

OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR CARE

By Joe Dale Wilson

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

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

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

Caring for an older person is

not an easy task because they can be a real handful at times. It is easy to lose patience with them. "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (Galatians 6:9.) We have to keep in mind our labor of love for those who cared for us when we were young. We are bearing "one another's burdens" and fulfilling "the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2.) If you are the only caregiver find someone who can give you some time off and allow you to take care of yourself. It is a very difficult thing to take care of failing parents or even a husband or a wife. Ask for help from your family, and from the church. It is not a sign of weakness but shows that you need to be refreshed so you can do the best you can for the ones you love.

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

— Vernon, TX

PATIENCE AND ITS PERFECT WORK

By Mark Lindley

The Christian life can be very challenging. Due to the many obstacles and trials Christians encounter, we need to "let patience work."

James wrote the following about the need to let patience work: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (James 1:2-4.) Notice the statement: "let patience have its perfect work."

James informs Christians that we need patience when facing various kinds of trials. "Patience" means "endurance." Christians may have to cope with the criticism of non-Christians, financial loss, family problems, failing health, and many other trials. Patience is the virtue needed in such times

The passage teaches that Christians must "let patience have its perfect work." If we do this, then we will be "perfect and complete, lacking nothing." This sounds appealing, so how do we let patience work? First, consider that we do not let patience

work when we hinder or interrupt the process of enduring trials. When facing challenges, we may feel tempted to panic.

Sometimes people try to run from problems, and escape through drug abuse and alcohol. Others may turn toward illicit relationships with the opposite sex to find comfort. However, turning to these things to escape problems only creates more problems.

"What, then, is the solution? How does one allow "patience to have its perfect work?" There are three basic things we can do to let patience work: (1) We should not try to squirm out of trials. Since trials present an opportunity to grow, we should face them. Rather than running from the problems, the psalmist wrote, "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:10.) Just be still. (2) We should trust that God will work things out in His own time. Trials will not last forever. Rather than rushing God, we should be patient, listen, and learn lessons as life is happening. (James 1:19.) (3) We should pray that God would use

this trial to make us stronger. Prayer is an act of submission, showing that the one praying relies on God. (James 1:6-7.)

By remaining calm, trusting God, and praying to God, one allows patience to work. After patience completes its work, then one will be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

So, in trials, let patience work!
— Ripley, MS

"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:3-5.) "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:6,7.)

Old Paths

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

ADDRESS CHANGE!

Due to ongoing theft of our mail at the church building, please begin directing all correspondence/contributions for OLD PATHS to my home address: 830 W. Fargo Drive, Broken Arrow, OK 74012. Thank you for your ongoing and much-needed support!

"TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?"

By Cecil Burch

"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'" (John 6:66-68.)

Some of the saddest times in the life of Christ were when His disciples, even after he had performed miracles and fed and taught them, rejected Him. Their excuses for not believing in Him were many. Before they walked away on this occasion, the complaint was made, "This is a hard saying, who can understand it?" (John 6:60.)

Today, it is heart-breaking when we see those who, for whatever reason, leave the fellowship of the church and align themselves with unbelievers. They choose to follow their own opinions and feelings. Jesus described a group of people who were very religious and very dedicated, but religiously wrong, by saying, "You make the commandments of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, 'These people draw her to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" (Matthew 15:6-9.)

Jesus made it very clear that He comes even before family. He said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate (love less) his father and his mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26.)

Some people who desire to be popular allow their lives to be controlled by the majority. Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14.)

Every child of God should consider Peter's wise response: "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

— Amarillo, TX

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12.) "For no other foundation can anyone lay that that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11.) "When Christ who is our life appears, then you will also appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3: 4.)

ANCHORED IN JESUS

By Charles Goodnight

Centered? Do what? Centered in what? Centered on what? What are we focused on? Where is our heart? Really? Our kids, when they were young, were diagnosed with ADHD. They had a difficult time focusing on anything. My, was that a challenge! Church, when we come together as a family to worship, what do we focus on?

What are our hearts and minds centered on?

The question applies to every day and every moment of our lives.

May our God help us to remember that Jesus Christ MUST be the center of our faith. The storms will come. The trials will face us. Clinging close to Jesus, we will be safe, protected, shielded from the storms of life. But even so, we will still be challenged, stretched, wrung out.

By staying focused on Jesus, we will be anchored in Him, secure and unshaken. Race car drivers are trained to focus their attention on where they want to go (as opposed to where they don't want to go). The premise is simple: They are traveling so fast that if something catches their attention, and they look at it, they'll hit it! So they learn to tune out the peripheral and focus on the road ahead.

Friend, focusing on Jesus will always keep us moving in the right direction. With little or no attention to the peripheral, I press on ahead - my attention on Jesus. If not, I can't follow where He is going - I'm less in tune with Him.

May our heartbeat be in tune with His heartbeat.

Let's just keep it simple, and let's keep CENTERED. It's the greatest of challenges.

— Texas City, TX

"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind . . ." (Philippians 4:12-15a.) "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2.)

POET'S CORNER

By Dalton Key

COLLECTING DUST

The Bible is a book beloved,
At least we say it's so;
It rests in honor on the shelf
With other books, you know.

And yet its pages seldom read,
Are given little thrust;
We claim to love this Book of Books,
But it keeps collecting dust!

TRUTH MAKES NO RETREAT

When right is wrong and wrong is right,
With truth turned upside down;
When night is day and day is night,
And candor can't be found;

Has come the time to turn and run?
Should saints admit defeat?
Remember, friend, we've just begun,
And truth makes no retreat!

WOULD YOU?

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

MY CHOICE

At three-score and five I now realize,
That we choose to be happy or hurt;
Those things that transpire can lift us up
higher,
Or drag us right down to the dirt.

What matters the most are the thoughts
that we host,
Much more than what tumbles our way;
Regardless what comes, whether feasting
or crumbs,
We're always in charge of our day.

Life marches ahead, with excitement or dread,
Depending completely on me;
What is is what is, and it is what it is,
But I choose how to frame what I see.

EDITORIAL . . .

GIVE ME THE BIBLE

By Dalton Key

The Bible is and has always been the world's most treasured book, outpacing other books in sales by a sizable margin. Billions of copies of God's word are purchased around the globe each and every year.

And yet, how long has it been since you slowed down, sat down, calmed down, and committed some quality time with the Bible?

You say you just can't fit Bible reading into your busy schedule? You'll have to invent a better excuse than that. An average reader can complete reading the entire Bible in a year's time, by reading just fifteen to twenty minutes a day. Many of the Bible's books can be finished, from first to last, in less than ten minutes. Surely you can find a few minutes each day for the betterment of your soul.

You say the Bible is "over your head" and too difficult for you to read and understand? Believe it or not, the average word in the Bible contains fewer than five letters. Most translations use language at about a fourth-grade reading level. Heaven has designed this marvelous book so as to be available and understandable to all of us, highly educated or not. Isaiah wrote of the "Highway of Holiness," concerning which "whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray." (Isaiah 35:8.) If fools, which Albert Barnes identified as "the simple, the unlearned," can grasp the clear message and meaning of the Bible, I'm sure you'll be able to get something out of it.

You say you have no interest in the Bible? How could you not be interested in the world's most reliable source of information regarding your origin, your purpose for living, and your existence beyond this life? As the very word of God, the Bible is "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12.) The Psalmist should be speaking for all of us in proclaiming, "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver . . . How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:72, 103.)

Don't you think the time has come for the excuses to end and for regular, quality time with the Book of Books to begin?

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of sinners, But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." (Psalm 1:1,2.) The time has come to take the Bible off the shelf and put it in the heart where it belongs!

(ATTENTION MEN: Make plans now to attend our annual Old Paths Men's Retreat, September 7-9, on the site of Flint Hills Christian Camp, just north of Sedan, Kansas. Our theme this year: "Blessed Assurance, A Study of 1 Corinthians 15." For further information, text (918) 845-4886. I hope to see many of you there!)

**"YEAH, I READ THAT BOOK ONE TIME"**

By Danny Tunnell

A man was asked, "Do you read the Bible?" He replied, "Yeah, I read that book one time."

That statement would be okay with great secular literature. "Yeah, I read *Gone With the Wind* one time, or yeah, I read *To Kill a Mockingbird* once." But the Bible is an inspired book and needs to be read repeatedly and daily. (Psalm 119: 11, 16, 103-105.) "My son, attend to My words; incline your ear unto My sayings, let them not depart from your eyes, keep them in the midst of your heart." (Proverbs 4:20,21.)

God never intended for us to read the Bible just one time.

One fellow said, "In our house we had a Bible on our coffee table and it never got dusty." He went on to say, "We never read it, but we just kept it dusted!" That reminds me of an old country song, "Dust On the Bible," written by Johnny and Walter Bailes. The Bailes brothers did a lot in helping to make religious themes an acceptable part of the country music genre. They wrote, "I went into a home one day to see some friends of mine.

Of all the books and magazines, not a Bible could I find. I asked them for the Bible; when they brought it, what a shame. For dust was covered o'er it, not a fingerprint was plain."

Many people believe that it's good to read the Bible daily. But how many are actually doing that, even Christians? To have faith in God is to have faith in His word. (Roman 10:17.)

Daily Bible readers who really think about what they are reading are becoming a rarity. (Joshua 1:18; Psalm 119:97.) Our schedules may be so busy that Bible reading has to be a priority or we'll crowd it out with other interests. (Luke 8:14.) We need to set aside some time each day to read and reflect on God's word.

Bible reading is not a speed reading contest. We are not seeing how quickly or rapidly we can read. We may read a chapter out of the Bible so rapidly that we don't have a clue what it said.

Remember, the more attention you give scripture, the more you'll

get out of it. "Pay attention to what you're listening to! Knowledge will be measured to you by the measure of attention you give. This is the way knowledge increases." (Mark 4:24, God's Word Translation.)

Why is it important that we read the Bible regularly? The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. (Ephesians 6: 17.) Satan is doing everything he can to disarm us. Satan would love to take away the sword. He wants to replace the sword with tradition, or to say the Bible is no longer applicable.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15.) How are we going to keep His commandments if we don't know them?

Keep reading and telling the old, old story of Jesus and His love, as Kate Hanley wrote so eloquently 150 years ago. "For those who know it best, seem hungering and thirsting, to hear it like the rest."

— Miami, OK

YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN!

By Milton Smith

In Acts 20:28, Paul told the elders of Ephesus, "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood." In this passage, Paul is affirming the fact that those who have undergone the new birth belong to Jesus Christ in a very special way. When Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world, He literally "purchased" the church with his blood. It thus became his own personal possession. This truth is even made clearer when we consider the fact that the church is described collectively in the New Testament as the spiritual body of Jesus. In a more personal way, Paul wrote that each individual Christian is "bought with a price" and that we should, therefore, "glorify God" by the manner in which we live. (1 Corinthians 6:20.) The phrase "purchased possession" is used in Ephesians 1:14 in reference to each and every child of God.

Jesus feels so close to those of His church that the Holy Spirit refers to individual members as being

Jesus' brothers and sisters. (Hebrews 2:11; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 7:15.) This is an obvious reference to our subsequent adoption into His spiritual body following the new birth. (Romans 8:15.) Nearly 2000 years ago - after offering a prayer for His chosen apostles - Jesus added these words, "I do not pray for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me." (John 17:20-21.) While Jesus was on earth, He prayed for each and every soul who would make the personal choice to become a member of His family.

There exists no greater blessing than to belong to the family of God and have Jesus as our spiritual brother. In a special way, He is lovingly there for us when we go to the Father in prayer. (Hebrews 4:15-16.) Never forget that if you are a faithful child of God, Jesus views you as His personal possession. You belong to Him in a unique relationship

that the world neither comprehends nor possesses. Because of this, He has a genuine concern for you on a daily basis. As a member of His fold, your loving Shepherd will never forsake you. (John 10:27-28.)

A simple word of advice: never allow the deceitfulness of this world rob you of these unparalleled blessings that reach from here to eternity!

— Tulsa, OK

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Dalton Key Editor

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