birth of Jesus", New Commandment Baptist Church
 December 10, 2007 - "Evangelism", Central Union Mission
 January 17, 2008 - "Money", Central Union Mission
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 March 20, 2008 - "Joy", Central Union Mission
 March 27, 2008 - "Reconciliation", Central Union Mission
 April 4, 2008 - "Stewardship", New Commandment Baptist Church
 April 10, 2008 - "Bible Fundamentals Diagnostics", Central Union Mission
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 July 24, 2008 - "Hope", New Commandment Baptist Church
 August 3, 2008 - "Hope", Central Union Mission
 August 3, 2008 - "Joy", Central Union Mission
 August 7, 2008 - "Overcoming", Central Union Mission
 August 14, 2008 - "Faith", Central Union Mission
 December 12, 2008 - "Service", New Commandment Baptist Church

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COMMUNITY SERVICE

2005-2009, volunteer, Central Union Mission, service included serving food, leading devotions, distributing clothing, participating in radio-thon, participating in walkathons
 2001-2003, member of graduate studies committee, department of economics, The Ohio State University
 2001, Vice-President, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 2001, co-chairman of the banquet/scholarship committee, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 2000-2001, member of advisory board, Office of Retention Services, The Ohio State University
 2000, coordinator of Mu Iota Chapter banquet committee, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc.
 2000, delegate, fourth district, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. National Conclave
 1999, delegate, Mu Iota Chapter, fourth district meeting, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
 1999, Pan-Hellenic council representative, Mu Iota Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
 1999, chairman of picnic committee, Columbus Pan-Hellenic Council
 1999, member of charity golf tournament committee, Mu Iota Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
 1999, member of talent hunt/scholarship committee, Mu Iota Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
 1999-2000, tutor, Department of Economics, The Ohio State University
 1999-2000, tutor, Ramah Christian Center (Columbus, OH)
 1998-2000, panelist, American Economics Association Pipeline Project Conference
 1999, member of student organization funding allocation committee, The Ohio State University
 1998-1999, Treasurer, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 1998-1999, chairman of banquet/scholarship committee, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 1998, member of staff search committee, The Ohio State University
 1997-1998, volunteer for Janitors' Day, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 1997-1998, co-chairman of education committee, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 1996-1997, chairman of local committee, 1997 national convention committee, National INROADS Alumni Association
 1995-96, President, Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, Howard University
 1995-96, resident assistant, Meridian Hill Hall, Howard University
 1995, coordinator, "Help the Homeless Eat" homeless feeding program
 1995, member of faculty-student envoy to Israel, Howard University and Israeli Embassy, participated in conferences at Tel Aviv University, Bari-Ilan University, and The Knesset
 1994-95, Vice-President, Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, Howard University
 1994-95, coordinator of community cleanup-campus beautification project, Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, Howard University


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1999, delegate, Mu Iota Chapter, fourth district meeting, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
 1999, Pan-Hellenic council representative, Mu Iota Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
 1999, chairman of picnic committee, Columbus Pan-Hellenic Council
 1999, member of charity golf tournament committee, Mu Iota Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
 1999, member of talent hunt/scholarship committee, Mu Iota Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
 1999-2000, tutor, Department of Economics, The Ohio State University
 1999-2000, tutor, Ramah Christian Center (Columbus, OH)
 1998-2000, panelist, American Economics Association Pipeline Project Conference
 1999, member of student organization funding allocation committee, The Ohio State University,
 1998-1999, Treasurer, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 1998-1999, chairman of banquet/scholarship committee, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 1998, member of staff search committee, The Ohio State University
 1997-1998, volunteer for Janitors' Day, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 1997-1998, co-chairman of education committee, BG PSC, The Ohio State University
 1996-1997, chairman of local committee, 1997 national convention committee, National INROADS
 Alumni Association
 1995-96, President, Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, Howard University
 1995-96, resident assistant, Meridian Hill Hall, Howard University
 1995, coordinator, "Help the Homeless Eat" homeless feeding program,
 1995, member of faculty-student envoy to Israel, Howard University and Israeli Embassy, participated
 in conferences at Tel Aviv University, Bari-Ilan University, and The Knesset
 1994-95, Vice- President, Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, Howard University
 1994-95, coordinator of community cleanup-campus beautification project, Phi Sigma Pi National
 Honor Fraternity, Howard University
 1994-95, Director/Associate Director, Office of Community Affairs, Howard University Student
 Associate
 1994-95, coordinator of health expo, Ballou High School Project, and community festival, Office of
 Community Affairs, Howard University Student Association
 1994-95, coordinator of college scholarship assistance program, Cardoza Senior High School/Phi
 Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, Howard University
 1994, chairman of programs and banquet committees, Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity Howard
 University
 1992-93, co-chairman of James Dickinson Carr Scholars Society, Rutgers University,
 1992-1995, volunteer food preparation, painting and PBS pledge drive, INROADS/Greater Washington
 1992, volunteer musician, Christmas program for seniors, Rutgers University
 1991, writer, student newspaper, Rutgers University
 1990-1991, volunteer, assistant guitar instructor and soccer coach, DC Department of Recreations

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EMPLOYMENT

October 2006 - present, Central Union Mission, Washington, DC

Accounting Assistant, Finance and Administration Department
 Assistant Bookkeeper, Finance and Administration Department

June 2005 - October 2006, Central Union Mission, Washington, DC

Former Intern & Former Student, Spiritual Transformation Program Men's Ministry Department (This
 program served as a fast-track training program, with a faith-based emphasis, while in transition to
 community and professional leadership, and the training from this program led to invitations and
 appointments to serve on the Deacon Board, the Trustee Board, financial ministry, and instructor
 opportunities at local institutions)

December 2000 - March 2005

Research Supervisor, grants from the National Science Foundation and Ohio State University
 Department of Economics

July 2002 - August 2002, University of Colorado, Denver, CO

Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics and the American Economics Association (AEA)
 Summer Program

August 2000 - June 2001, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, OH

Instructor, Department of Economics

June 2000 - August 2000, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Instructor, MBA Programs, Fisher College of Business

June 1999 - August 1999, Ohio Department of Development, Columbus, OH

(Graduate) Intern, Office of Tax Credit Incentives, Economic Development Division

June 1998 - August 2001, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics

June 1996 - July 1997, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Washington, DC

Economist Assistant, Department of Research and Statistics

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Summers 1992-1995, Communications Satellite Corporation, Bethesda, MD

Intern, corporate finance department, internal audit department, treasury department, competitive
 analysis department, and international finance department

August 1991-June 1993, Rutgers University, Camden, NJ

Cashier, Rutgers University School of Law
 Administrative Assistant, Rutgers University Department of Admissions

Summer 1991, General Service Administration, Washington, DC

Intern, Office of Ethics and Civil Rights

ACADEMIC EDUCATION

September 1997- March 2005, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Doctor of Philosophy Program, Department of Economics
 Submitted written draft of dissertation (2002)
 Passed written and oral candidacy exams (2000)
 Passed field exams in economic history and macroeconomics(1999)
 Passed qualifying exams in microeconomic theory (1999)¯oeconomic theory (1998)

September 1997- December 1998, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Master of Arts Degree, Department of Economics

June 1997- August 1997, University of Texas, Austin, TX

American Economics Association Summer Program, advanced training before doctoral studies, in
 association with the Department of Economics
 Completed courses in microeconomic theory, econometrics and applied econometrics

August 1996-December 1996, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

Department of Mathematics

June 1994 -July 1994, Harvard University, Boston, MA

Certificate of Completion, Summer Venture in Management, School of Business Administration

August 1993 -May 1996, Howard University, Washington, DC

Bachelor of Arts Degree, Department of Economics



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June 1994 -July 1994, Harvard University, Boston, MA
 Certificate of Completion, Summer Venture in Management, School of Business Administration

August 1993 -May 1996, Howard University, Washington, DC
 Bachelor of Arts Degree, Department of Economics
 Bachelor of Arts Degree, Department of Political Science
 Graduated Magna Cum Laude

August 1991-June 1993, Rutgers University, Camden, NJ
 Bachelor of Arts studies, Department of Economics

June 1990-August 1990, University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC
 Department of Mathematics

ACADEMIC WORKING PAPERS, PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATION

Academic Working Papers***
 Long-Run Wealth Inequality (Dissertation Draft, 2002)
 Institutional and Agency Effects (2002)
 The Dusk and Dawn of Freedom (2000)

*** including original writings and analysis such as long-run property and homeownership inequities with new approaches to discrete choice statistical analysis; presentation slides, problem sets and exams for courses in Intermediate Microeconomics and Pre-MBA Foundations in Economics; recommendations as a referee for the International Journal of Manpower

Academic Publications
 A Supplemental Text to the Intermediate Microeconomics Laboratory: A Manual on How to Apply Statistics and Econometrics to Economic Theory, Ohio Wesleyan University, Ohio, 2000. (with Robert Gitter and Alice Simon)
 History of the Eighties: Lessons for the Future, Vol. I, Washington, DC: FDIC, 1998 (Contributor)
 History of the Eighties: Lessons for the Future, Vol. II, Washington, DC: FDIC, 1998 (Contributor)

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Academic Presentations
 February 7, 2002: University of Michigan SCOR National Research Conference, Ann Arbor, MI
 November 17, 2001: Social Science History Association Annual Meetings, Chicago, IL
 November 16, 2001: Howard University, Washington, DC
 July 7, 2001: Western Economic Association International Annual Meetings, San Francisco, CA
 November 29, 2000: Department of Economics, OSU, Columbus, OH, July 2, 2001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2009, award, Three-Year Service Award, Central Union Mission
 2009, award, Employee of the Month, Central Union Mission
 2008, award, Two-Year Service Award, Central Union Mission
 2008, award, Employee of the Month, Central Union Mission
 2007, award, Employee of the Month, Central Union Mission
 2006, graduation certification, Spiritual Transformation Program, Central Union Mission
 2005, admissions, Spiritual Transformation Program, Central Union Mission
 2002, fellowship, University of Michigan SCOR National Research Conference
 2000-2002, research grant, National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant
 1997-2002, fellowship, Dean's Graduate Enrichment Fellowship, The Ohio State University
 2001, fellowship, Journal of Money, Banking and Credit Dissertation Research Grant
 2000, award, Outstanding Service Award, OMA, The Ohio State University
 2000, research grant, Department of Economics, The Ohio State University
 2000, fellowship, PEGS Fellowship, Department of Economics, The Ohio State University
 1998, admissions/membership, Mu Iota Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc.
 1998, award, Outstanding Man of America, OYA
 1997, admissions and scholarship, American Economics Association Summer Program, hosted by the Department of Economics, University of Texas (Austin)
 1997, award, Special Act Award, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
 1997, admissions, doctoral program, Department of Economics, The Ohio State University
 1997, admissions and fellowship (offer), doctoral program, Department of Economics, Michigan State University
 1996, admissions, doctoral program, Department of Economics, University of Delaware
 1996, admissions, doctoral program, Department of Economics, Howard University
 1996, award, Leadership Award, INROADS/Greater Washington, Inc.
 1996, admissions/membership, Phi Beta Kappa Honorary Society

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1996, admissions/membership, Phi Beta Kappa Honorary Society
 1996, admissions/membership, Phi Sigma Alpha National Political Science Honor Society
 1995-1996, scholarship, Blackburn Foundation Scholarship, Howard University
 1995, award/membership, Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities
 1995, admissions/membership, Golden Key Honor Society
 1995, admissions and fellowship (offer), summer public policy program, Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy, Princeton University
 1994-1996, scholarship, Board of Trustees Scholarship, Howard University
 1993, admissions/membership, Omicron Delta Epsilon International Economics Society
 1993, admissions/membership, Alpha Tau Chapter, Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity
 1991-1995, scholarship, Carl Rowan/Project Excellence Scholarship, Gannet Corporation
 1991-1995, scholarship, Phillips-Murray Foundation Scholarship
 1991, scholarship, Roothbert Foundation Scholarship
 1991, award, Bronze Medal of Citizenship, Sons of the American Revolution
 1991, scholarship, Kiwanis Club First Place Scholarship
 1991, scholarship, Duke Zeibert's/DC Public School's Gifted and Talented Scholarship
 1991, scholarship, Combined Military Association Scholarship
 1991, scholarship, Alpha Omega Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Scholarship
 1991, scholarship, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Scholarship
 1991, scholarship (offer), Maxwell Company Scholarship
 1991, award, 1st Place, essay writing contest
 1991, admissions and scholarship, Rutgers University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Howard University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Hampton University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), University of District of Columbia
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Morehouse College
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Boston University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Manhattan College
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Penn State University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), West Virginia University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Virginia Union University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Tennessee State University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), North Carolina Wesleyan University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Texas Southern University
 1991, admissions, and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Norfolk State University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), George Washington University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Guilford College



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1991, scholarship, National Honor Society Scholarship
 1991, award, Bronze Medal of Citizenship, Sons of the American Revolution
 1991, scholarship, Kiwanis Club First Place Scholarship
 1991, scholarship, Duke Zeibert's/DC Public Schools Gifted and Talented Scholarship
 1991, scholarship, Combined Military Association Scholarship
 1991, scholarship, Alpha Omega Chapter, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Scholarship
 1991, scholarship, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Scholarship
 1991, scholarship (offer), Maxwell Company Scholarship
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 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Morehouse College
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Boston University
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 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Penn State University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), West Virginia University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Virginia Union University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Tennessee State University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), North Carolina Wesleyan University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Texas Southern University
 1991, admissions, and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Norfolk State University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), George Washington University
 1991, admissions and financial aid/scholarship (offer), Guilford College
 1991, award, Most Spirited Award, Calvin Coolidge
 1990, admissions/membership, National Honor Society, Calvin Coolidge
 1987, award, Most Helpful Award, Godwin
 1986, admissions/membership, National Junior Honor Society, Godwin
 1986-1992, awards/acknowledgements for musical performances, violin

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Directory of internal internet links at <http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com> [6 links]

Preamble
January 2010 Summary [Basic slide show, 16 slides]
Growth in God Video

Chronology
Chronology of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
Timeline of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
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Scope & Faith
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Jesus Saves Video
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Directory of internet links to other internet locations [3 links]

1st internet site of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation

http://www.geocities.com/jecjr_educationfoundation/homepage.htm (discontinued)

1st video of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation

<http://video.yahoo.com/watch/6593777/17118826>

Growth in God: readings from the Holy Bible and music by Judy Jacobs

2nd video of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation

<http://video.yahoo.com/watch/6706563/17419144>

Jesus Saves: Integrated speech & preaching based on the Holy Bible & preliminary results from my economic research (2002 draft of dissertation written/presented by James Edward Curtis Jr)

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- Preamble
- Chronology
- Scope & Faith
- Mailing Address
- Directory
- Jesus Saves



Jesus Saves @ Yahoo! Video

What is Your Real Reason? Is it Jesus? ® (Transcript)
Written by: James Edward Curtis Jr

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What is Your Real Reason? Is it Jesus? ® (Transcript)
Written by: James Edward Curtis Jr
Speech by: James Edward Curtis Jr
Inspired by: the Holy Ghost, and the mercy and grace of Jesus

Relief from Suffering by means of the Birth of Jesus

Matthew 1:18-24 describes the birth of Jesus: "they will call him Immanuel—which means, 'God with us.'" **Luke 2:1-7** describes the location of the birth of Jesus: they "placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." **Luke 2:8-19** describes the angels which appeared before the shepherds regarding the birth of Jesus and **Luke 2:20** describes the response of the shepherds: "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen." The shepherds responded this way because Jesus paid the price for those in suffering. I, James Edward Curtis Jr, once wrote a draft of a dissertation concerning suffering, which the Bible suggests Jesus intended to save us from—suffering in the form of inequality, for instance, inequality between many white Americans and many black Americans, or, dare I suggest: inequality among the supposive suffering; inequality among black Americans.

Suffering in the form of Inequality and the Domination of Unexplained Differences in Unequal Outcomes

Some of my 2002 dissertation draft reads: "Researchers have a long-standing interest in understanding the causes and consequences of inequality. One approach to analyzing inequality is to compare average economic choices from a classical theoretical framework. Another approach considers the impact of the formation of society, through statutes and institutions, on average economic outcomes. This dissertation studies the effects of (both by investigating the effects of) slavery on white-black wealth inequality upon the emancipation of slaves in the (United States of America) using historical... data.... Foremost, a theory of relative wealth is presented, where wealth is determined by group-specific salaries, hours of work, consumption, and interest rates. Historical white-black differences in wealth were estimated using ...decomposition. This technique decomposes economic differences into the explained portion (of white-black wealth differences) explained by differences in classical characteristics and the unexplained portion due to different returns to classical characteristics....Results confirm that we cannot reject the claim...when comparing the



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Suffering in the form of Inequality and the Domination of Unexplained Differences in Unequal Outcomes

Some of my 2002 dissertation draft reads: "Researchers have a long-standing interest in understanding the causes and consequences of inequality. One approach to analyzing inequality is to compare average economic choices from a classical theoretical framework. Another approach considers the impact of the formation of society, through statutes and institutions, on average economic outcomes. This dissertation studies the effects of (both by investigating the effects of) slavery on white-black wealth inequality upon the emancipation of slaves in the (United States of America) using historical... data.... Foremost, a theory of relative wealth is presented, where wealth is determined by group-specific salaries, hours of work, consumption, and interest rates. Historical white-black differences in wealth were estimated using ...decomposition. This technique decomposes economic differences into the explained portion (of white-black wealth differences) explained by differences in classical characteristics and the unexplained portion due to different returns to classical characteristics....Results confirm that we cannot reject the claim... when comparing the wealth of ex-slaves to the wealth (of) whites, (the portion of) differences in wealth ... which were unexplained... dominate the portion (of differences in wealth) due to (different) classical characteristics.

Suffering in the form of Inequality and Linking Modern Differences to Historical Roots

(Preliminary results from my 2002 dissertation draft also suggests) the size and source of contemporary (white-black) wealth differences have historical roots: In 1870, at least 75 percent of white-black wealth differences were not explained by characteristic differences described by the classical model when employing the primary index. This is consistent with wealth decompositions of late twentieth century data that shows that three-quarters of white-black differences in wealth were unexplained...(by classical characteristic differences).

Suffering in the form of Inequality as Represented by a Negative Correlation between Time of the Real End of Enslavement and the Magnitude of Unexplained Differences

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Suffering in the form of Inequality as Represented by a Negative Correlation between Time of the Real End of Enslavement and the Magnitude of Unexplained Differences

Finally, ... (preliminary results from my 2002 dissertation draft also suggests) unexplained differences (in white-black wealth) in states which ended slavery (as a result of) the Civil War were 10 percent higher than unexplained effects in states which ended slavery well before the Civil War....(Combining this 10 percent gap with persistent) magnitudes of the unexplained effects (in white-black wealth differences) ... we cannot reject the existence of a negatively bounded correlation between the duration of time from enslavement and the magnitude of unexplained differences in (white-black) wealth.

(In other words, for those who monitor relative wealth accumulation and are unmoved by divine empathy, a disincentive to increase the rate of full manumission is possible. Consider slavery as overt, formal constraints to zero or even negative wealth accumulation; and consider freedom of ex-slaves as the perception of overt lack of formal wealth constraints and yet the possibility of covert, hidden or informal constrained wealth accumulation controls (i.e. southern Jim Crow laws); and finally, consider full manumission as the uninhibited opportunity to accumulate wealth at rates of entitles without a history of slavery or with a more limited history of slavery. This definition of full manumission probably includes the necessity of wealth transfers to the fully manumitted ex-slave in transition from slavery or free ex-slave to full manumission. Nevertheless, this negatively bounded correlation between duration of time from the end of enslavement and magnitude of unexplained differences in wealth suggests the magnitude in the unexplained portion of white-black wealth differences increases as the length of time from the real[1] end of enslavement decreases.)

(This poses another research question: what is the level and source of wealth accumulation differences among blacks with a long history of freedom/manumission and blacks with a short history of freedom/manumission. This investigation probably starts with the re-examination of the historical documentation of the former existence of free black slave owners of black slaves).

However Jesus Saves

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(This poses another research question: what is the level and source of wealth accumulation differences among blacks with a long history of freedom/manumission and blacks with a short history of freedom/manumission. This investigation probably starts with the re-examination of the historical documentation of the former existence of free black slave owners of black slaves).

However Jesus Saves

Why do I say all of this? Why describe "Relief from Suffering by means of the Birth of Jesus"? Why mention "Suffering in the form of Inequality and the Domination of Unexplained Differences in Unequal Outcomes"? Why mention "Suffering in the form of Inequality and Linking Modern Differences to Historical Roots"? Why mention: "Suffering in the form of Inequality as Represented by a Negative Correlation between Time of the Real End of Enslavement and the Magnitude of Unexplained Differences"? ...Because Jesus was born to save the whites. Jesus was born to save the blacks; Jesus was born to save the light-skinned black. Jesus was born to save the dark-skinned black; Jesus was born to save the men. Jesus was born to save the women; Jesus was born to save the poor. Jesus was born to save the rich. Jesus was born to save the faithless. Jesus was born to save the faithful.

There's not a friend like Jesus, no not one.

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[1] Real end distinguishes formal announcements of the end of slavery (i.e. Emancipation Proclamation and free ex-slaves) from the day the compensated, uninhibited capacity to accumulate wealth at levels of those without a history of slavery or more limited history/version of slavery begins (full manumission)

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November 27, 2009

Bible Commentary: Unanswered Questions

1. Is Psalms 51:5 (shapen in iniquity) **and** Genesis 1:27 (created in his image) consistent?
2. Is a 'cookbook' consistent with 'good news'?
3. Is being fat Biblically unacceptable? Is the true difference between fat and thin veiled?
4. What is the lesson from possible sad-tech/sad-SAS/sad-social-emotional programming, where possibly shunning the images of happy tech is now a subset of sad-programming?
5. Why possibly program my learning and discernment process for 'just-in-time-to-immediately-exploit- retroactively' (ha-ha)?
6. Is it wrong to want to know the 'critical uniqueness' of the creations of the 'creator'?
7. Does he/she/they believe in efficient inefficiency in the social programming of their subjects? Why? Re-engineering/SAS-patches?
8. Is Ecclesiastes 10:19b (NIV: money is the answer for everything) **and** 1 Timothy 6:10 (NIV: For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs) consistent?
9. Are the following perfectly correlated? Why?
 - a. Work experience in 'the faith and works of James Edward Curtis Jr',
 - b. Church memberships in 'the faith and works of James Edward Curtis Jr',
 - c. Colleges and universities in 'the faith and works of James Edward Curtis Jr',
 - d. Accounts payable form instructions,
 - e. 'Unanswered questions'?

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March 29, 2010

Leadership: A Divine Discussion

A Divine Discussion Between Deacon James Curtis 202-257-9803 and Pastor Stephen Tucker

202-291-5711, New Commandment Baptist Church on Monday, March 29, 2010 4:45 PM – 5:29 PM

Described and Written by James Curtis

The Financial Condition of James Curtis

I informed Pastor Tucker I am working on obtaining sources of income, consuming some medication for sleep and relaxation, seeking employment, and simultaneously seeking self-employment, based on the presentation at the internet site of James Curtis [<http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>].

Pastor Tucker informed me that New Commandment Baptist Church intends to send me some financial assistance due to my financial condition, while noting past service to New Commandment Baptist Church. Pastor Tucker informed me that he had not viewed the internet site of James Curtis [<http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>], but “what I preach, I have to face”.

Attending Churches with Different Denominations, in a Search for Meaning of Potential Higher Levels of Service in the Faith Community

I again informed Pastor Tucker that I had been attending churches with different Bible-based denominations in my search for meaning of potential higher levels of service in the faith community, including Baptist, Missionary Baptist, Non-denominational, Christian Outreach, and the Holiness denomination, and wanted his perspective on the differences.

Pastor Tucker informed me that the Baptist faith is splintered, “more than ten different” sectors, including “Baptist, Missionary Baptist, Freewill Baptist, (and) Full Gospel Baptist”. But he emphasized “as long as you stick with the Bible”, I’ll be okay. “One difference”, he noted, was the baptism in the name of the “Father, Son and Spirit” (versus) baptism in the name of “Jesus” (versus) baptism in the name of the “Father, Son and Holy Ghost”. He also mentioned differences in water baptism, including water baptism by “emersion, sprinkle, (and) water on the head”. He mentioned the splinter of Baptist faith is a “distraction from the great commission” and the scripture “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”, and “your denomination” should not be a distraction.

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Pastor Tucker further described New Commandment Baptist Church as a “Non-Traditional Baptist” Church. He mentioned New Commandment Baptist Church “follows scriptures” and allows women to preach. He mentioned denominations, like Missionary Baptist churches, often do not allow women to preach and/or women have “a limited role”. Nevertheless, he stated the “preacher brings good news” and “women fall into that category”. Pastor Tucker mentioned the example of Mary Magdalene and how “God allowed Mary Magdalene (not one of Jesus’ disciples) to be the first at the tomb” of Jesus. Pastor Tucker also segmented Southern Baptists from American Baptists. He mentioned Southern Baptists were “involved in slavery” and “recently repented”.

The search of James Curtis for understanding potential higher levels of service in the faith community

I requested Pastor Tucker review the internet site of James Curtis [<http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>] and inform me of the path and estimated length of time to the outcome of a higher level of service in the faith community as, for instance, an Evangelist or Elder.

Pastor Tucker informed me he would look at the internet site of James Curtis [<http://jcurtis113.web.officelive.com>]. He also informed me of the importance of being “anchored” in the church, so one can “recognize your gifts and talents (and) validate your calling”, so that I am covered.

The conversion between Pastor Stephen Tucker and Deacon James Curtis concluded with a meditation on our faith and petition to the creator, often called prayer

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April 3, 2010

Bible Commentary: Thankfulness and Inspirational Communications

Thankfulness and Inspirational Communications

April 3, 2010

James Edward Curtis Jr

I thank the congregation, the worship leader, the deacons, the ministers, the first family of the church, and the Pastor for this opportunity to communicate what I have been inspired to communicate. Proverbs 11:14 reads “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety”. My theme for today’s word is thankfulness, in spite of, in the context of communications with three counsellors: Pastor/Dr. Zachary Tims, Pastor Gregory Strong and the father.

Communications with Dr. Zachary Tims, Pastor of New Destiny Christian Center in

Orlando, Florida. Some time ago, I purchased a compact disc series entitled, “I’m A

Survivor”, from Dr. Zachary Tims, which was important enough to me that I wrote him back.

August 28, 2009, I listened to one of his compact discs, where the theme was ‘This Too Shall

Pass” and he quoted scripture from Psalms 23. He made two important points: ‘Do not make

a permanent decision in a temporary condition’, when it comes to issues such as relationships

and homeownership. Second, he recommended using ‘praise’ as a response against

depression, stress and prison-like treatment. Essentially, there was and is a lot going on in my

life and this theme was timely. It encouraged me to remember that, for the last 10 years, my

fellowship with the faith community was contingent on where I resided due to transportation

and financial issues. But I have been empowered with an automobile to explore expressions of

faith before making the next move towards higher level service to Christ.

March 9, 2010, I wrote Dr. Zachary Tims and stated ‘I...enjoy your preaching of “I’m a

Survivor”. I enclosed an offering and informed him that, based on his preaching, “I am

faithful Jesus, the Son of God, is going to come through on my behalf”. Since then, I have

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been blessed with a stellar recommendation from the Executive Director of Central Union Mission and I have been inspired to compile a portfolio of self-employment progress over the last 20 years. Based on the advice of gradual relationship development and praise in response to chaotic environments, I may have a strong grounding for future employment opportunities, which may one day include income and assets from self-employment.

Communications with Gregory Strong , Pastor of City of Zion Church in Laurel, Maryland. I have recently spent a significant amount of time at City of Zion Church. I first encountered Pastor Gregory Strong at Central Union Mission, who admitted me and graduated me from the Spiritual Transformation Program in 2005 and 2006, respectively. He preached a sermon on November 29, 2009, concerning ‘equipping’ saints. He described how ‘people are confused, people are hurting, (and) people are perplexed’. He encouraged me to ‘take a stand’...‘the enemy is a deceiver’. This sermon inspired me to get equipped for self-employment, even in chaotic environments. On February 21, 2010, I requested some of Pastor Gregory Strong’s time to review my writings concerning self-employment. He agreed to review my writings and on March 11, 2010, he encouraged my efforts and recommended seeking additional certification in the faith community, possibly to optimize self-employment outcomes.

Today, I am here to inform you that I am a couple classes away from a Certificate of Completion from Greater Mount Calvary Holiness Church, I completed an application for a possible certificate in Ministry Leadership in November 2010 from Regent University and Project Bridges, and I have collected paperwork concerning a possible Masters of Divinity program, possibly from Howard University. Second Timothy 2:15 states, we are to ‘study to shew thyself approved, unto God’. I believe I am pursuing that direction.

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Communications with Dad (James Curtis Sr) and Granddad (Luther Curtis Sr) in Lisman, Alabama. My dad and granddad were modest men and men of few words. Several years ago, I learned what it was like to care for seniors financially. God had blessed me with some resources and I was inspired to provide these resources to immediate family members and local churches, which included my dad and granddad. Through these resources, my dad was able to pay some bills and buy a car, drive to Alabama and take care of granddad. Now, during a time of my elevated need for financial resources, dad has been a blessing. On March 10, 2010, I wrote dad and granddad, and stated “I (am) believing you are doing well. I am still blessed and highly favored thanks to you and your material and physical gifts of life.”

In closing, Phillippians 4:6-7 reads “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep you...through Christ Jesus”. May God bless you.

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April 14, 2010

Leadership: Ministry Leadership Training

James Edward Curtis, Jr
 President of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation
 524 Kenyon Street NW 35
 Washington, DC 20010

April 14, 2010

Pastor John K Jenkins, Sr
 First Baptist Church of Glenarden
 Landover, Maryland

Bishop Alfred A Owens, Jr
 Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church
 Washington, DC

Pastor Anthony E Moore
 Carolina Missionary Baptist Church
 Fort Washington, Maryland

Reverend Harold Brinkley
 Project Bridges
 Landover, Maryland

Pastor Jenkins, Bishop Owens, Pastor Moore and Reverend Brinkley,

My name is James Curtis. I am seeking to earn the Certificate of Ministry Leadership. I am an ordained Deacon and graduated from the Spiritual Transformation Program at Central Union Mission in 2006. I intend to combine this training with my academic education, (two Bachelor's degrees and Master's degree) in order to effectively help the community, including the community of faith.

I have enclosed a duplicate of my one-page resume, completed application for the Certificate of Ministry Leadership, and completed application for the Project Bridges seminar series for your consideration. I mailed the completed application for the Certificate of Ministry Leadership, completed application for the Project Bridges seminar series, and a payment of \$99.00 to Project Bridges on April 10, 2010. This information was faxed to (206) 984-1598, April 10, 2010.

If you would like to arrange an interview with me, please call me at (202) 257-9803, or write me at 524 Kenyon Street NW 35, Washington, DC 20010. Thank you for your time, efforts and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

James Edward Curtis Jr

Enclosures

 THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER		
<i>Divine Providence & Instruments for Empowerment for the Socially Marginalized</i>		
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Application for the Certificate of Ministry Leadership from Project Bridges-Regent University

From: James Curtis <jamesedwardcurtisjr@yahoo.com>

To: pastoroffice@fbcglenarden.org; aowensjr@aol.com; pastor@carolinachurch.org;
info@projectbridges.org

Certificate of Ministry Leadership Application - James Curtis Project Bridges Letter - 2010-04-14.pdf (4067KB)

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April 14, 2010

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No, Not One!

Johnson Catman, Jr., 1895

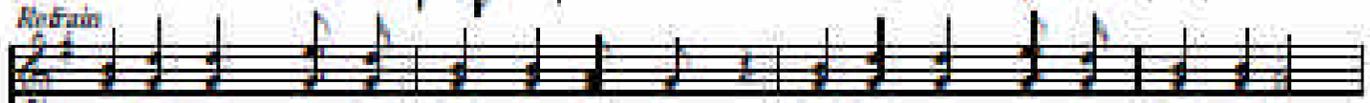
George Crawford Hugg



1. There's not a friend like the low - ly Je - sus, No, not one! No, not one!
 2. No friend like Him is so high and ho - ly, No, not one! No, not one!
 3. There's not an hour that He is not near us, No, not one! No, not one!
 4. Did ev - er saint find this Friend for - sake him? No, not one! No, not one!
 5. Was ever a gift like the Sav - our giv - en? No, not one! No, not one!



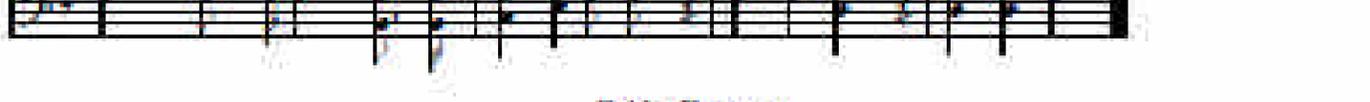
None else could heal all our soul's di - sea - es, No, not one! No, not one!
 And yet no friend is so meek and low - ly, No, not one! No, not one!
 No night so dark but His love can cheer us, No, not one! No, not one!
 Or sin - ner find that He would not take him? No, not one! No, not one!
 Will He re - fuse us a home in heav - en? No, not one! No, not one!



Refrain
 Je - sus knows all a - bout our strug - gles, He will guide till the day is done!



There's not a friend like the low - ly Je - sus, No, not one! No, not one!



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THE ENDURING FAITH CENTER



Divine Providence & Instruments for Encouragement
for the Socially Marginalized

Encouragement from The Holy Bible: James 1:1,12

James Edward Curtis Jr.
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April 14, 2010

Audio Visual Videos, Ringtones & Hymns: "Holy Holy Holy"

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Words: [Reginald Heber](#), 1826. Heber wrote this hymn for Trinity Sunday while he was Vicar of Hodnet, Shropshire, England.

Music: Nicaea, [John B. Dykes](#), in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1861 ([MIDI](#), [NWC](#), [PDF](#)). Alternate tune:

Trinity (Stone), [A. Stone](#), in *The Primitive Methodist Hymnal*, edited by George Booth (London: The Primitive Methodist Publishing House, 1889), number 201 ([MIDI](#), [NWC](#), [PDF](#))

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessèd Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessèd Trinity

{<http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/h/o/holyholy.htm>}

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May 19, 2010

Bible Commentary: *Developing Hope Through Giving Thanks*

Developing Hope through Giving Thanks

May 12, 2010

James Edward Curtis Jr

I thank the congregation, the worship leader, the deacons, the ministers, the first family of the church, and the Pastor for this opportunity to communicate what I have been inspired to communicate. **Proverbs 11:14 (King James Version)** reads: “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety”. My theme for today’s word is: Developing Hope through Articulating and Mediating on Giving Thanks, in the context of communications with three counsellors: Pastor/Dr. Zachary Tims, Pastor Gregory Strong and the father.

Foremost, Communications with Dr. Zachary Tims, Pastor of New Destiny Christian Center in Orlando, Florida. Some time ago, I purchased a compact disc series entitled, “I’m A Survivor”, from Dr. Zachary Tims, which was important enough to me that I wrote him back. August 28, 2009, I listened to one of his compact discs, where the theme was “This Too Shall Pass” and he quoted scripture from **Psalm 23**. He made two important points: ‘Do not make a permanent decision in a temporary condition’, when it comes to issues such as relationships and homeownership. Second, he recommended using ‘praise’ as a response against depression, stress and prison-like treatment. Essentially, there was and is a lot going on in my life and this theme was timely. It encouraged me to remember that, for the last 10 years, my fellowship with the faith community was contingent on where I resided due to transportation and financial issues. But I have been empowered with an automobile to explore expressions of faith before making the next move towards higher level service to Christ.

March 9, 2010, I wrote Dr. Zachary Tims and stated ‘I...enjoy your preaching of “I’m a Survivor”’. I enclosed an offering and informed him that, based on his preaching, “I am faithful Jesus, the Son of God, is going to come through on my behalf”. Since then, I have been blessed with a stellar recommendation from the Executive Director of Central Union Mission and I have been inspired to compile a written and electronic portfolio of self-employment progress over the last 20 years. Based on the advice of gradual relationship development and praise in response to chaotic environments, I may have a strong grounding for future employment opportunities, which may one day include income and assets from self-employment.

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Second, Communications with Gregory Strong, Pastor of City of Zion Church in Laurel, Maryland. I have recently spent a significant amount of time at City of Zion Church. I first encountered Pastor Gregory Strong at Central Union Mission, who admitted me and graduated me from the Spiritual Transformation Program in 2005 and 2006, respectively. He preached a sermon on November 29, 2009, concerning 'equipping' saints. He described how 'people are confused, people are hurting, (and) people are perplexed'. He encouraged me to 'take a stand'... 'the enemy is a deceiver'. This sermon inspired me to get equipped for self-employment, even in chaotic environments. On February 21, 2010, I requested some of Pastor Gregory Strong's time to review my writings concerning self-employment. He agreed to review my writings and on March 11, 2010, he encouraged my efforts and recommended seeking additional certification in the faith community, possibly to optimize self-employment outcomes.

2 Timothy 2:15 (King James Version) states, we are to 'study to shew thyself approved, unto God'. I believe I am pursuing that direction. Today, I am here to inform you that I am a couple classes away from a Certificate of Completion from Greater Mount Calvary Holiness Church, I completed an application and the first class for a possible certificate in Ministry Leadership in November 2010 from Regent University and Project Bridges, and I have collected paperwork concerning a possible Masters of Divinity program.

Third, Communications with Dad (James Curtis Sr) and Granddad (Luther Curtis Sr) in Lisman, Alabama. **Philippians 4:6-7 (King James Version)** reads: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep you...through Christ Jesus". My dad and granddad were modest men and men of few words. Several years ago, I learned what it was like to care for seniors financially. God had blessed me with some resources and I was inspired to provide these resources to immediate family members and local churches, which included my dad and granddad. Through these resources, my dad was able to pay some bills and buy a car, drive to Alabama and take care of granddad. Now, during a time of my elevated need for financial resources, dad has been a blessing. On March 10, 2010, I wrote dad and granddad, and stated "I (am) believing you are doing well. I am still blessed and highly favored thanks to you and your material and physical gifts of life." In the daily devotional, Our Daily Bread, written August 24, 2007, Julie Link writes: "God has something for each of us to do, despite our limitations. Rise up and ask what He might want to do through you."

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This is equivalent to saying that there is hope despite our situations. I remember many days resting in transitional housing, thinking and worrying about my next step in life. You see, I have obtained a lot of education, but it is almost worthless without continuous study and a mentor who helps place you after your studies are complete. When I became homeless, my studies became discontinued due to lack of funds and lack of guidance by my mentors. Furthermore, since my studies and mentors were concentrated in Ohio and I was homeless in DC, Maryland and Atlanta, I became separated from my mentors. The mentors, that invested time and energy in me, were too distant for an effective relationship and my resources for further education were exhausted.

But thank God for allowing me to graduate from the 2006 class of the Spiritual Transformation Program and the 2008 deacon class of New Commandment Baptist Church. There, I began to re-educate myself based on the Bible and develop a new talent of teaching scripture. Now, I have been asked to speak, on several occasions, at churches and at the Spiritual Transformation Program. And the rewards from speaking God's word have overflowed to benefits in my life, including an improved personal financial condition. And this hope in Christ I have can be developed among others. **Jeremiah 29:11 (New International Version)** reads "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." This is confirmed in **Proverbs 23:18 (New International Version)**: "There is surely a future hope for you..."

Definition of Hope. The Free Dictionary defines hope as "The theological virtue defined as the desire and search for a future good, difficult but not impossible to attain with God's help." This definition implies a little work on behalf of the person with hope. It states: 'the desire and search for a future good.' Therefore, if our hope is in God, we must be active seekers of Him. This seeking requirement for hope is confirmed in **Hebrews 11:6 (New International Version)** reads "...without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." Dennis De Haan²¹⁸ writes about seeking and obtaining hope:

"It's when we can't do anything that *God does everything*. And herein lies a profound paradox of the Christian's experience. Faith is simultaneously an exercise of our will and the impartation of divine strength. And from that marvelous mixture spring joy and peace and an abundance of

²¹⁸ "New Hope," Our Daily Bread, RBC Ministries, May 21, 2004 (<http://www.rbc.org/odb/odb-08-06-07.shtml>)

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hope. Are you in a totally helpless situation? Strength gone? All options exhausted? If you have trusted Jesus as your Savior, God will strengthen you to keep on believing. As you trust Him, He'll give you not only joy and peace, but also hope when all hope is gone.”

In closing, If you are low on hope, please be informed that you have come to the right place: the house covered by the anointing of Jesus. God knows and hears your needs. **Psalm 9:17-19 (Amplified Bible)** reads: “18For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the expectation and hope of the meek and the poor shall not perish forever.” Furthermore, **Psalm 10:17 (Contemporary English Version)** reads: “You listen to the longings of those who suffer. You offer them hope, and you pay attention to their cries for help.”

I have hope because I give thanks to God and I give thanks to God due the hope in my heart. **Psalm 136: 1-2, 26 (King James Version)** reads: “O Give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever...O give thanks unto the God of heaven; for his mercy endureth for ever.”

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May 19, 2010

Bible Commentary: Faithful Yet Subjected to Feuding

May 19, 2010

“Faithful, Yet Subjected to Feuding”

(author) James Edward Curtis Jr

THANKFULNESS AND HOPE

On May 12, 2010, I wrote about Developing Hope through Articulating and Mediating on Giving Thanks and cited the scripture: **Philippians 4:6-7. Philippians 4:6-7 (King James Version)** reads: “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep you...through Christ Jesus”. This is equivalent to saying that there is hope despite our situations. I concluded by suggesting that if you are low on hope and you go to a person or place of faith, you are covered and protected by Jesus, even during times of strife and conflict.

CONFLICT AND GROWTH

On August 28, 2009, I purchased a compact disc series entitled, “I’m A Survivor”, from Pastor Doctor Zachary Tims. This was an informative set of sermons which encourages one to endure through conflict. Furthermore, on August 19, 2009, I provided my testimony to others about how I am not perfect but I am Growing in God. I mentioned how Jesus is covering me whether I am experiencing conflict in the workplace, in the market place, in the place of worship and in my place of resting. I cited the scriptures **Luke 21** and **Matthew 10: Luke 21:10, 16-19 (New International Version)** reads: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom... You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. All men will hate you because of me (meaning being faithful to Jesus). But not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life.” Furthermore, **Matthew 10:17 (New International Version)** reads: “Be on your guard against men; they

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will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues.” The expression of faith can be diluted when experiencing such forms of conflict.

RESPONDING TO CONFLICT WITH FAITH

Individuals, familiar with the Bible, are also familiar with **Matthew 10:16 (New King James Version)** which states we are to be “sheep in the midst of wolves (and) harmless as doves,” when proclaiming faith and experiencing conflict. Individuals, familiar with the Bible, are also familiar being courageous and bold, like David in the books of **I Samuel, II Samuel** and **I Kings**, when proclaiming faith and experiencing conflict. Thus, there exist two ways to respond when proclaiming faith and experiencing conflict: passive and non-passive.

The Example of CBS’ “Survivor”

I also watched the 2010 television series, “Survivor”, on CBS and wondered about the methodology I would use to attempt to win a game of Survivor. Would I employ the recent *very non-passive* method of Russell—say anything to anyone? Or, would I employ the recent *semi-passive* method of Sandra—who endured the insults of Russell? First, I would probably consult the Bible. In my writing, [I am Growing in God](#), I cited **Matthew 18:15-17** which suggests the feuding parties should talk and, if there is no resolution, then others should be informed of the matter. In the “Survivor” television series on CBS, the *semi-passive* Sandra and the *very non-passive* Russell made their cases in the finals to the “Survivor” jury, and the repeatedly-insulted, *semi-passive* Sandra was victorious.

[The Good News](#) for those, like James Edward Curtis Jr, who are semi-passive and have endured harsh words, repeatedly, over time, is Jesus. Recently, I have experienced some trauma due to harsh words and questionable events initiated by others. However, I received wise counsel from Pastors and lawyers, as encouraged by **Proverbs 11:14**; I was also given a forum to express my concern over what I experienced; And, now, I am allowing the forces of Jesus to resolve the matter tangibly, possibly in manner that

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inflates my pockets, or intangibly, simply in a manner that increases my standing with Jesus and enhances my capacities in the divine kingdom. **Hebrews 11:6** and **John 10:10** suggests that both are possible: **Hebrews 11:6 (New International Version)** reads: “without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him”. **John 10:10 (King James Version)** reads Jesus came “that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

CONCLUSION

In closing, I am asking the men and women of faith to please stand with Jesus because **Philippians 4:13 (King James Version)** reads “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Finally, I am also asking the men and women of faith to please stand with Jesus because there’s a hymn and conclusion of my writing and speech entitled, “What is Your Real Reason? Is It Jesus?”, which accurately states, “There’s not a friend like Jesus. No not one.”

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June 15, 2010

Leadership: The Goals and Objectives of The Men's Ministry



Since 1990

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Senior Pastor and FounderDeacon Joyce Milton
Church ClerkDeacon Roberta Tucker
Chairperson of DeaconsDeacon Ernestine Buggs
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New Commandment Baptist Church (NCBC) Men's Council Ministry Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the NCBC Men's Council Ministry are:

- A. To empower men by employing the inspirational Word of God to become godly influences:
 - a. in the Church, and
 - b. in neighboring community; and
- B. To fellowship :
 - a. with God the Father, God the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ Almighty), and God the Holy Spirit
 - b. with men in NCBC,
 - c. with other men in other churches,
 - d. with community leaders, and
 - e. with other men in the community

Strategies

The strategies of the NCBC Men's Council Ministry are:

- A. To employ the gifts of males at NCBC in NCBC Men's Council Ministry leadership (consisting of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Chaplain, Assistant Chaplain), for instance, where the
 - a. NCBC Men's Council Ministry President and NCBC Men's Council Ministry Vice-President presides over the meetings and events of the NCBC Men's Council Ministry
 - b. NCBC Men's Council Ministry Treasurer and NCBC Men's Council Ministry Assistant Treasurer collects and manages attendee dues of \$5 a meeting (contingent upon the financial condition of each attendee of NCBC Men's Council Ministry meetings)
 - c. NCBC Men's Council Ministry Secretary and NCBC Men's Council Ministry Assistant Secretary records and distributes the minutes of each meeting/event
 - d. NCBC Men's Council Ministry Chaplain or NCBC Men's Council Ministry Assistant Chaplain leads the men in opening and closing prayers, and schedules a male Minister or male Deacon to make a presentation inspired by the Bible to the men attending each NCBC Men's Council Ministry event (contingent on time available)
- B. To integrate new males of NCBC into the ministries of NCBC, and integrate existing NCBC males, who are not involved in ministry, into the ministries of NCBC
- C. To coordinate a set of wholesome events, consistent with the goals and objectives of the NCBC Men's Council Ministry, for instance,
 - a. Singing in the NCBC male chorus
 - b. Assisting Deacon C Thomas in providing flowers to NCBC women on Valentine's Day
 - c. Cooking and serving breakfast at the annual NCBC Women's all-night session
 - d. Fellowshiping at NCBC bowling outings
 - e. Coordinating NCBC fundraisers, i.e. a male chorus musical concert
 - f. Coordinating a NCBC Men's Day

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August 4, 2010

Leadership: Ministry Leadership Training

Below is a description of the
July 2010 Regent University Project Bridges Seminar
Summarized by James Curtis Jr

On July 10, 2010, Maurice Buford, the Naval Chaplain for the Marine Corps University, facilitated a seminar entitled, "Awakening the Compassionate Leader in You". The facilitator used instant response survey technology to measure the perceptions of the seminar attendees concerning compassionate leadership and small group discussions throughout his presentation. The attendees were provided a meal during one of the breaks.

The importance of the discussion of compassionate leadership

The facilitator presented a leadership **scale** where leaders are

- (1) not committed/not excited
- (2) get fired up
- (3) serve with strength
- (4) plateau
- (5) step back
- (6) let someone else do it/retire

The facilitator described the importance of compassionate leadership due to

- (1) the word of God (Matthew 9:35-38: Jesus...was moved with compassion)
- (2) hurting people
- (3) 10 of 100 executives fail
- (4) a survey showing trust in military, small business and authorities exceeded trust in religion

The facilitator provided an academic and Bible-based definition of compassionate leadership, which includes:(the academic definition) Compassionate leadership seeks the greatest good, feels pain, loves and seeks to help, and (the Biblical definition) Compassionate leadership is being together with someone's pain in love (1 Corinthians 13:3-7), and (the antonym) Non-compassionate leadership is egoism, greed, an un-teachable spirit and unresolved pain

The facilitator quoted from Jim Collins, How the Mighty Fall and described five (5) leadership patterns one should not follow.

I. Do not cultivate a hubris born of success: The facilitator presented academic and Biblical definitions of hubris. (The academic definition) Hubris is ego where the entire universe revolves around them; arrogant where someone is believed to be better than someone else; and nasty. (The Biblical example) King Saul was used to describe hubris behavior (1 Samuel 18:7-9). The facilitator quoted The Future of Christianity by A.E. McGrath when discussing a non-compassionate approach to leadership: 'McDonaldization'. The facilitator described 'McDonaldization' as efficiency, calculability, predictability, control, feeling 'like a number', 'Pastor doesn't know my name', '(simply) requesting resources', and, in sum, 'tithes, numbers and media air time'.

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To counter this thought process, the facilitator suggested one should focus on compassionate servant leadership, described in Philippians 2:5-8: 'made in the likeness of men'. The facilitator defined compassionate servant leadership as the natural feeling in which one wants to serve. The facilitator suggested modeling leadership, based on the Bible, involves the fruit of spirit (Galatians 5:22) and abiding in Jesus (John 15:5). Furthermore, the facilitator suggested persons need to make the compassionate leader arise by

- (1) seeking forgiveness for whatever needs to be forgiven
- (2) understanding 'I' am not the issue
- (3) being comfortable being uncomfortable
- (4) (God) gets the glory
- (5) quality time with God

II. Do not cultivate an undisciplined pursuit of more: (The Biblical example) King Saul was used as an example of undisciplined pursuit of more (1 Samuel 13:11-13), when King Saul blamed followers, Samuel and the Philistines for his choices. The facilitator suggested compassionate leaders should be excellent in what (they) do.

The facilitator described a Biblical and academic process for compassionate critical thinking. The Biblical example of compassionate critical thinking is trying spirits (1 John 4:1) and reasoning together (Isaiah 1:18). The facilitator presented eight (8) elements of reasoning for compassionate critical thinking, which include

- (1) goals
- (2) questions
- (3) facts (consider biases and filters, and information lased with biases)
- (4) theories (and concepts)
- (5) inference (conclusions based on interpretation of assumptions)
- (6) assumptions (conscious and unconscious belief)
- (7) point of view
- (8) implication (possible, probable and necessary)

The facilitator stated God speaks to us through words (of the Bible), people, dreams and circumstances to make us compassionate critical thinkers.

III. Do not overlook the risk and peril (of group thinking): The facilitator defined group thinking as the deterioration of mental efficiency or moral judgment in the place of group solidarity. The facilitator presented a discussion on why we follow and six (6) psychological needs, including the:

- (1) need to fill our parenting needs
- (2) need for security and certainty
- (3) need to feel chosen
- (4) need for community
- (5) fear of isolation
- (6) fear of personal powerlessness

The facilitator suggested one should overcome group thinking with compassion, based on Ephesians 4:26 (anger separate from sin), Galatians 6:1 (a spirit of gentleness), and Luke 13:12-13. To overcome group thinking with compassion, the facilitator suggested having:

- (1) the courage to assume responsibility
- (2) the courage to serve
- (3) the courage to challenge
- (4) the courage to participate in transformation

IV. Do not grasp for Salvation: The facilitator questioned the push to radically change and the use of fads to change things, and cited Matthew 16:13-17 (Jesus identified as the Christ), Luke 9:28 (having a consistent core, i.e., Peter, John and James), and Psalms 119:71 (humility in affliction). The facilitator suggested if not rested, we are going to give God (minimum).

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V. Do not cultivate a lack of association with the current dynamic (time expired)

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September 24, 2010

Leadership: Evangelism Training

Evangelism Training

City of Zion Church (Laurel, MD)

Elder Gregory O Strong, Pastor

Donald W Watson, Associate Minister and Instructor

September 24, 2010 at 7:00 PM

The Way of the Master Study Guide distributed (Cost \$7) and sign in occurred at 7 pm

Information distributed ("Salvation: An Hour With Your Bible" pamphlet, "The Ten Commandments" reading and "Roman's Row/The R's of Salvation" reading); Encouraged to memorize the distributed information

Praise and Worship

Scripture Readings from The Holy Bible (New International Version) and memory scriptures:

Romans 10:12-15 of The Holy Bible (New International Version): For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Matthew 28:19 of The Holy Bible (New International Version): Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Luke 21:4-7 of The Holy Bible (New International Version): All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down." "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"

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Acts 11:19-21 of The Holy Bible (New International Version): Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

Prayer

Introduction of the Way of the Master formula

Class instructions (Call if you cannot make it, enter through the side door, and ask questions—there are no dumb questions)

“Lesson 1: Cultivating Compassion for the Lost” (page 11-19)

“Sharing Your Experiences...What are you hoping to accomplish by taking this course?” (Why are you here?) I informed the class: “I have been blessed by people who have invested in the word (in The Holy Bible) and want to recruit other people to share in the encouragement I receive from the word”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 of The Holy Bible (New International Version) and memory scripture: “All Scripture is God-Breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (on any occasion).

You also have to be prayed up or you will operate in the natural.

“Point to Ponder...We can have compassion for those we care about.”

Luke 16:19-31 of The Holy Bible: "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers.

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Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

“View the Video Cultivating Compassion for the Lost” I described the video as ‘interesting’. Points presented include: you are here because you have love and care about where others spend eternity; A story of a firefighter with a lack of concern presented (At a roundtable discussion, I was encouraged to judge the firefighter and suggested the term ‘stalemate’ because how could a firefighter be a firefighter have lack of concern); Questions presented to people on the street about heaven and hell; If we love people we have to do something; A presentation of ‘Does God exist?’ and sharing faith occurred; Tools on how to reach others presented; ‘Eat, sleep and drink evangelism’ encouraged.

The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20:2-17 of The Holy Bible (New International Version) and memory scripture: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

[1] "You shall have no other gods before me."

[2] "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments."

[3] "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."

[4] "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

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[5] "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

[6] "You shall not murder."

[7] "You shall not commit adultery."

[8] "You shall not steal."

[9] "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

[10] "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor"

"Apply the Principles...Who are the people whose salvation you are most concerned?" (the needy, although I must carefully reflect on helping strangers with unknown motives versus familiar people in which I have some information)

"Apply the Principles...Write a letter to God. God these are my hopes and desires for this course" (the encouragement of others soundly; to be equipped with common speaking points for effective evangelism)

Speak the word; you are not going to reach everybody (but you have to say it; you could speak that word of life)

Matthew 19:16-19 of The Holy Bible (New International Version): Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." "Which ones?" the man inquired. Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the

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kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Quality Quote...“The saving of souls...will be an all-absorbing passion to him...Charles Spurgeon” God holds everyone accountable (and sent you to do an assignment)

Homework

Memorize “The Ten Commandments” (Exodus 20:2-17 of The Holy Bible (New International Version)

Answer Questions 1-11 (page 16-19 from The Way of The Master)

Memorize Hebrews 9:27 of The Holy Bible (New International Version)

Next Week (Friday, October 1, 2010 at 7:00 PM)

Deacon Dennis Washington will make presentation on “Missions”

Homework: Answer Questions 1-11 (page 16-19 from The Way of The Master)

[1] Read Jeremiah 1:5-10. Do you think that God’s intimate knowledge of Jeremiah (verse 5) was confined to him, or do you think God has this same knowledge of all of us (see Psalm 139)?

Jeremiah 1:5-10 of The Holy Bible (New International Version): "Before I formed you in the womb I knew [a] you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." "Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

God has the same knowledge of all of us. In Genesis 1:27 of The Holy Bible (New International Version), the author states “God created man in his own image”. Psalm 139 is a psalm of King David, the second King of Israel and Judea, to the Lord God. In Psalm 139:3b of The Holy Bible (New

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International Version) , King David states: “you are familiar with all my ways”. In Jeremiah 5:5b, the Lord states to the Prophet Jeremiah: “I knew you, before you were born”. These three passages confirm God’s knowledge of all of us.

[2] What was Jeremiah’s response to the knowledge that God had set him apart for His purpose (verse 6)?

The Prophet Jeremiah responded to God the same way Gideon responded to God: with humility. In Jeremiah 1:6 of The Holy Bible (New International Version), the Prophet Jeremiah states: “I do know what you speak”, or, in other words, the Prophet Jeremiah cannot comprehend his selection as a Prophet and his setting apart.

Similarly, Gideon was selected to save Israel from the Midianites, who “invaded the country” “whenever the Israelites planted their crops” (Judges 6:3 of of The Holy Bible (New International Version). Gideon stated “How can I save Israel?” “and I am the least of my family” (Judges 6:15). Instead, when selected to help the people of God, we should be encouraged by the scriptures, including 1 Peter 2:9 of The Holy Bible (New International Version), where the Apostle Peter states: “you are a chosen people”.

[3] What was the real reason underlying Jeremiah’s excuse (verse 8)?

The Lord described the Prophet Jeremiah as “afraid” in the book of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:8 of The Holy Bible (New International Version)). However, Paul writes in the book of Philippians, “Do not be anxious about anything” (Philippians 4:6 of The Holy Bible (New International Version)). This is confirmed in the gospel of Matthew, where Jesus states “do not worry about your life” “but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you” (Matthew 6:25-33 of The Holy Bible (New International Version)).

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June 23, 2010

Leadership: Faith-Based Employment Training



Applicant Background Information

Name James Edward Curtis Jr
 Address 524 Kenyon Street NW 35
 City Washington, DC Zip 20010 Phone (202) 257-9803
 E-mail jamescurtisjr@aol.com

Church Affiliation (if any): New Commandment Baptist Church/Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church

Are you a United States Citizen? Yes Yes No _____

If not, can you provide residency papers? Yes _____ No _____

Will you be able to provide the following forms?

Birth Certificate? Yes Yes No _____ U.S. Social Security Card? Yes Yes No _____

Driver's License? Yes Yes No _____ OR Non-Driver ID? Yes _____ No _____

Please list any physical handicaps or other special needs. Bipolar Disorder (296.64)

Emergency Contact: James Curtis Sr – Father - (205) 457-8862

Educational Background

Circle highest grade achieved	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	GED	Vocational Training [College]	
										Passed GED in Year _____		
<u>Calvin Coolidge Senior</u>	<u>High School</u>							<u>Washington, DC</u>				
High School								City, State				
Enrolled From Year <u>1989</u>	To Year <u>1991</u>	Graduated? Yes <u>Yes</u> No _____										

If you received education or training beyond High School or GED level, what college or vocational training facility did you attend?

Project Bridges/Regent University (Glenarden, MD) April 2010-current
 Spiritual Transformation Program, Central Union Mission (Washington, DC) June 2005-October 2006
 The Ohio State University (Columbus, OH) September 1997-March 2005
 Howard University (Washington, DC) August 1993-May 1996

Training Facility or College Name _____ City, State _____

Enrolled From (see above) To (see above)

Did you receive a certificate or diploma from this college or training facility? Yes Yes No _____

If yes, what training/degree did you receive?

Certificate of Ministry Leadership Program, Project Bridges/Regent University (Glenarden, MD) April 2010-current
 Certificate of Completion, Spiritual Transformation Program, Central Union Mission (Washington, DC) June 2005-October 2006
 Master of Arts in Economics and PhD Program in Economics, The Ohio State University (Columbus, OH) September 1997-March 2005
 Bachelor of Arts in Economics, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Howard University (Washington, DC) August 1993-May 1996



James Edward Curtis Jr
PROJECT DIRECTOR

Encouragement from The Holy Bible: James 1:1,12

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Previous Work Experience List your last four employers, starting with your most recent or current employer. Include military and volunteer experience. Be as complete as possible.

Business Name:	Central Union Mission
Address:	1350 R Street NW Washington, DC 20009
Phone:	(202) 745-7118 x224
What is/was your job title?	Assistant Bookkeeper (Accounts Payable Manager)
What are/were your duties?	Manage the accounts payable process for Central Union Mission and oversee administrative filing of records
Who is/was your supervisor?	David Treadwell (Central Union Mission Executive Director)
Employed From	October 2006 To March 2010
If you are no longer employed here, why did you leave?	Quit (work-related stress)

Business Name:	Central Union Mission
Address:	1350 R Street NW Washington, DC 20009
Phone:	(202) 745-7118 x224
What was your job title?	(Graduate) Intern/Former Student (Spiritual Transformation Program)
What were your duties?	ministry, accounts payable, administrative filing, and building services
Who was your supervisor?	Gregory Strong (former Central Union Mission Men's Ministry Director)
Employed From	June 2005 To October 2006
Why did you leave?	promotion

Business Name:	grants from the National Science Foundation and Ohio State University
Address:	Ohio State University Research Foundation, Columbus, OH 43210
Phone:	(202) 292-6701 (Ohio State University Department of Economics)
What was your job title?	Research Supervisor
What were your duties?	data collection, hire/manage research assistants
Who was your supervisor?	Richard Steckel
Employed From	December 2000 To March 2005
Why did you leave?	Responsibilities associated with PhD program in Economics(term ended)

Business Name:	University of Colorado; Ohio Wesleyan University; Ohio State University
Address:	Denver, CO; Delaware, OH; Columbus, OH
Phone:	(202) 292-6701 (Ohio State University Department of Economics)
What was your job title?	Instructor/ Teaching Assistant
What were your duties?	Lead or assist classroom instruction (undergrad and grad economics)
Who was your supervisor?	Nori Hashimoto (former Chair of the Department of Economics)
Employed From	September 1998 To July 2002
Why did you leave?	term ended

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Security

Have you ever been convicted of a felony and/or served time in the past seven years? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, please describe below. *Providing this information will not disqualify a person from Jobs Partnership and may help in obtaining successful employment.*

Incident	Year	City, State	Charge

Current Employment Status Check all that apply.

Unemployed Yes Full-time job * Part-time job * Receiving Public assistance ___
 * self-employed; however, I, James Curtis Jr, have received no income (yet) from self-employment

Current Marital/ Family/Housing Status

Married ___ Single Yes Divorced ___ Widowed ___
 Do you have children? Yes ___ No No If yes, how many? ___
 Housing Arrangements:
 Rent Apartment Yes Rent House ___ Own Home ___ Homeless ___ Other ___

Jobs Partnership Training Information

Will you need to work part-time during your Jobs Partnership training? Yes Yes No ___
 Will you need transportation for your Jobs Partnership training? Yes ___ No No
 What is your reason for taking Jobs Partnership training? ___
 I, James Curtis Jr, am taking Jobs Partnership training for growth leading to income from employment

 What is your present job objective or vocational goal? The job objective/vocational goal of James Curtis Jr is to fulfill director/management/professional employment openings in the finance and administration sector, available in the District of Columbia and Southern Maryland, with a title, salary-income, and tenure commensurate with schooling, experiences, and cost of living increases
 Job Title? The job titles I, James Curtis Jr, am seeking include (compensated ministry/outreach), administrative director, accounting manager, financial analyst, economist, and professor
 Other Activities/Interests The current other activities/interests of James Curtis Jr include community service, and studying/meditating on the responsibilities and outcomes of faith in Jesus.

June 23, 2010

 Applicant Signature Date



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Encouragement from The Holy Bible; James 1:1,12



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August 29, 2011

Leadership: Faith Employment Training Graduation Speech

James Edward Curtis Jr

Jobs Partnership Greater Washington

Graduation Ceremony

Scheduled December 16, 2010

Revised August 29, 2011



Through personalized Jobs Partnership Greater Washington instruction and through private study, I learned to continue to read the word of God, The Holy Bible (2 Timothy 2:15), that is God the Father, God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit/Holy Ghost (1 John 5:7), while seeking one's life purpose (Jeremiah 29:11), not only to prevent the second death (Revelation 21:14), but also to look forward and be present in the new heaven (Revelation 21:1), and maximize ascending faith (Genesis 28:12a).

When employment opportunities emerge, remember to believe in the salvation power of Jesus (Matthew 1:21), and that the source of your employment capacity is from above (Proverbs 21:1). Believe in Jesus by employing faith in what is seen and what is unseen (Hebrews 11:1), and remember belief is insufficient without works (James 1:14-26) even though we are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). Furthermore, the source of employment capacity is from above: God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1), and God gave man the opportunity to administer God's creation (Genesis 1:28, 2:15).

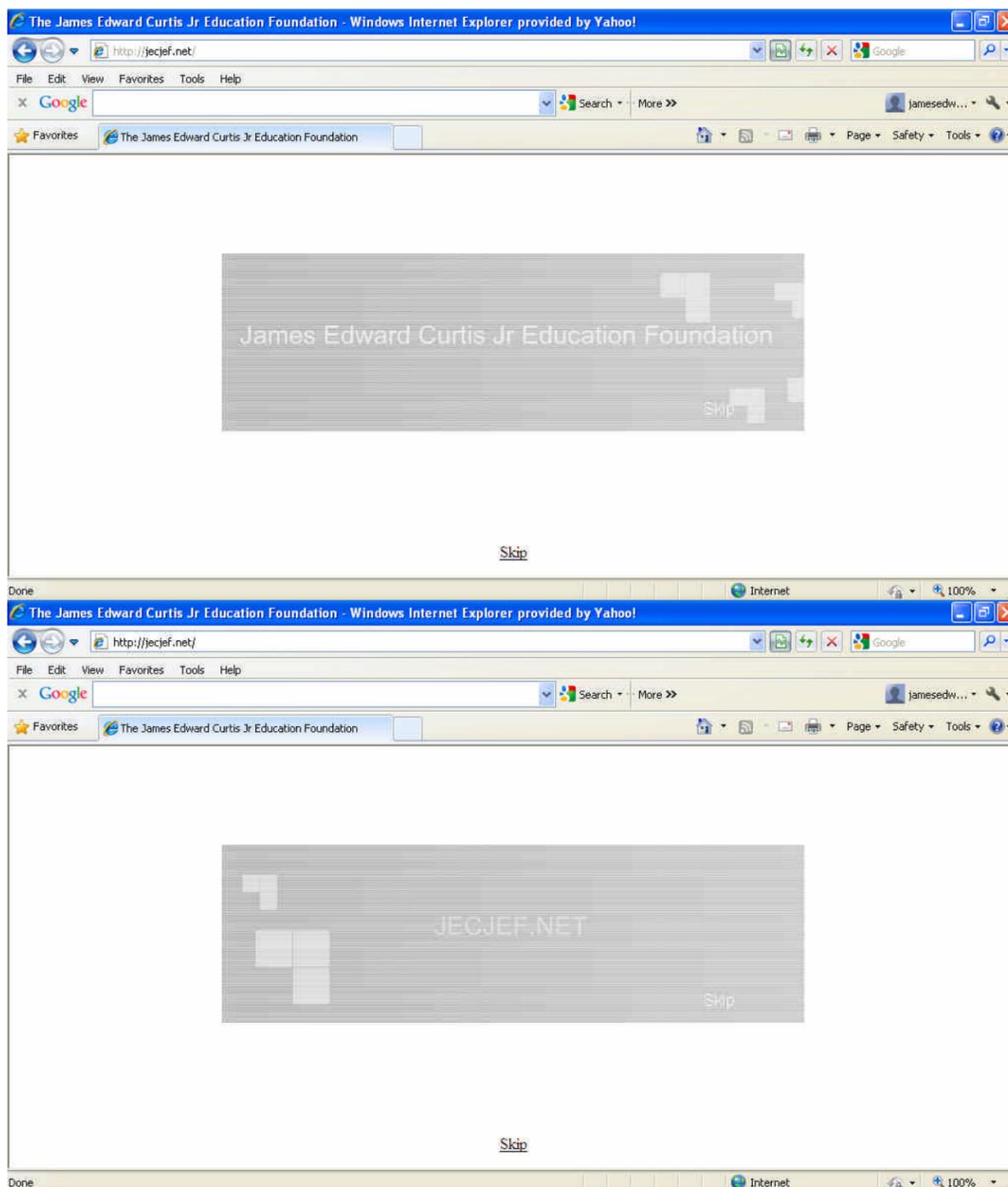
If a challenge occurs on your job which is too difficult for you, or if a shortfall occurs in your life, possibly due to no fault of your own (Romans 14:13), confess Lord Jesus, in your manner of confession (Romans 10:9), & observe the salvation power of the Lord Jesus Christ emerge in your life (Romans 3:23-25, John 10:10, Philippians 4:13). In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, may God bless you & may you continue to be a blessing to others. Thank you.

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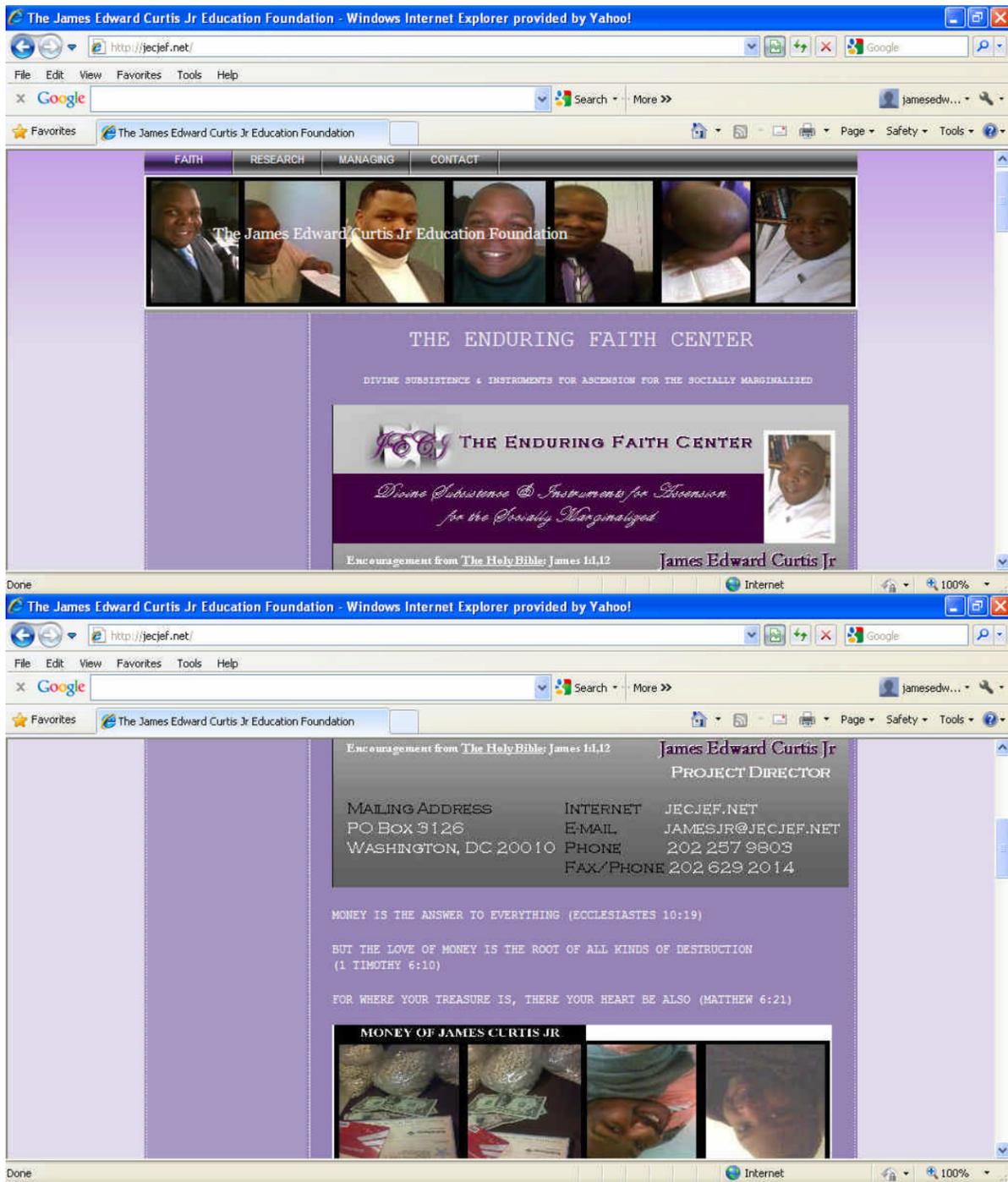
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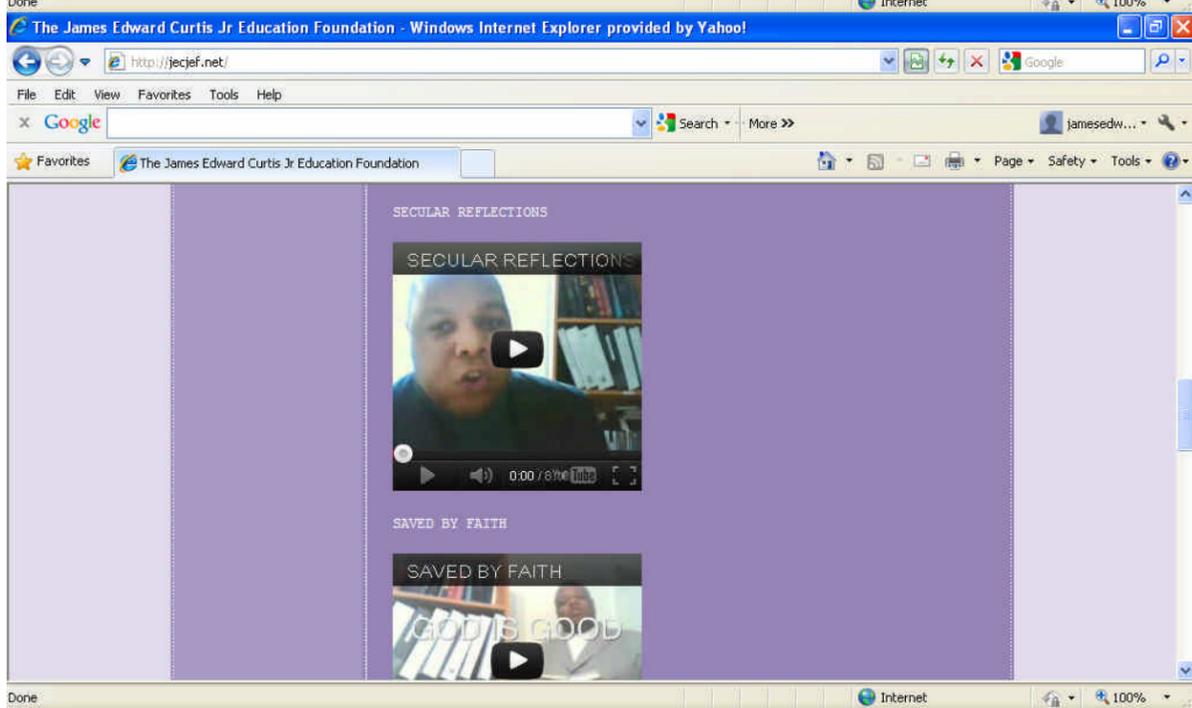
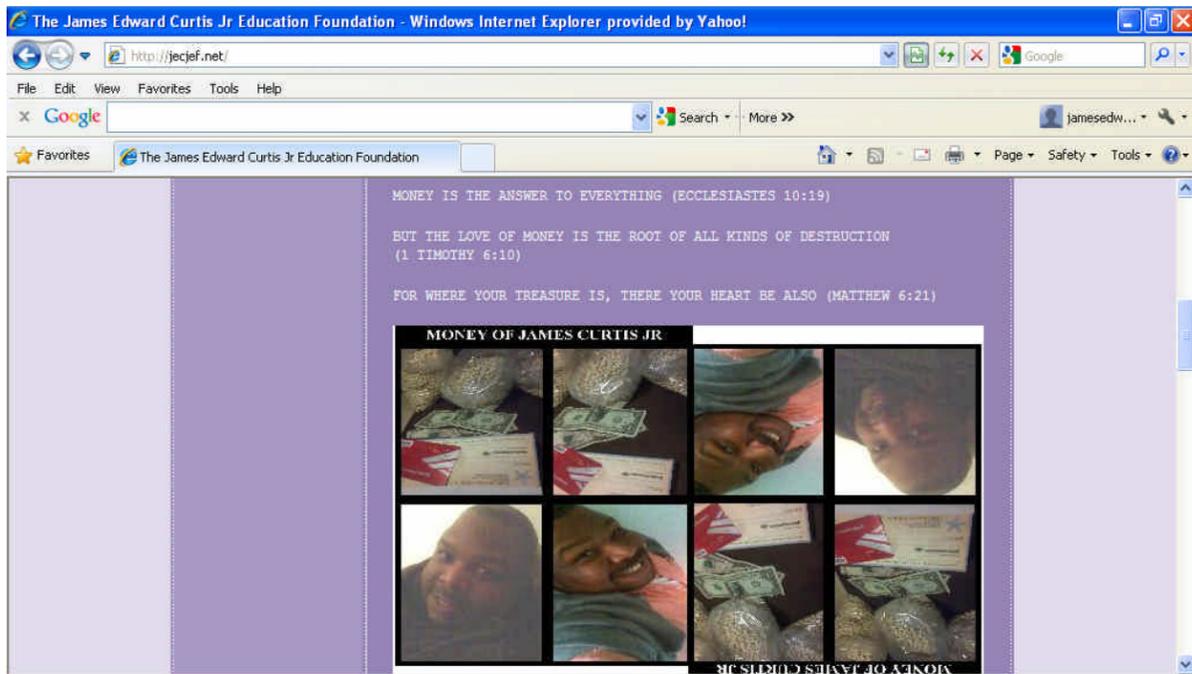
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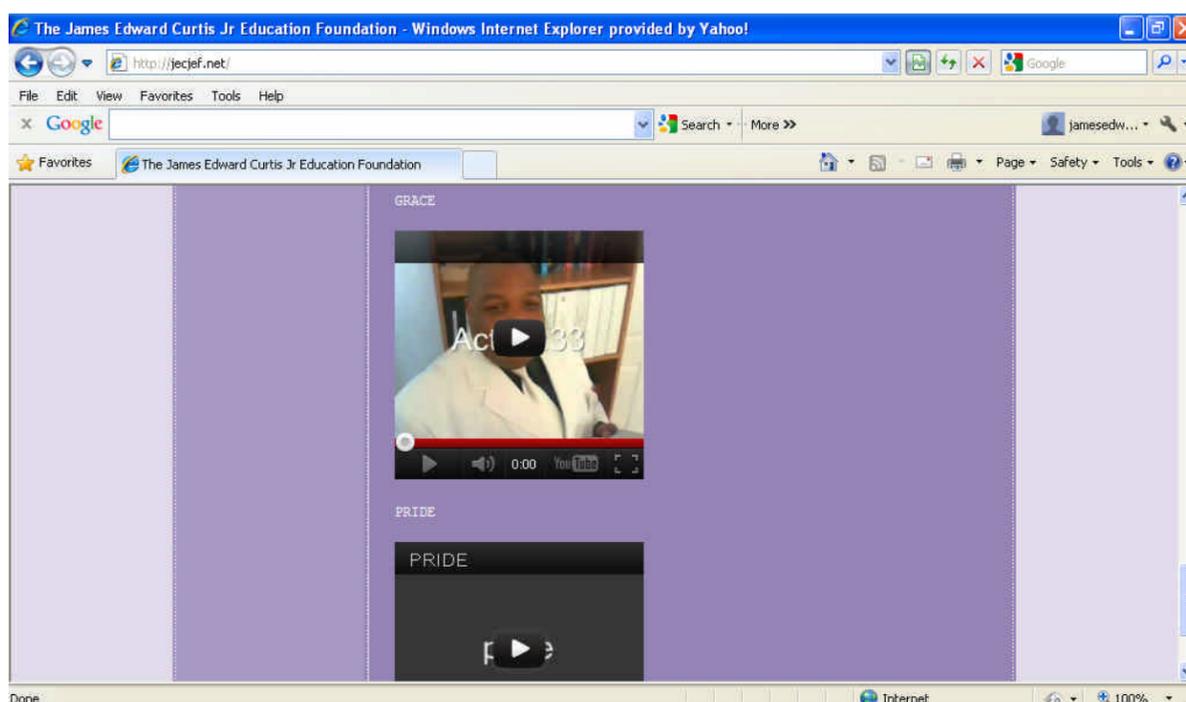
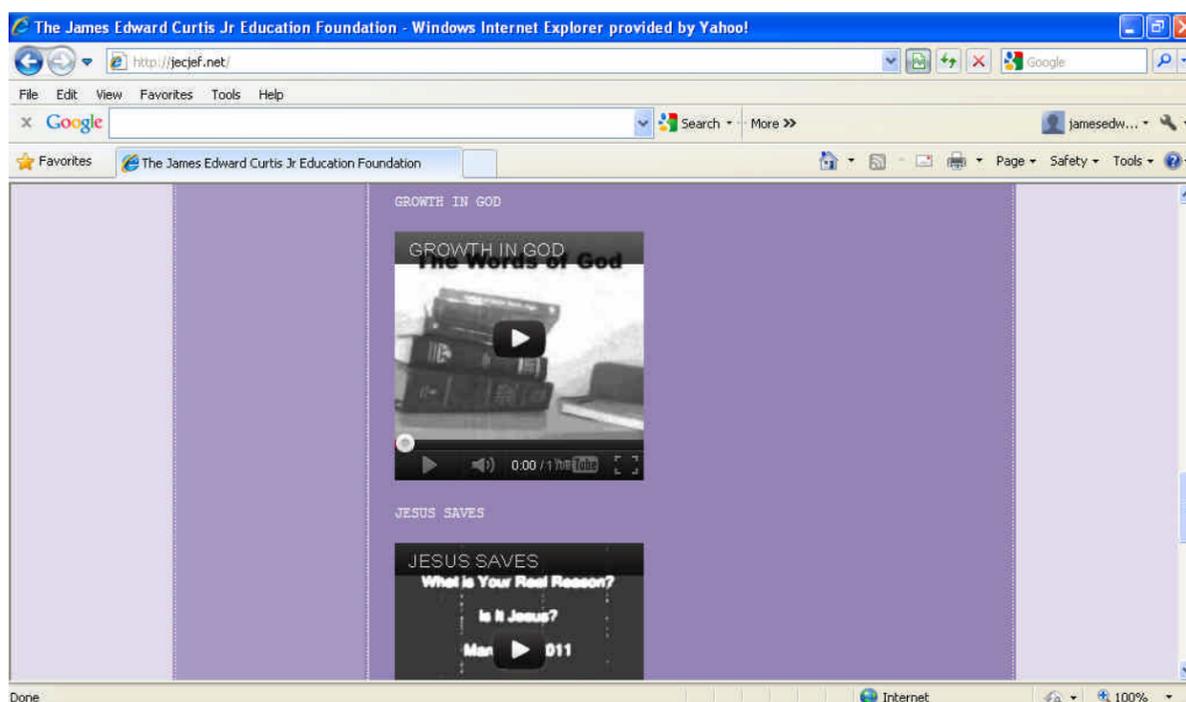
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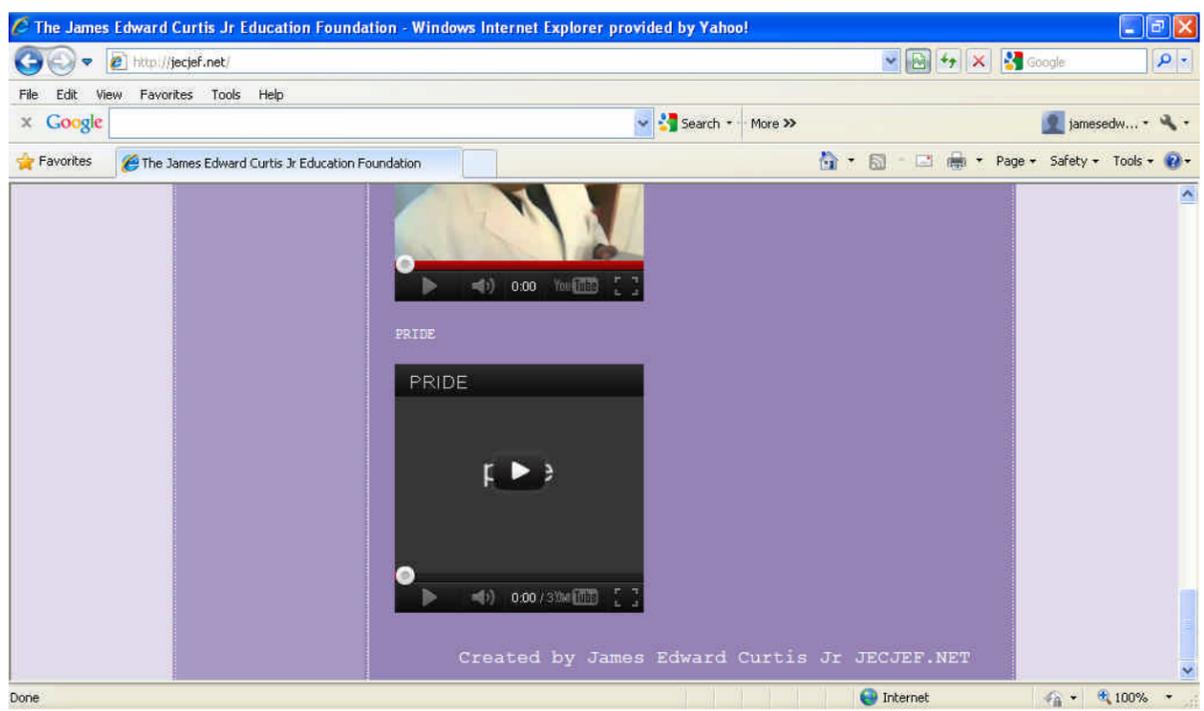
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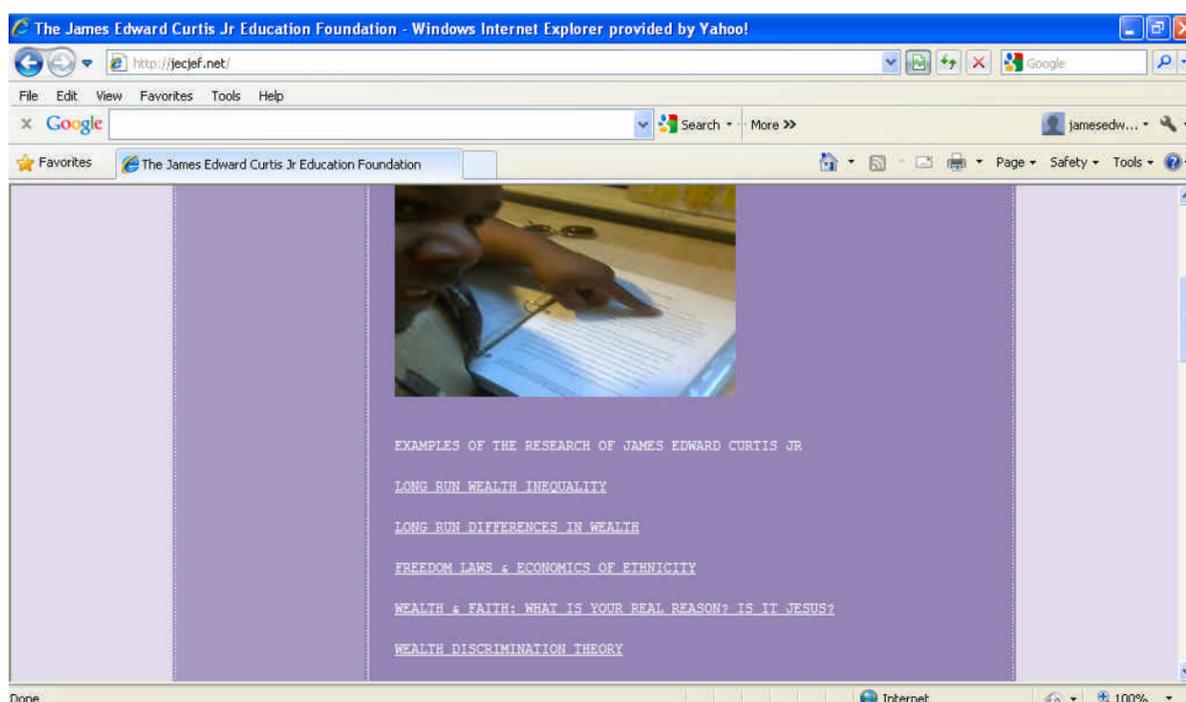
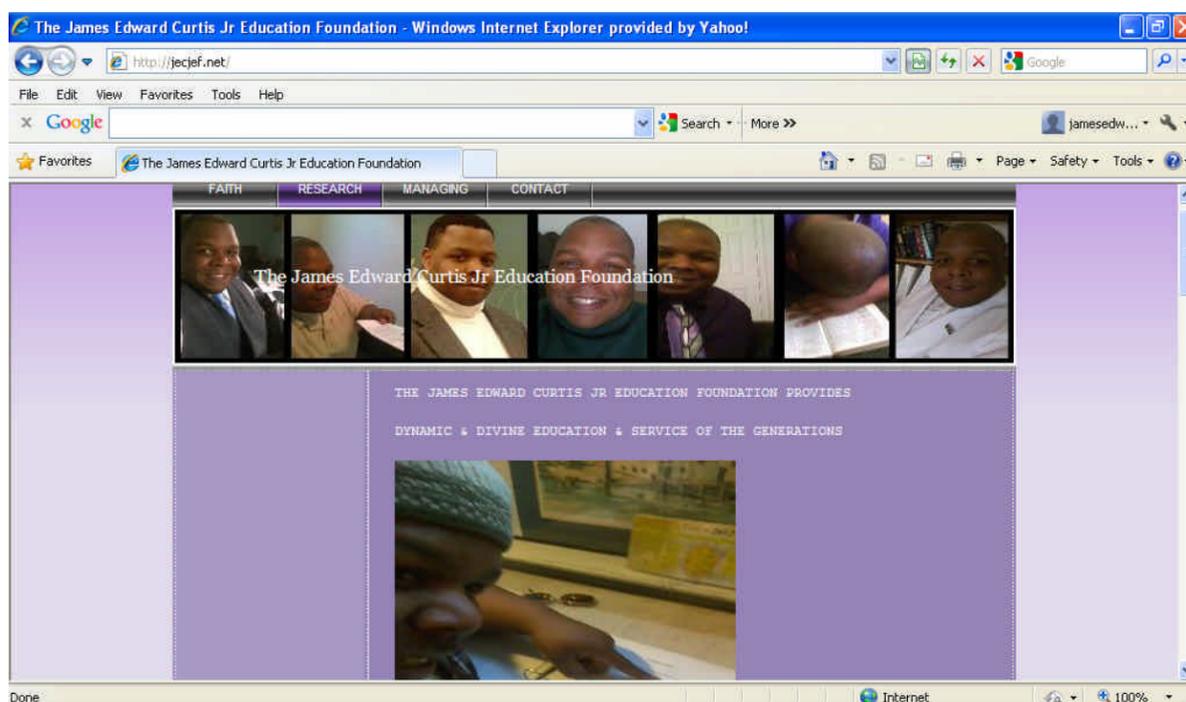
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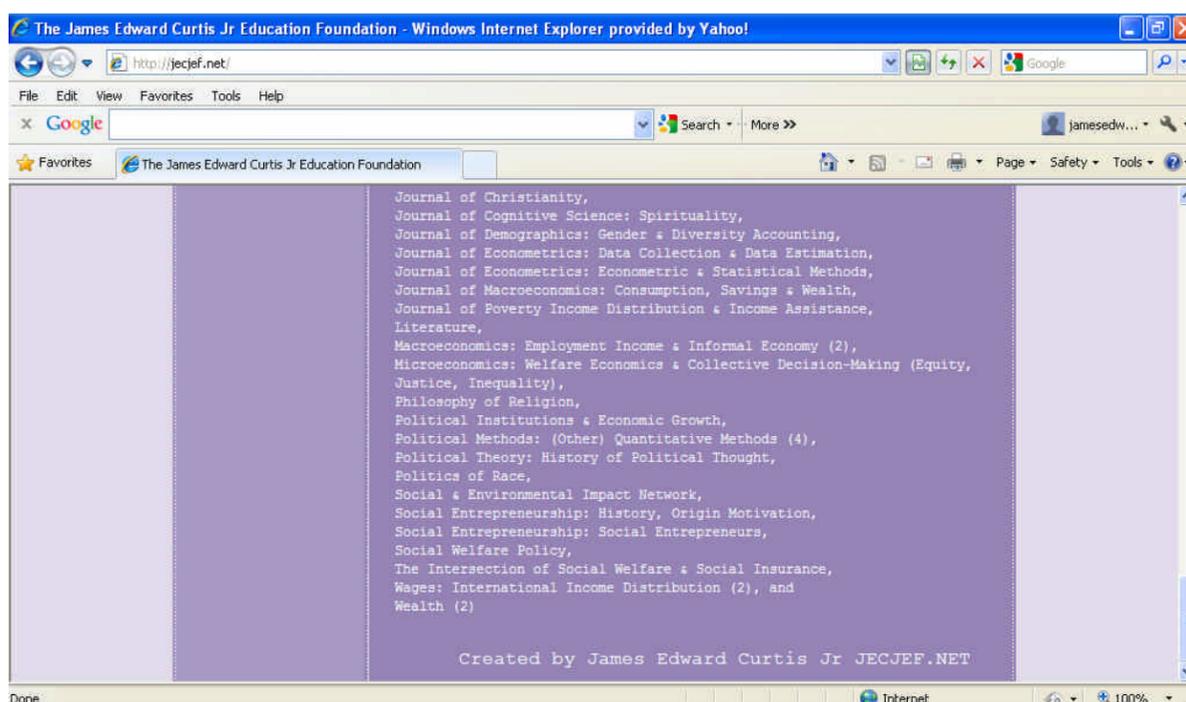
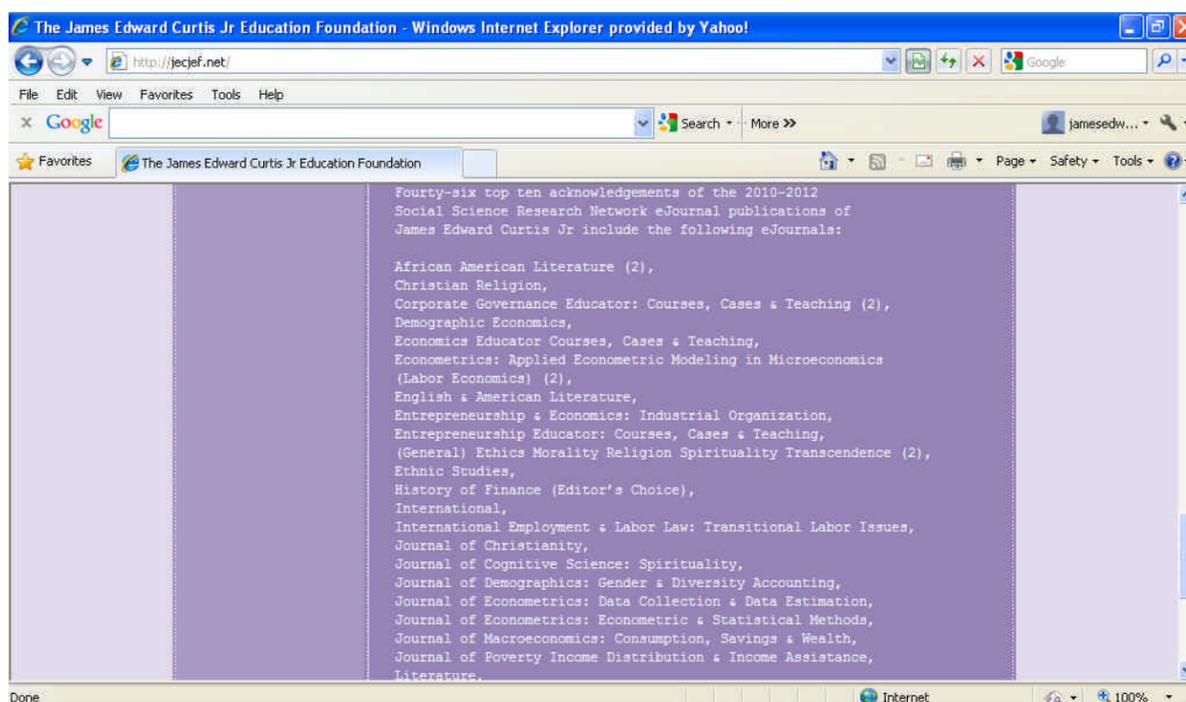
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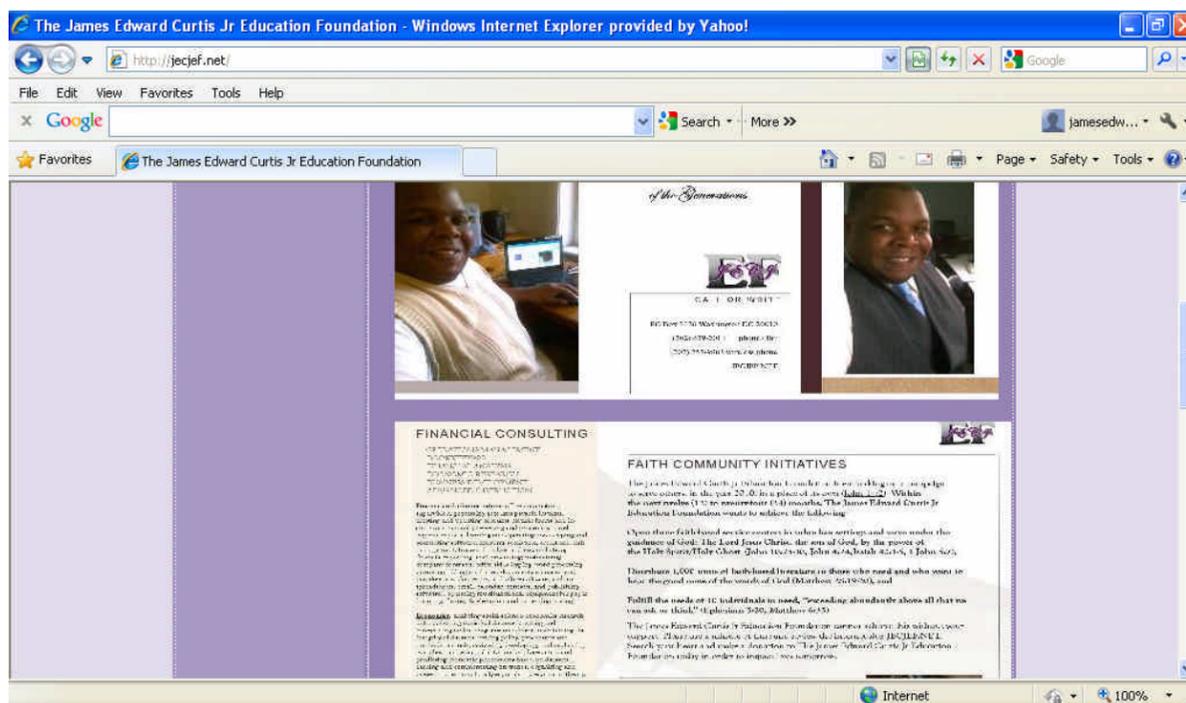
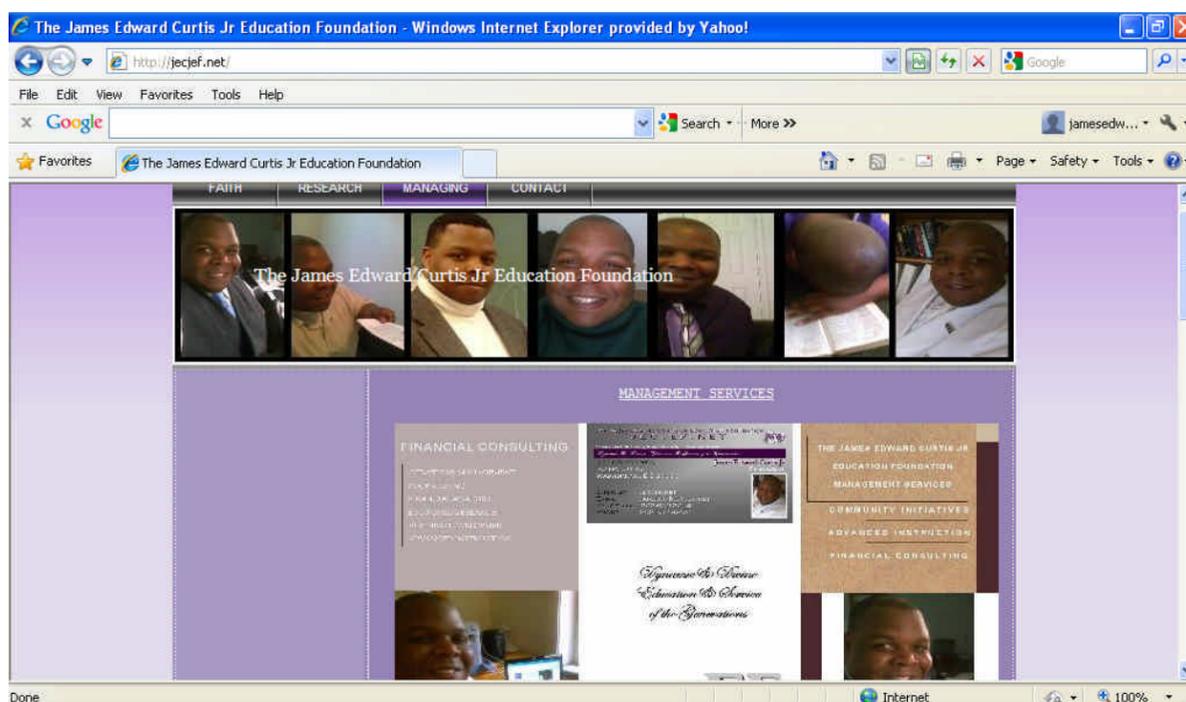
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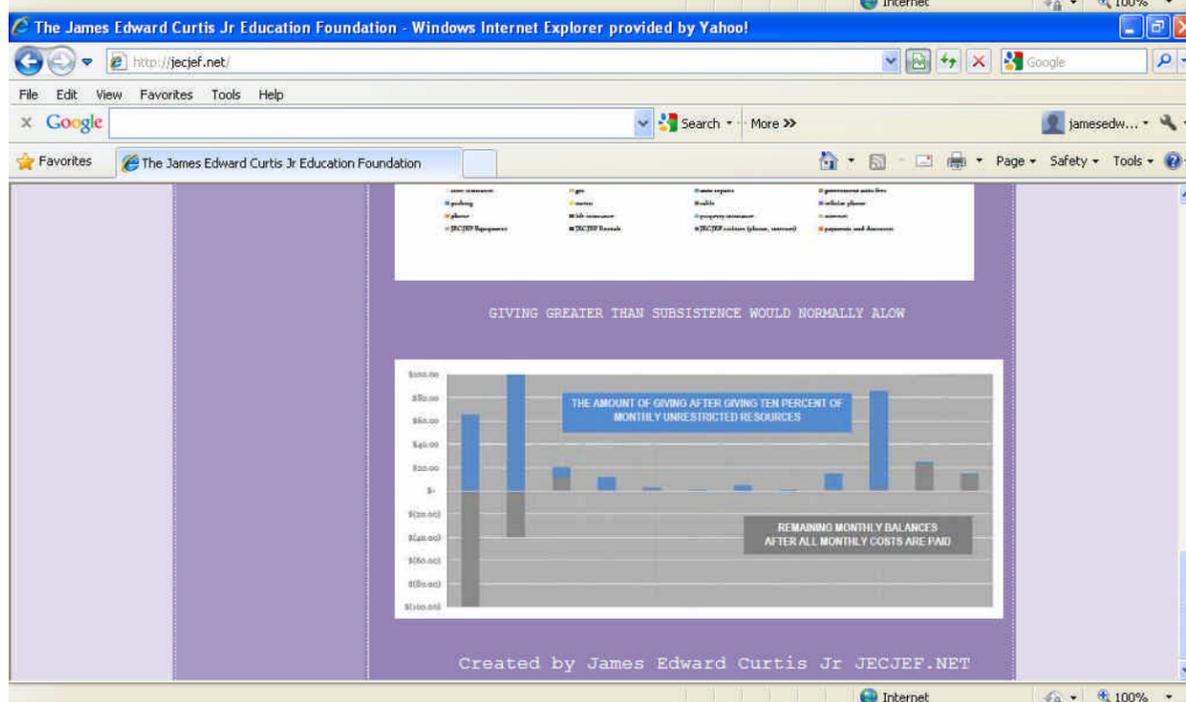
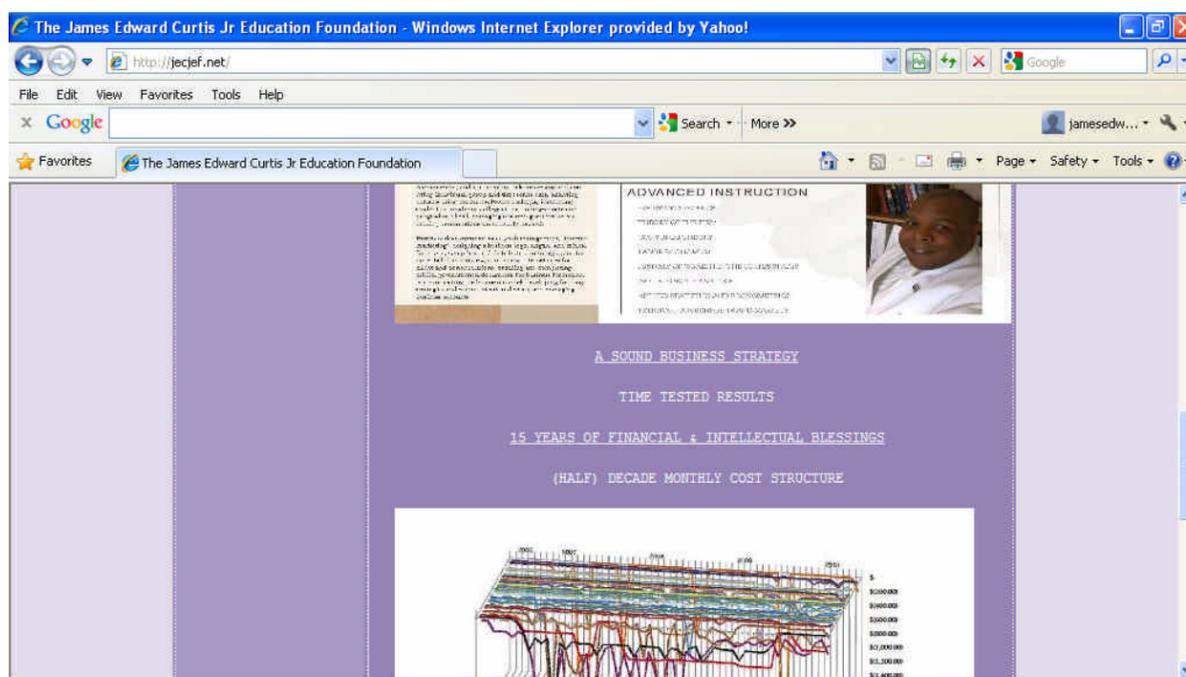
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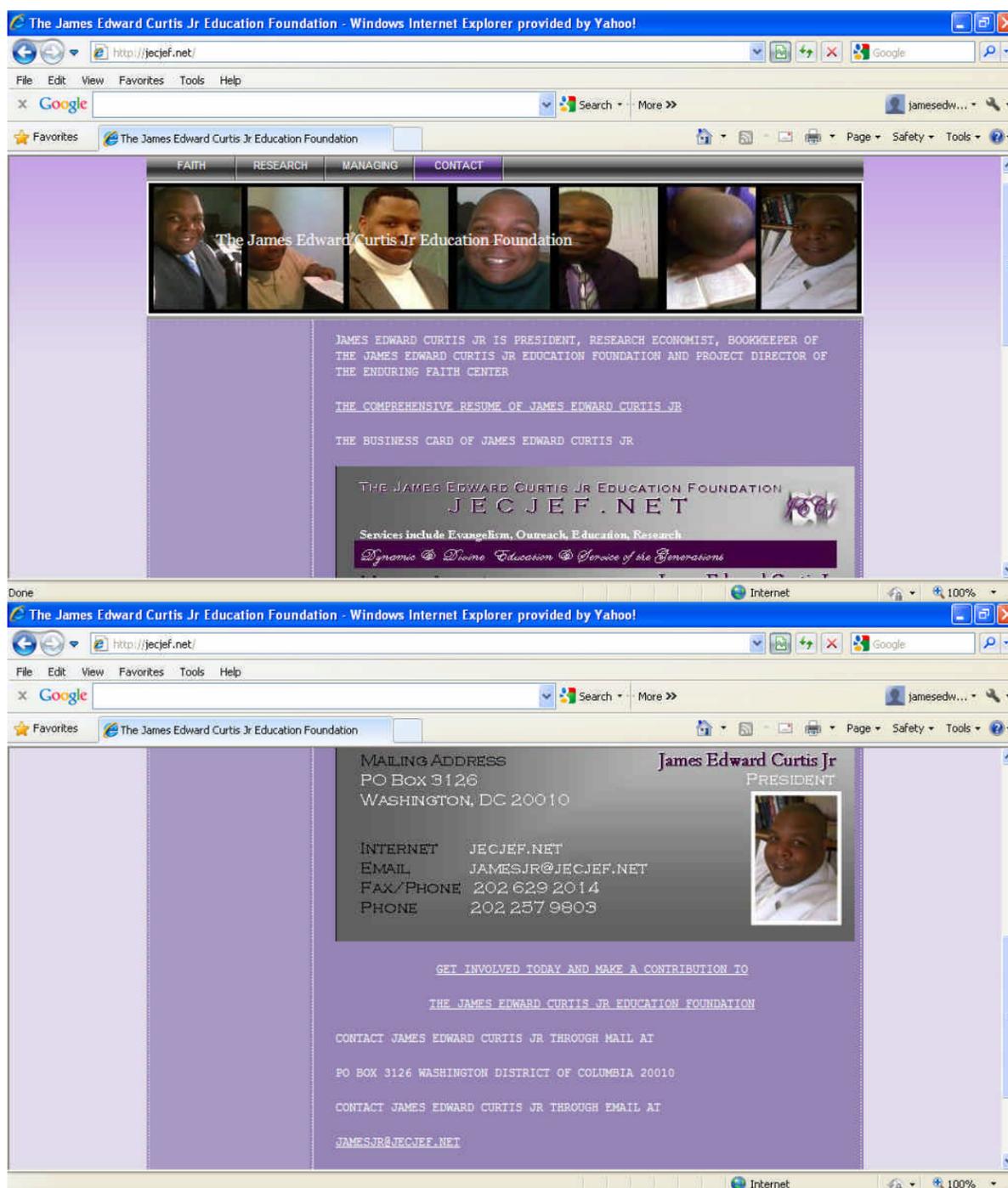
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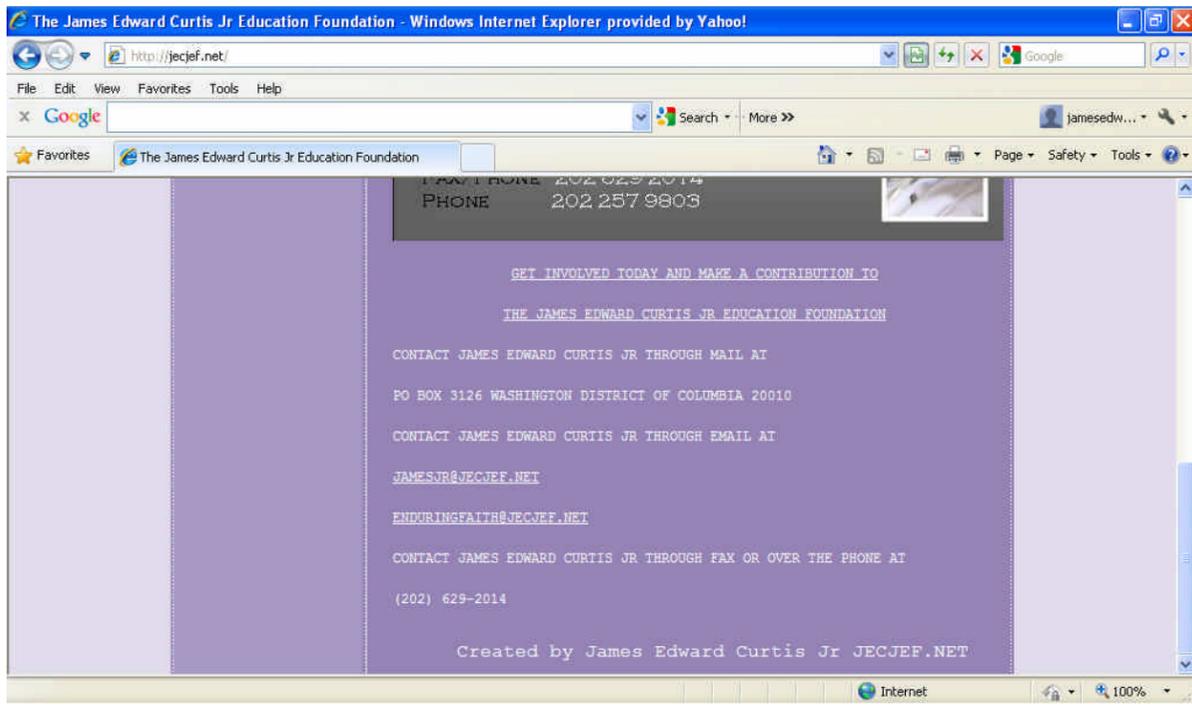


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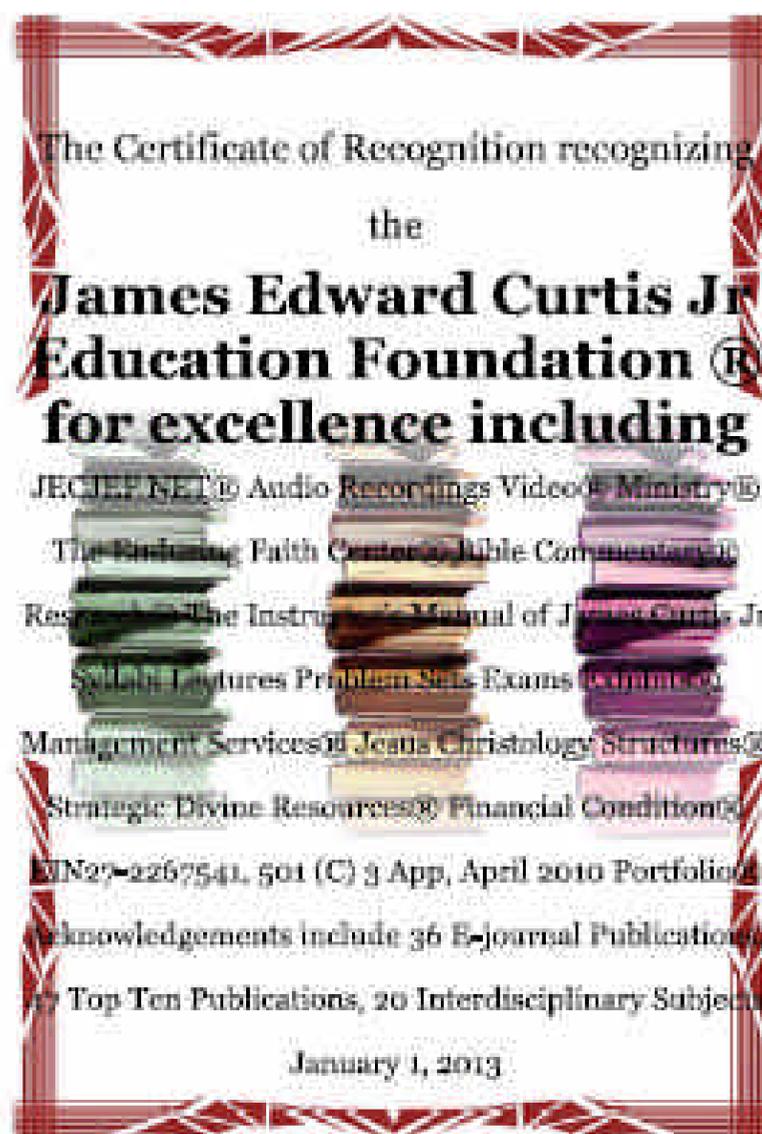
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January 1, 2013

Leadership: Recognition of The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation



James Edward Curtis, Jr.
 President, Bookkeeper, Research Economist, Director
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The James Edward Curtis Jr Education Foundation

Jesus Saves University

In recognition of successful completion of the requisite course of study and upon certified nomination of Faculty.

The Board of Regents has conferred upon

James Edward Curtis Jr.

in recognition of the satisfactory fulfillment of the prescribed requirements for the degree of

Doctorate of Jesus Christ

with the rights, honors, and privileges thereunto appertaining
Dated this first day of January, two thousand and thirteen



Robert Miller
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

James Davis
President of University

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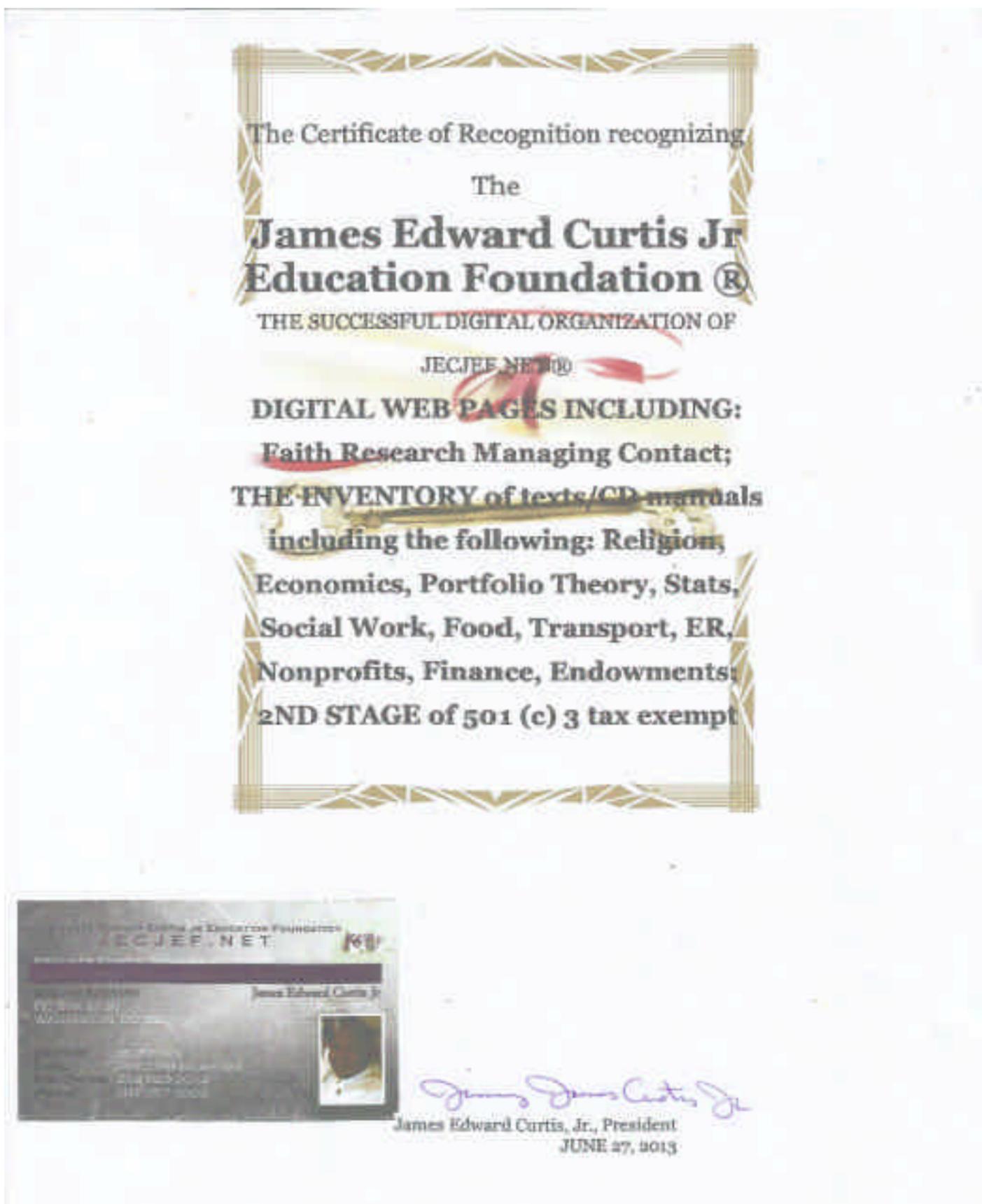
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June 27, 2013

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APPENDIX ADVANCED DEVOTION TOPICS

Consider the following decision:

$$\mathbf{MAX} \{ \mathbf{x}_{nij} \geq \mathbf{0} \} \quad \mathbf{U} = \gamma_{\mathbf{U}} \prod_{SP=1} \mathbf{U}_{SP}^{\theta_{(SP)}} \text{ such that } \mathbf{X} \leq \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}$$

$$\text{Let:} \quad \mathbf{U}_{SP} = \gamma_{\mathbf{U}(SP)} \prod_{j=1} (\prod_{i=1} \mathbf{u}_{ij(SP)}^{\theta_{ij(SP)}})$$

$$\text{such that} \quad \mathbf{U} = \gamma^* \prod_{SP=1} [\prod_{j=1} (\prod_{i=1} \mathbf{u}_{ij(SP)}^{\theta^*})]$$

$$\text{where} \quad \gamma^* = \gamma_{\mathbf{U}} \prod_{SP=1} \gamma_{\mathbf{U}(SP)}$$

$$\boldsymbol{\theta}^* = \theta_{ij(SP)} \boldsymbol{\theta}_{(SP)}$$

$$\text{Further, let:} \quad \boldsymbol{\varepsilon} = \sum_{SP=1} \mathbf{E}_{SP} + \mathbf{e}$$

$$\mathbf{E}_{SP} = \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \mathbf{E}_{ijSP} + \mathbf{e}_{SP}$$

$$\mathbf{E}_{ijSP} = \mathbf{E}_{\mathbf{x}(n)ijSP} + \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \mathbf{p}_{\mathbf{x}(l)} e_{\mathbf{x}(l)ij} + e_{ij} \text{ for all } n = 1, 2, \dots, E \neq 1$$

$$\mathbf{E}_{\mathbf{x}(n)ijSP} = \sum_{n=1} \mathbf{p}_{\mathbf{x}(n)} e_{\mathbf{x}(n)ijSP}$$

$$\text{such that} \quad \boldsymbol{\varepsilon} = \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \sum_{n=1} \mathbf{p}_{\mathbf{x}(n)} e_{\mathbf{x}(n)ijSP} + \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \mathbf{p}_{\mathbf{x}(l)} e_{\mathbf{x}(l)ij} + \mathbf{e}^*$$

$$\text{where} \quad \mathbf{e}^* = \mathbf{e} + \sum_{SP=1} \mathbf{e}_{SP} + \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} e_{ij}$$

Consider the following model of \mathbf{U} .

$$\text{Let:} \quad \mathbf{u}_{ijSP} = \gamma_{\mathbf{u}ijSP} \prod_{n=1} (\mathbf{x}_{nij} - s_{\mathbf{x}(n)ijSP})^{\alpha(n)}$$

$$\text{such that} \quad \mathbf{U} = \gamma^{**} \prod_{SP=1} [\prod_{j=1} (\prod_{i=1} (\prod_{n=1} (\mathbf{x}_{nij} - s_{\mathbf{x}(n)ijSP})^{\alpha(n)^*}))]$$

$$\text{where} \quad \gamma^{**} = \gamma_{\mathbf{U}} [\prod_{SP=1} \gamma_{\mathbf{U}(SP)} (\prod_{j=1} (\prod_{i=1} \gamma_{\mathbf{u}ijSP}))]$$

$$\boldsymbol{\alpha}(n)^* = \alpha(n) \theta_{ij(SP)} \boldsymbol{\theta}_{(SP)}$$

Consider the following model of \mathbf{X} .

$$\text{Let:} \quad \mathbf{X} = \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \sum_{n=1} \mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{x}(n)} \mathbf{x}_{(n)ij} + \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{x}(l)} \mathbf{x}_{(l)ij}$$

$$\text{where} \quad \mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{x}(n)j} = \mathbf{p}_{\mathbf{x}(n)} (1 + \delta_{xjg} + \sum_{q=1} t'_{qx(n)})$$

$$\mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{x}(E)} = \eta(\mathbf{B})$$

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Consider the following model of $\mathbf{\xi}$.

$$\text{Let: } \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \sum_{n=1} \mathbf{p}_{\mathbf{x}(n)} e_{\mathbf{x}(n)ijSP} + \sum_{v=1} \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \mathbf{w}_v \mathbf{h}_{vij} = \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \mathbf{W}_{ij}$$

$$\text{where } \mathbf{w}_v = \mathbf{p}_{\mathbf{x}(l)}$$

$$\mathbf{h}_{vij} = e_{\mathbf{x}(l)ij} - \mathbf{x}_{(l)ij}$$

$$\text{such that } \mathbf{\xi}^* = \sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} \mathbf{W}_{ij} + \mathbf{e}^*$$

$$\text{where } \mathbf{W}_{ij} = (1-g - \sum_{q=1} t_{ql}) \mathbf{I}_{ij} + \mathbf{A}_{ij} + (1-g) (\sum_{q=1} S_{qij} + C_{ij}) - G_{ij}$$

$$\mathbf{I}_{ij} = \sum_{v=1} \mathbf{w}'_v \mathbf{h}'_{vij}$$

$$\mathbf{w}'_v = \mathbf{w}_v - \delta_{w(v)jg} - \sum_{q=1} t'_{q}$$

$$\mathbf{h}'_{vij} = \mathbf{h}_{vij} - \delta_{h(v)jg}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{A}_{ij} = & [\mathbf{A}_{0ij} (1-g - \sum_{q=1} t_{qA(0)}) + \sum_{a=1} N_{(1,a)ij} (R_i, M_i) (1-g - \sum_{q=1} t_{qN(1,a)}) \\ & + \sum_{m=1} \gamma_{\pi(m)ij} \boldsymbol{\pi}_{Z(m)ij} (1-g) \mathbf{I} (1 + \gamma_{\rho ij} \rho) (1 - \sum_{q=1} t_{q\rho}) \\ & + \sum_{b=1} N_{(2,b)ij} (R_i, M_i) (1-g - \sum_{q=1} t_{qN(2,b)}) - G_{\rho ij} - \delta_{Aijg} (\rho, \mathbf{A}_{0ij}) \end{aligned}$$

$$\mathbf{A}_{0ij} = A_{0ij} (\mathbf{x}_{n0}, \gamma_{w(0)ijF}, \mathbf{W}_{0F} (\mathbf{I}_0 (\mathbf{w}_0, \mathbf{h}_0, S_0), A_0 (A_{(-1)}, N_0 (R_0, M_0), \gamma_0 \pi_{(m)} \boldsymbol{\pi}_{0Zm}), t_{0q}, \delta_{0g}, \gamma_{0\rho}), R, M)$$

$$\boldsymbol{\pi}_{Z(m)ij} = (\mathbf{P}_{Z(m)j} \mathbf{Z}_{mij} + \sum_{q=1} S_{qZ(m)ij} - \sum_{d=1} \mathbf{P}_{Z(m,d)j} \mathbf{X}_{Z(m,d)ij}) (1 - \sum_{q=1} t_{q\pi(m)})$$

$$\mathbf{P}_{Z(m)j} = \mathbf{p}_{Z(m)j} (1 - \delta_{Z(m)jg} + \sum_{q=1} t'_{qZ(m)})$$

$$\mathbf{Z}_{mij} = \gamma_{Zmij} \prod_{d=1} \mathbf{X}_{Z(m,d)ij}^{\beta(d)}$$

$$\mathbf{P}_{Z(m,d)j} = \mathbf{p}_{Z(m,d)j} (1 - \delta_{Z(m,d)jg} - \sum_{q=1} t'_{qZ(m)})$$

$$\mathbf{X}_{Z(m,d)ij} = \mathbf{x}_{Z(m,d)ij} - \delta_{Z(m,d)jg}$$



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[KJV]:

- price goods according to supply (closeness to harvest; no non-competitive pricing): *Lev. 25:15-17*
- price of eternity (confess Jesus, believe he was raised from death): *Romans 10:9*
- taxation (full range): *Matt. 22:21; Ecc. 5:9*
- inheritance: *Gen. 2:16-17; Pr. 13:22a; Pr. 19:14; Deut. 28: 2,4; Deut. 28:15,18*
- post-birth wealth (through God's will): *Deut. 8:17-18; Ps. 44:1-3; Ec. 5:19*
- behavioral [righteousness, wisdom] lower boundary for [durable] wealth: *2 Chr. 1:11-12; Ps. 49:10; Ps. 112:2-3; Pr. 5:1-2,10; Pr. 13:11; Pr. 8:17-18*
- tithe: *Matt. 22:21; Lev. 27:30,32*
- offering: *Lev. 1-7; Ps. 96:8*
- zero wages (no account of biblical support): *Lev. 25:39; Ex.1:10,13 vs. Ex. 3:10; Rev. 18:11-13*
- low wages/servants: (KJV differs servant from slave: *Jer. 2:14*); *Eph. 6:5*
- bound positive labor supply: *Gen. 2:15*
- group-based discrimination: *Ex. 1:10*
- subsistence (programs have biblical support): *Lev. 23:22*

- freewill:
 - * 15 references to offerings alone (*Lev. 22:18,21,23; Lev. 23:37-38; Num. 15:2-3*);
 - * an author's speech: *Ps. 119:108*;
 - * a king's assessment of followers: *Ezra 7:13*

- fixed choices:
 - * fixed beginning of man: *Gen. 1:26-27 vs. Ps. 51:5*
 - * fixed end of man: *Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Rev. 20:12-15*
 - * fixed gov't controls (shocks) : (*King's heart*) *Pro. 21:1*, (*Pharaoh's heart*) *Exod. 7-14*

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*Divine Providence & Instruments for Encouragement
for the Socially Marginalized*



Encouragement from The Holy Bible; James 1:1,12

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