GOD'S COMMAND TO REPENT

Introduction: God commands all men everywhere to repent. Everyone is commanded to repent. The reason we are to repent is because there is coming a judgment day. He will judge the world in righteousness. Man must prepare to meet God by repenting of his sins. Man must get right with God and others by repenting of his sins. Many of the problems in churches, individual lives, and families exist today because someone has sinned and will not repent and get things right. We are living in a world that knows little if anything about Bible repentance. Repenting of sins brings about the change in lives. Only repentance will do with God. God's command and demand of man is REPENT OF YOUR SINS.

I. THE COMMAND TO REPENT.

A. The option.
1. This is a command of God. We are to repent of our sins. We had to repent when we were lost. We need to repent as saved people when we sin against God.
2. If you will not heed God's command, you will be full of pride. Pride brings on destruction. Proverbs 16:18.
3. Jesus tells us man must repent or perish. Luke 13:3. Almighty God tells us to repent to have the fellowship restored.
4. God's people do sin. I John 1:8-10. When we sin God's wants us to repent of sins and ask His forgiveness. I John 1:9. You do not have to repent. It is up to you. You can choose to repent or choose not to repent.

B. The opportunity.
1. The Lord gives us time and space to repent. He lets us know we are wrong. His Holy Spirit convicts or convinces us that we have sinned. The Spirit draws us to confess our sins.
2. He allows us to make our own minds up about what we want to do about it. He loves us and He wants us to want to do His will.

3. Sin will separate us from God. It will destroy our fellowship with God. Sin comes between God and His people.
4. The Lord is long-suffering. He convicts and calls on us to repent of our sins. He gives us time and opportunity to repent.

C. The obedience.
1. He is gracious and gentle toward those who repent. He is very loving and merciful in His dealings with us.
2. He wants all to repent. He doesn't want any to perish. II Peter 3:9, I Timothy 2:4. The Lord has done everything that He can to save mankind. Man must repent of his sins.
3. Every lost person will not repent of sins. Every saved person will not repent of sins. In order to obey the Lord, man must repent of his sins. He must do it to obey the Lord.

II. THE CONCERN OF REPENTANCE.

A. God wants to pardon you.
1. The lost person is a sinner. Romans 3:23. The lost person is guilty and wrong before God. He is sinful, unrighteous, unholy, and depraved.
2. God wants to forgive the lost person and have fellowship with him. Ephesians 1:7. Redemption is considered the same thing as forgiveness of sins.
4. God will pardon and forgive those who confess and repent of sins. He cannot forgive people of sin, if they do not ask for forgiveness.

B. God wants to give you peace.
1. Man is an enemy of God. Romans 5:9. He is a stranger to God and His ways. Ephesians 2:12.
2. Man doesn’t know what real peace is until he receives the peace of God. Romans 5:1. Man will never experience a lasting true peace as long as he rebels against the Giver of peace.

3. Sin destroys man’s peace with God and himself. Isaiah 59:1,2. The lost man has no peace with God. The sinful saved man doesn’t have peace with God.

4. The One who can give you peace has commanded and demanded that you first repent of your sins and then He will forgive you and give you peace of heart and mind.

C. God wants to give you His presence.
1. The lost person doesn’t want God around, doesn’t want to talk about Him, His Word, or His ways.
2. The saved person feels like God’s very far off when he sins against Him. It seems like God is not there.
3. God wants to walk and talk with the human race that He created. He wants to share His glory and creation with mankind.
4. He wants to be our companion and guide. He wants to share each day, experience, and event with us. He loves and cares for us.

D. God wants to give you purity.
1. Man is sinful, wrong, and unrighteous. He is full of guilt and shame. God knows this and man knows this.
2. We feel unclean and dirty. Sin will do this to you. God wants to forgive and cleanse you. He will take the guilt away with the sin.
3. It is a good and blessed feeling to know that you have been cleansed of your sins and you stand right before God.
4. In our world of permissiveness and so called freedom, we have little peace, joy, and contentment. The peace, joy, and contentment comes from being right with God. Romans 5:1.

III. THE CONFESSION IN REPENTANCE.
A. Confess the error.
1. The Lost person is in error. He is wrong. He does what he does because he is wrong inside.
2. The saved person can be in error. We can do, say, and be wrong or in error. You can never get it right until you admit you are wrong.
3. When man doesn’t measure up to God’s Word he is in error. Confess it. Admit it. Acknowledge it. Own up to it.

B. Confess the evil.
1. The lost man is evil before God. He chooses to live apart from God. He doesn’t want God in his life. This is really evil.
2. The saved person can want to do things that are against God’s will and Word.

3. The Lord wants us to confess the words, way, and will that is not His. Own up to what you are doing is evil. It isn’t righteousness.

4. Have you ever heard anyone say, “Well, if I have done any thing wrong, I am sorry for it.” We need to say, “Lord, what I have done is wrong and evil in your sight. Lord forgive me.”

C. Confess you are acting like or as an enemy of God.
1. Man who was created by God can be and is an enemy of God. Romans 5:10. An enemy hates you and despises you and what you stand for.
2. You are standing in opposition to God and His will for your life. You are resisting God.
3. You may resist and refuse God’s will for your life right now. The lost person will die and go to hell. The saved person will rebel against God bearing guilt, being miserable, and standing and living outside God’s will and greater blessings.

IV. THE CONTRITION IN REPENTANCE.
A. The realizing of sin.
1. The lost person is soon aware of his sins. He knows he has sinned. He is a sinner.
2. The saved person realizes his sins. We know when our actions, attitudes, articulations, and ambitions are wrong.
3. When we realize we have sinned, we can excuse, justify, cover up, deny, or blame others for our sins.
4. The psalmist realized his personal sins against God. Psalm 51:3.

B. The recognizing what your sins do.
1. Sin hurts and harms us. The wise man said we wrong our own souls by sinning. Proverbs 8:36.
2. Sin is against God. David confessed his sin was against God. Psalm 51:4. Isaiah said our sins or iniquities separate between us and God. Isaiah 59:1,2.
3. Your stubborn will hurts God, your church, you, and your family.
4. You must recognize that sin involves more than gratifying your own personal lust.
5. Sin has a planting time and sin has a reaping time. You will reap what you have sown. Galatians 6:7,8.

C. The remorse in sinning.
1. Remorse is being sorry that you have sinned. It is being heart broken over your personal sin. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Psalm 51:17.
2. Many cry because of a messed up life or a miserable life. They are not broken hearted over sin.
3. God will not despise a broken spirit and a contrite heart. God is merciful and forgiving to one who experiences heartfelt sorrow over sin.
4. God will forgive a repenting person just like a parent does when a child cries for forgiveness.
5. We are living in a generation which knows very little about true Bible repentance.

V. THE CLEANSING IN REPENTANCE.
A. The grace of God.
1. God is a gracious God. God does not act like man acts. He isn’t as a man when it comes to sin and dealing with sin.
2. His grace offers man forgiveness of sins. His grace has provided a simple and fair way of removing sin. I John 1:9.
3. He invites everyone to come and be forgiven. The young and old and the in between are invited. It is a whosoever will invitation.
4. God’s grace extends the invitation to come and be forgiven of your sins.

B. The guilty.
1. Sinners will experience and feel the guilt of doing wrong. They will realize they have not acted right.
2. God wants to take the sin or sins away and the guilt that accompanies the sin.
3. God wants you to experience the wonderful feeling of joy and gladness that comes because your sins are forgiven.
4. One of the first emotions a sinner feels after he has been saved is joy and gladness.
5. God invites the lost to come for forgiveness and cleansing. He invites the saved person to come for cleansing.
6. The Lord not only tells the sinner what is wrong, but He also points out how to right the wrong. He welcomes the sinful to come and be cleansed.

C. The gone.
1. When people repent of sins, God forgives them, and their sins are gone.
2. The guilt, misery, and fear of judgment is gone. It is taken away. You have settled things with God and you have peace with Him because you have made your peace with Him.
4. He gives us joy and peace. We are right with God and will want to get right with others.
5. What man really wants and needs and is searching for is the peace and joy and gladness that comes by having our sins forgiven and cleansed. Man is looking in all of the wrong places for what He longs for.

GROW IN GRACE OR GROAN IN DISGRACE

By Ricky Knight

Text: II Peter 3:17,18

Introduction:

A. This chapter is written to challenge christians and the lost.
1. The lost are to prepare their hearts for the days ahead through Jesus.
2. The christian is to beware of the evil days and the coming of the Lord. II Peter 3:10,11.
3. The christian is to realize the temporal nature of this world and work to promote the eternal things of God. II Peter 3:13.

B. Let us be challenged, christians, by the words, "Grow in grace..." V18.

I. GOD'S PLAN IS RIGHT FOR YOU.

A. God doesn't do business in the sloppy manner of some.
1. There is no confusion.
2. Only order.

B. God planned that souls would be saved by grace then grow in that same grace.

C. God planned that christians should grow spiritually as our body grows physically.
1. We begin as babes in Christ feeding on the milk of the Word. I Peter 2:2,3.
2. The milk of the Word represents the basics of the Bible.
3. Beyond the basics would be the meat of the Word. Hebrews 5:12-14.
4. We mature from a child to young men and from young men to fathers in faith. I John 2:12-14.

D. The saved grow in grace when they get busy for God.
1. When they pray, study, worship, witness, give, and obey.
2. To do otherwise is to become stunted.

II. SATAN'S PLAN IS TO STUNT, WARP, AND DISGRACE YOU.

A. God warns us to "beware" lest we be led away with the error of the wicked. V17.
1. Wickedness is so alluring that many fall prey.
2. The end result, however, is disgrace.

B. Satan wants to stunt the christian’s growth.
1. The christian’s main defense against Satan’s temptation is to grow in grace.
3. There is nothing more pitiful looking than something stunted. A stunted pig is skinny, stumpy, and shy. A stunted vegetable is weak, without fruit, and withered.
4. The stunted christian is not exempt either. They are miserable and fruitless.

C. Satan wants to warp the christian.
   1. People whose bodies do not develop many times suffer mental anguish.
   2. Christians who fail to grow in grace usually have warped selfish attitudes.

III. THERE ARE NO OTHER OPTIONS.
   A. Either you grow in God’s grace or you groan in disgrace.
   B. There is no point where you can stop growing for God and not be disgraced.
      1. David the mighty giant for God stopped growing and fell into disgrace with Bathsheba.
      2. Samson though strong was led away with the error of the wicked Delilah and was disgraced.
      3. Peter denied Jesus and was disgraced.

Conclusion:
A. Jesus provided you, lost person, with an option, get saved!
B. Saved person, grow in grace for God!

O DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING?
By Violeta B. Hayes

Three crosses once stood
On that lonely hill;
My Savior in the midst
Fulfilling his Father’s will.

There at the cross
For me he died;
Because of my sins
He was crucified.

To a borrowed tomb
My Lord was laid;
With full atonement
What a price he paid.

But, lo, and behold,
He arose triumphant;
O death, where is thy sting?
O glorious victory, O Lord of glory.

HEART FOR GOD
By Neal Clark

Introduction: We look on the outside of a person. God looks at the heart. Was David a perfect man? No, but God said he had a heart for God and would fulfill His will. Do we have a heart for God? I believe the way David responded to situations proved His heart for God. I believe the way we respond to the following test will determine if we have a heart for God.

   A. How did David respond - had repentant heart.
      1. He didn’t deny his sin. V1-3.
      2. He didn’t defend his sin. V4.
      3. He wanted deliverance from sin. V7.
   B. How do we respond - do we have a repentant heart?

II. THE TEST OF SERVICE Acts 13:22 “He does what I ask?”
   A. How did David respond - had a servant’s heart.
      1. He had a sorrowful heart. Psalms 51:1-3.
      2. He had a sacrificial heart. II Chronicles 24:24.
      3. He had a serving heart. Psalms 51:13.
      4. He had a servant’s heart. Psalms 119:10-38.
   B. How do we respond - do we have a servant’s heart?

   A. David faced great stress.
   B. David was threatened by Saul.
   C. David had family problems.
   D. David fought wars.
      2. He trusted God for shelter. Psalms 61:3.

IV. TEST OF SUCCESS I Samuel 18:13,14 - I Samuel 17.
   A. Easy to be humble when you are on the bottom.
   B. When everything is going good.
   C. How did David respond - with a wise heart.
      1. Wise in his decisions.
      2. Wise in his deliberations.
      3. Wise in his directions.

V. TEST OF SUBMISSION Psalms 26:1,2; Psalms 139:23,24.
   A. How did David respond?
   B. He had a submissive heart.
      1. Submissive to the Lord’s will.
      2. Submissive to the Lord’s Word.
      3. Submissive to the Lord’s way.

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Our telephone number is 1-713-442-7137
Subject: Exposition of Galatians 5:1-5.
Focus: STANDING FAST

Introduction:

A. The REVIEW.
   1. The problem which confronted these saints.
   2. The proclamations which called for the saints' response.

B. The REALITY of redemption experience should have a dramatic affect on our total person. II Corinthians 5:17.

I. OUR STAND POSITIONALLY. 5:1.
   A. Stand CONFIDENTLY 5:1a. "Stand fast therefore..."
      1. This calls for ACTION.
      2. This calls for a mindset of ATTITUDE.
      3. This means to be settled - to know - to be sure.
   B. Stand CONSISTENTLY 5:1b. "In the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...."
      1. This position has been secured for us by Christ. John 8:32 and John 14:6.
      2. This position has been secured by faith in Christ. Ephesians 2:8,9.
   C. Stand CONTINUALLY 5:1c. "...And be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."
      1. The ATTEMPTS to deprive us of this liberty.
         a. Satan and sin will seek to deprive us.
         b. Our companions will seek to deprive us.
         c. Pleasures may seek to deprive us.
         d. Persecution may seek to deprive us.
         e. Deceivers may attempt to undermine the doctrine of salvation and security in order to deprive us of our liberty in Christ.
      2. The AWFULNESS of being bound up is certainly evidenced and manifested.
      3. The ACTIVITY which will help us from not getting entangled again in the yoke of bondage.
         b. Private prayer, confession, and petition.
         c. Self denial.

II. OUR STAND EXPERIMENTALLY. 5:2-4.
   A. Either JUDAISM or JESUS. 5:2 "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."
      1. If you SUCCUMB to the philosophy of what you can do you're headed for TROUBLE and DISAPPROVAL.
   B. If you SURRENDER to the person of Jesus Christ and allow Him to work in your life you're headed for TRIUMPH and DELIGHTFULNESS.
   C. Either APOSTASY or APPROPRIATION. 5:4 'Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; Ye are fallen from grace.'
      1. Effectiveness of Christ can be nullified.
      2. Enlightenment on the phrase - "Ye are fallen from grace."
         a. Does this mean you can lose your salvation? No!
         b. It means that those who embrace the law or anything else for the basis of salvation have not been brought into the arena of grace.
         c. They have not allowed the law to do it's function. 3:24.

III. OUR STAND PRACTICALLY. 5:5 "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."
   A. DEPENDENT on the Spirit. 5:5a.
      1. The ministry of the Spirit is vital in the CONVERSION, CONFORMING, AND CONSUMMATION of every believer.
      2. When do you receive the Spirit?
   B. VIBRANT in hope. 5:5b.
   C. FERVENT in spirit. 5:5c.

Conclusion:

A. Strengthened to stand - individually.
   1. To be changeful, shifty, and uncertain on vital issues reveals a lack of moral fibre.
   2. The presence of the indwelling Christ imparts strength to stand under pressure of adverse circumstances.
   3. He is the inner brace that enables us to maintain one's position.
   4. Example of the congressman who voted for a bill that he was not in favor of because of the pressure put on him.
B. Strengthened to stand - collectively.
PREACHING THE GOSPEL IN REGIONS BEYOND

Text: II Corinthians 10:14-16.

Introduction:

A. Mission work (Preaching the Gospel) had its beginning in THE HEART OF GOD! John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Galatians 4:4,5.

B. LOVE’S MISSION WORK SENT JESUS FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH TO...

1. To REVEAL or manifest the Father’s LOVE, MERCY, AND SAVING GRACE TO SINFUL MANKIND.


3. To REDEEM (Pay the ransom or price of our sin’s penalty). Romans 3:23; 6:23; I Timothy 2:5,6.


D. The sweet, sweet, HOLY SPIRIT accompanies the mission work in:

1. CONVICTING SINNERS. John 16:8.

2. DRAWING SINNERS TO JESUS. John 6:44.


E. MEN, CALLED OF GOD TO PREACH HIS GOSPEL, HAVE ANSWERED MISSION’S CALL TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN REGIONS BEYOND.

1. CHOSEN VESSEL Acts 9:15.

2. CONCERNED Romans 10:1; 9:1.

3. Paul was CONSECRATED AND PERSONALLY COMMITTED TO PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO REGIONS BEYOND. Romans 1:14,15; I Corinthians 9:16,22.

F. My FIRST KNOWLEDGE OF MISSION WORK came when I was but a child on the farm in Arkansas.

1. The COMMITMENT OF MY GODLY MOTHER: Out of love’s desire for her children to HEAR THE GOSPEL AND HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE SAVED FROM THEIR SINS, my mother would walk the dusty, muddy roads, going from house to house asking neighbors to HELP START A SUNDAY SCHOOL in the old one room school house. Then she would WRITE A MISSIONARY, asking him to come PREACH THE GOSPEL IN THAT REGION.

2. The Lord COMMENDED SUCH MISSION MINDED MOTHERS. II Timothy 3:15.

3. Such MISSION MINDEDNESS BROUGHT THE GOSPEL FROM HEAVEN TO ISRAEL, ASIA, GREECE, AMERICA, ARKANSAS, AND TEXAS and many other regions beyond.

G. Three INGREDIENTS IN MISSION WORK.

1. God’s MESSENGERS. II Timothy 1:9,12.


3. The necessary MEANS (Money). II Cor. 11:8.


A. This call from above is URGENT. John 4:35.

B. This call is BINDING! Revelation 22:17.

C. There is rejoicing in the region above when the mission is accomplished. Luke 15:7.

II. THE CALL TO MISSION WORK (PREACHING THE GOSPEL) COMES FROM REGIONS BEYOND!!!


C. From many parts of the world SUCH CALLS COME!!!

1. Missions and Missionaries are saying, HELP.

2. Orphans are saying, HELP.

3. PARENTS are crying for HELP.

4. GRANDPARENTS, COMPANIONS, CHILDREN are calling for HELP.

5. YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN preparing to better carry this gospel are in need of HELP.

6. This call brought me to South Texas 41 years ago.

7. LET’S HEED III JOHN 8 "Fellow helpers."

III. THE CALL TO MISSIONS (PREACHING THE GOSPEL) COMES FROM A REGION BELOW.

A. From a place Jesus called hell, where the soul never dies and the fires never go out. Mark 9:43,45,47.

B. From a place whose occupants will be CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. Rev. 20:14.

C. A REAL PLACE with realities! (Memory, recognition, thirst, pain, and torments).

D. Hear the call for preaching the gospel from the region below. "I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."
1. One preacher preached a sermon entitled, "THINGS IN HELL THAT OUGHT TO BE A BAPTIST CHURCH." Concern, prayer, and testimony.

2. Another said someone ought to turn the subject around and preach on "THINGS IN A BAPTIST CHURCH THAT OUGHT TO BE IN HELL." (UNCONCERN, LACK OF PRAYER, LACK OF MISSION VISION).

IV. THE CALL TO MISSION WORK (PREACHING THE GOSPEL) COMES FROM A REGION WITHIN.

A. Each saved person is indwelt by the LOVE OF GOD. Rom. 5:5.
1. This love sent Jesus. John 3:16.
2. With this same love Jesus WENT AFTER OTHERS.

B. Others who have been MOTIVATED BY THIS INWARD LOVE.
1. Paul had an INWARD FEELING OF "DEBTOR TO ALL". II Corinthians 5:14.

WHERE IS THE ONE?
By Luther Crawford


Introduction:

A. As Jesus was going to Jerusalem one time, He passed through a certain village and was met by ten men standing afar off. They were lepers.

B. Leprosy was perhaps the most dreaded disease of that day. Leprosy is such a terrible disease that it is a type of sin. To see the awfulness of leprosy see the symptoms described in Leviticus 13:1-16 and the prescribed treatment in Leviticus 14:1-32. Leprosy made one unclean. One who had it was considered an outcast. If one of the descendants of Aaron was found with leprosy, he could not be a priest. It is interesting to note that even a house could have leprosy and clothing as well. Leviticus 13:47-59; 14:33-57. The Bible reveals that leprosy was sent upon Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah as a means of punishment.

C. These ten men Jesus met in the village knew they were lepers. They evidently knew something about Jesus for they cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." This is what a sinner should do when they realize they are condemned with sin.

D. The response of Jesus reveals His compassion toward those with leprosy. V14: Show yourselves to the priest and as they went were cleansed.

E. AND ONE OF THEM - when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, fell down on his face at his feet giving thanks.

F. WHERE ARE THE NINE - sermons have been preached with regard to the nine. Where are they?

G. WHAT ABOUT THE ONE? WHERE IS THE ONE? I observe this one as really being healed, not only physical, but spiritual. I see this one as the ONE WHO REALLY GOT IT. I see this one becoming a real disciple. It is with this kind, great churches are built. Don't worry about the nine in this message. Let's center our minds upon the ONE. Let's see if we can determine where the truly born again person is today.

H. WHERE THEN IS THE ONE? Why his encounter with JESUS MADE A GIVER OUT OF HIM.

I. HE IS GIVING THANKS. V15,16.

A. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." I Thess. 5:18.

B. Thanks expressed by the righteous. "Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence." Psalms 140:13.

1. For salvation: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." II Corinthians 9:15.
2. For answered prayer: John 11:41 Jesus thanked God for answering His prayer. We should do no less.
3. For victory: "But thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. HE IS GIVING HIS TIME.
A. He is redeeming the time, as Paul exhorted. Ephesians 5:16.
B. He is using His time to serve God and glorify Him.
C. So many today say they don’t have time to go to church. Have time for everything but God.

III. HE IS GIVING HIS TALENTS.
A. If he can sing for God, he is singing. If he can teach, he is teaching. If he can play an instrument, he is playing.
B. What about mis-used talent? What about Elvis P? What about John Lennon, the Beatle? It could very well be that those who listen to their music and went ape over their death were also mis-using their talent, as well.

IV. HE IS GIVING HIS TITHES.
A. For the support of the ministry of the church.
B. For the support of the ministry of the missions.
C. God expects of His people to give not only themselves, but to give their means as well.

V. HE IS GIVING HIS TESTIMONY.
A. He is testifying by his life the great things God has done for him.
B. He is testifying of his cleansing.
C. He is testifying of his salvation.
D. He is testifying of the word of God.

Conclusion:
A. Have you had an encounter with Jesus?
B. Did He save your soul? If not, you need to be saved.
C. Are you one of the NINE who may have received soul cleansing, but you haven’t really thanked God for it nor glorified Him for it.
D. Did your encounter with Jesus make a GIVER OUT OF YOU?
E. Most people today are TAKERS, but it is more blessed to give than receive.
F. I HAD RATHER BE THE ONE, THAN TO BE ONE OF THE NINE!!!

THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL
By Edd Rhodes

Introduction: The gospel is good news and glad tidings of the Lord Jesus Christ.
I. THE GOSPEL IS GLORIOUS.
A. Because of its meaning. (Good news).
B. Because of its origin. (God).
C. Because of its purpose.
D. Because of its need.
E. Because of its beauty.
I. Because of its endurance.
J. Because of its cost.
   1. The cost to God. (His Son).
   2. The cost to man. (Free).

YOU CAN SURVIVE THE LAST DAYS
By B.A. Morris

Text: Jude 24,25.
I. THE SUSTAINING POWER OF GOD.
A. There is a power that pulls us down.
   1. This is a power greater than of humanity. Ephesians 6:12.
   2. This power is in direct contrast to the Holy Spirit making it difficult to do the will of God. Galatians 5:17.
B. There is a power that pulls us up.
   2. The oral thoughts of a teacher containing truth (word of grace) put at our disposal (commend) is capable of edifying. Acts 20:32.

II. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PLAN OF GOD
A. The world system seems to be prevailing.
   1. It seems to be adding more adherents to it’s cause.
   2. Its system seems to be gaining more, now than before. II Timothy 3:13.
B. We have a sovereign Person.
   1. He is independent and is not interdependent.
   2. There is not a higher appeal than He.
   3. He existed in eternity past and will be in eternity future.
C. We have a sovereign plan.
   1. This plan was initiated before satan, sin, or the sinner existed.
   2. The beginning and end of this plan is known by the Planner. Acts 15:18.
   3. This plan is revealed to man in the Scriptures and can clearly be seen by rightly dividing the Word.

BACK ISSUES: Like our paper? We have most of the back issues. Send in and get all the available back issues.
III. THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER.

A. The security of the present life.
   1. The normal or abnormal can’t put apart (separate) what we have in Jesus Christ. Romans 8:35-39.

B. The security of the future life.

This ministry is a blessing: During the week of May 5th-11th we received calls from Louisiana, Tennessee, and Georgia wanting our books and back issues of the paper. We received letters from Longview, Texas; Ceres and San Jose, California; Corbin, Kentucky; Chesapeake, Virginia; and the Philippines wanting our books and papers. WHAT AN OUTREACH OUR CHURCH HAS. WE ARE GETTING THE PRINTED MESSAGE OUT TO REGIONS BEYOND. We appreciate the churches and individuals that are helping us. **YOU CAN HELP Us. Send an offering to the Sounding Out the Word Ministries TODAY!!!**

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THINGS THAT HINDER CHURCH GROWTH

by Wesley Waldrum

Text: Numbers 13:26-33,14:1-4

**Introduction:**

A. This generation of people here in the wilderness could very well REPRESENT many of our churches today.
   1. There was a spiritual war going on within the midst of the camp.
   2. Ten men had influenced millions of people.

B. Israel had REACHED the point that many of our churches today are reaching and not even realizing it.
   1. They are like the "FROG IN THE KETTLE." If you put a frog in a kettle of boiling water he is going to jump out because the water is too hot. But if you put him in a kettle of room temperature water and gradually increase the temperature, he will stay there till he boils to death.

2. This generation of people were useless to God.
3. God was no longer going to bless them in the way He wanted to.
4. Many times churches often wonder why they don’t grow.

C. Israel needed to do one thing-REPENT.
   1. Many churches today are in great danger.
   2. Many are filled with SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS within. UNCONFESSION SINS, UNCLEAN LIVING, AND UNCLEAN TALKING!
   3. When people take their eyes off Jesus, there’s going to be problems.
   4. Jesus said to the church of Ephesus "THAT IF THEY DON’T REPENT AND REMEMBER WHO THEIR FIRST LOVE IS, HE WAS GOING TO REMOVE THEIR CANDLESTICK."
5. One only needs to look at the outcome of Israel in our text to see the great need of REPENTING. God called these people an EVIL CONGREGATION. Ch. 14:27 They were DOOMED TO DIE. Ch. 14:32-35.

I. GOSSIP WILL HINDER CHURCH GROWTH. Ch. 14:4.

A. The sin of gossip.
   1. Leviticus 9:16.
   4. It often arises from HATRED AND JEALOUSY. Psalm 109:3.
5. God warns us to BRIDLE OUR TONGUE. James 3.

B. The seriousness of gossip.
   1. Gossip will destroy the lives of individuals as well as whole churches.
   2. Gossip will cause division, deadly wounds, and discord among the membership.
   3. The Bible instructs us that we should not even listen to it. I Samuel 24:9.

C. The separation of gossip.
   1. Gossip will SEPARATE us from our FRIENDS. Proverbs 17:9.
   2. Gossip will SEPARATE us from the BLESSINGS of God.
   3. Gossip will SEPARATE God’s CHURCHES.
   4. People will be hurt and people will leave. Some will even give up serving the Lord.

D. The sadness of gossip.
   1. The Lord’s church and His work will be hindered.
   2. If gossip is a sin then God must deal with it. The Bible declares that sin won’t go unpunished. Galatians 6:7,8.
   3. God will chastise His people for their sins. Hebrews 12:5,6.
4. The sad part is that many in God’s churches are guilty of this. THEY KNOW THEY HAVE DONE WRONG AND STILL WILL NOT ASK FOR FORGIVENESS FROM GOD OR THE ONE THEY HAVE OFFENDED! Matthew 12:36.

II. GRUMBLING WILL HINDER CHURCH GROWTH.

The people of Israel were constantly grumbling and complaining, never satisfied, always wanting more. God gave them everything they needed -- Food (manna and quail) but they wanted more. Numbers 11:5. God gave them clothes and shoes that would last. They complained about their leader.

A. Grumbling will cause discouragement.

1. Never have we lived in a world that has been so VICTIMIZED by DISCOURAGEMENT!
2. We live in a world where there is more money, more jobs, better education. We are the most comfortable generation, the most prosperous generation.
3. Yet we are the most discouraged generation to ever live. This is mainly caused by us not being satisfied, wanting more, complaining and grumbling.
4. Momma has to have a new dress, Daddy wants a new car, etc.
5. When you are discouraged, you are no value to yourself, others, or your church.
6. Dwight L. Moody once said, "I HAVE NEVER KNOWN GOD TO USE A DISCOURAGED PERSON."
7. Instead of griping and complaining we need to be THANKING.

B. Grumbling causes doubt.

1. Numbers 14:2,3.
3. When there is complaining going on in a church it will cause some to become discouraged and doubt if the cause is worth it.
4. When visitors walk into a church house and see and hear bickering and complaining going on, they will doubt.
5. It will cause some to even doubt you as a christian.

C. Grumbling will cause division.

1. Grumbling and complaining over silly things in a church has caused more division in churches.
2. People always seem to major on the minors and minor on the majors.
3. God expects His churches and His people to be in UNITY. Galatians 3:9.
4. The church at Jerusalem was known for it’s unity among the membership. Acts 2.

5. God’s churches are PRICELESS, they should have their PRIORITIES in order. They should remember their POSITION they should be before the world, they should exercise their POWER, realize their POTENTIAL and hold to the PROMISES they have as a church.

III. GIANTS IN OUR LIVES WILL HINDER CHURCH GROWTH.

A. Sin in our life and in the church will hinder.

1. None are immune, above, or beyond sin. I John 1:8.
2. Paul declares that the saved have two natures. Romans 7:17. There is a constant struggle going on.
3. When we get to the point that our sin turns into unconfessed SIN, then we’re in danger.
4. Unconfessed sin will hinder your spiritual growth and hinder your church.
5. God will bless and watch over, but He will withhold blessings as well.
6. God had great things in store for the people of Israel. They were to go into the land and possess it. It was their inheritance.
7. Ananias and Sapphira, two church members, LOST THEIR LIVES BECAUSE OF SIN.
8. Eli and his two sons were killed because of sin.
9. The church at Ephesus was told to repent.
10. The church at Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea were all told to REPENT.
11. GOD’S WORD STILL SAYS TO REPENT.

B. Another giant to overcome is self.

1. The three sons of Anak were giants that lived on Mount Hebron. Joshua 15:14.
2. SHE-SHAI - (HEBREW) = "Who I am" = EGO.
   a. People who try to exalt themselves eliminate God.
   b. Satan desired to be like the most high. Isaiah 14:14.
3. A-HI-MAN - (HEBREW) = "What I am" = PRIDE.
4. TAL-MAI - (HEBREW) = "What I can do" = SELF RELIANCE.
5. People who have the problem of PRIDE, EGO, or SELF RELIANCE within the church will hinder and hurt the church.

C. Our greatest giant to overcome is satan.

1. Next to God, satan is the most powerful influence in the world.
2. He is constantly playing tricks on human emotions.
3. He is behind all evil doings.
4. Satan has destroyed, and hindered God’s churches for generations. HE TAKES PLEASURE IN THIS.
5. Satan is our ADVERSARY. I Peter 5:8. He is our ARCH ENEMY, TEMPTER, TORMENTOR, AND TROUBLE MAKER.
6. HE tries to FILL our hearts with evil, HE FURIATES us, HE FRUSTRATES us.
7. He is constantly placing obstacles in our way.
8. Anytime you do something for Jesus, he gets mad and angry.
9. James 4:7 admonishes us to "RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU."
10. Verse 8 carries that thought even farther. "DRAW NIGHT UNTO GOD, AND HE WILL DRAW NIGHT UNTO YOU."

IV. GRASSHOPPERS WILL HINDER CHURCH GROWTH. The Israelites said that they felt like grasshoppers in the sight of the giants.

A. LACK OF FAITH.
1. The Israelites and the 10 spies felt that they couldn't conquer the land.
2. Many times we don't rely on the faith to do great things for God.
3. When the apostles at sea took their eyes off Jesus they began to sink.
4. Moses thought that he couldn't lead the nation of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Exodus 3:9-11.
5. Gideon thought that he couldn't defeat the Midianites with only 300 men.
6. Instead of having lack of faith we need to be like Paul when God wants us to do something. Acts 9:6.
7. Isaiah said, "HERE AM I, SEND ME."

B. LACK OF FOLLOWSHIP.
1. The Israelites lacked faith in their leader.
2. God had appointed Moses as their leader.
3. There are always some who are not willing to follow. These are usually the ones who hinder church growth.
4. The Bible teaches us that the pastor is the spiritual leader of the church.
5. Ephesians 4:11 teaches that the pastor is a gift from God to the church.
6. Hebrews 13:17 says, "OBEY THEM THAT HAVE THE RULE OVER YOU..."

C. LACK OF FRUITFULNESS.
1. If we are not fruitful we will not grow as a church.
2. Jesus teaches us that we are to witness. Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:8.
3. As a church you need to have vision.
4. We need to be able to see beyond the tip of our nose. We need to be able to see out the doors, down the street etc.

D. LACK OF FAITHFULNESS.
1. This hinders God's churches greatly.

2. We are living in a day where it seems that people just don't have time to go to church anymore.
3. People say that they don't have time, the truth is people just don't want to make the time.
4. It would do us all well to study and understand what Romans 12:1, Hebrew 10:25, Luke 17:10, and Joshua 24:15 is teaching.

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THREE KINDS OF CHURCH MEMBERS

By Julius Copeland

Text: III John

Introduction:
A. The church is made up of different kinds of members.
   1. Different abilities.
   2. Different personalities.
   3. Different backgrounds.
   4. This is for the good of the church.
B. Three times in this epistle the word "church" is used.
   1. The people mentioned in this letter were church members (Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius.)
   2. As we look at each of these men, we see three peculiarly different men.
   3. Two of these men were valuable to the church.
4. One was detrimental to the church.
C. Even today, there are people who are beneficial to the church, while some hinder the church.
1. Gaius was a remarkable church member.
2. Diotrephes was a repulsive church member.
3. Demetrius was a reputable church member.

I. THE REMARKABLE MEMBER V1. Gaius was a remarkable member. What made him so remarkable? The following characteristics:

A. Because he was liberated. V1.
1. He was in the truth.
2. He had the truth in him. His life was ordered by truth.
3. He walked in the truth. V3.
   a. "Truth" the revealed reality and the manifested veritable essence of a matter.
   b. We cannot know real liberty until we know truth.

B. Because he was laboring. V5.
1. His doing was continual.
   a. This involved work and hard labor.
   b. "Faithful" Gaius labored in such a way that he was trustworthy, reliable, and dependable.
2. His doing was toward the saints.
   a. He faithfully aided the saints.
   b. The other saints could depend upon Gaius for help.
3. His doing was toward strangers.
   a. It’s one thing to help those we know and love, and another thing to help a stranger.
   b. "Stranger" not of one’s own family.
   c. He is a lover of strangers.
   d. This describes the remarkable man. He does for other people.

C. Because he was loving. V6.
1. The love Gaius had for others was noticeable.
   a. "Borne witness" to witness, to attest anything that one knows.
   b. The saints and strangers could state with authority that Gaius was a lover of the work.
2. We, too, are to be lovers of the saints and strangers.
   a. This is the distinguishing mark of God’s people.
   b. We should have the kind of love that others talk about.

II. THE REPULSIVE MEMBER.
-- Contrast Gaius and Diotrephes --
1. Gaius was prosperous, Diotrephes was proud.
2. Gaius was compassionate, Diotrephes was contrary.
3. Gaius was helpful, Diotrephes was hateful.

A. His ego V9.
1. He had a desire for pre-eminence.
   a. "Pre-eminence" to be the first, hold the first place, or highest dignity.
   b. He not only desired it, he loved it.
   c. Only Christ is to have the pre-eminence. Colossians 1:18.
2. We all have to battle this spirit.

B. His enmity V9,10.
1. What were his deeds?
   a. "Receive us not".
   b. He rejected the apostolic letters and authority.
3. He raised false accusations..."Prating against us with malicious words." V10.
   a. "Prating" to overflow with talk.
   b. "Malicious" sorrow, pain, hence, evil.
   c. "Not content" to be satisfied with a thing.
4. He was hateful. V10.
   a. He wouldn’t receive the brethren.
   b. He wouldn’t allow those who wanted to.
   c. He excluded them who were kind.

III. THE REPUTABLE MAN V12.
A. He had a good reputation among the lost. V12.
1. "A good report of all men."
B. He had a good reputation in the work. V12.
1. "And of the truth itself."

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