

HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

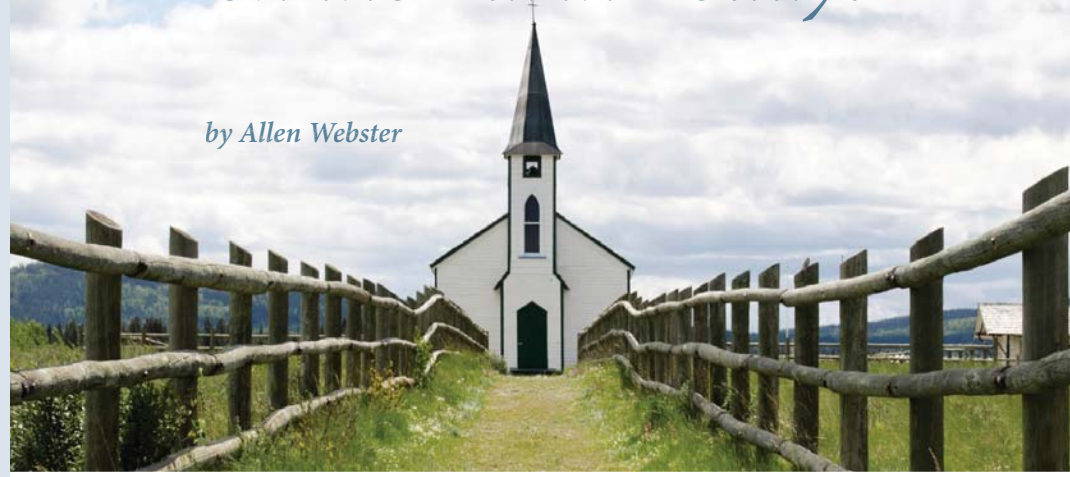
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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 16 NUMBER 5

Is the Church Jesus Built *on the Earth Today?*

by Allen Webster



We are not interested in a church that is like the church Jesus built any more than we are interested in a Savior like the Son of God. He either is or He isn't; it either is or it isn't.

A cow is like a horse in that it has four legs and a tail, but a cow is not a horse. A monkey is like a man in that it is a mammal that walks on two legs, but a man is no monkey.

The worship of Cain and Abel was similar (both worshipped the same God, at the same time, in response to blessings), but Cain's was rejected, and Abel's was accepted (Genesis 4:4-5; Hebrews 11:4). Tares and wheat were close in appearance, but one was edible and desirable, and the other was poisonous and hated (Matthew 13:24-30).

We are interested in finding the same church Jesus promised Peter He would

build (Matthew 16:18). On that occasion Peter did not say that Jesus was "like" the Son of God. He called Him "the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

Since it is not possible for any church to prove historically that it has existed from the time of the New Testament, is it even possible that the New Testament church still exists today? Yes, because it is not necessary to trace a line of succession back two thousand years. That possibility is easily proved by considering three simple principles. Come, "let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18).

CONSIDER THE SEED PRINCIPLE

If we wanted to grow Alabama tomatoes in Texas, would we need a row of tomatoes stretching across Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and into Texas? No, just take the seeds from Alabama >>



The seed is the word of God.

— Luke 8:11

to Texas, plant them, and they will grow.

The succession of the plant is in the seed, not in the row. One of God's eternal laws is that a seed produces "after his kind" (Genesis 1:11–12). When we plant beans we reap beans, not watermelons or corn; when we plant a peach seed it can produce only a peach tree, nothing else. Paul used this fact to illustrate a spiritual lesson: "Whoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). All institutions on earth—from Chinese Communism to Dell computers, from pro football to the Army—are perpetuated by their "seeds" (doctrines). So are all religious organizations. Each has a body of doctrine that it plants as seed. What is planted (taught) determines what grows.

"The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). When it was planted in the first century it produced Christians (individually) and the church of Christ (collectively). Let's apply the seed principle to today's religious situation:

- Do we have the same seed today as what was planted in New Testament times? Yes, we have the Bible (1 Peter 1:22–25).
- Has the seed become inert? No, it is alive (1 Peter 1:22–25).
- Do we have the same soil? Yes, human hearts (Matthew 13:19–23). It grows the same thing that it did then—Christians (Acts 2:22–47; 11:26). What else could it produce?
- What church will the seed produce? The same one it produced then; the one Jesus died to purchase, over which He reigns, and which bears His name (Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16).

The perpetuation of the church is in the pattern, not in the history of following it. It is in the seed, not in a perennial crop. It makes no difference how long the gospel seed may have been stored. If there had not been a church upon the earth after the New Testament order for a thousand years, so long as God's Word still survived, then Christ's church would sprout up when people read, understood, and obeyed the gospel.

CONSIDER THE CODEBOOK PRINCIPLE

A game, government, or gadget can be reproduced if its specifications are preserved in a book or computer. If there were no Monopoly board on earth, but a diagram of the board and rules of the game were discovered, it could be recreated in a short time. If the planet's last television finally ceased to flicker, a talented person could take a description of it

and make another one. If Communism or Islam conquered democracy all over the world, a future "Continental Congress" could take our Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, and a high school government textbook and begin to govern a free people yet unborn.

The Bible is the standard for Christianity. Paul wrote, "Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Philippians 3:16; cf. 2 Timothy 3:16–17). It simply contains the "rules" of Christianity. It is the diagram of what a church is to look like. It is the textbook of the Christian religion. Thus, in any place a Bible is read, understood, believed, and obeyed, the church will come into existence. This will happen regardless of whether a church has ever existed there before, is in existence at the time anywhere else, or even if it has been extinct for a century.

CONSIDER THE RESTORATION PRINCIPLE

Many people like to restore old automobiles or antebellum homes. They get the original plans and painstakingly restore the car or house as it was in the beginning. Such a restoration is occurring presently on Thomas Jefferson's summer home in Forest, Virginia. Those involved even test the soil to determine what kind of trees and bushes were originally planted near the house, so they can plant the same plants in the same places.

Isaac began a similar restoration project in the days of the patriarchs. The Bible records,

And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them (Genesis 26:18).

A spiritual restoration project has been done with Christ's church. Christ set the water of life flowing from the wellspring of His church. Over the centuries, it slowly became stopped up by man's teachings. Man became thirsty for more than tradition, Protestantism, and cults. He longed for the satisfying water of the original well. Restorers consulted the original blueprint within the pages of the New Testament and began to dig again the original doctrines. One by one they identified first century practices and called them by their original names (1 Peter 4:11). Careful workers eventually restored the church just as it was then—the same plan of salvation, organization, officers, acts of worship, love and zeal, and moral teachings. "Come and see" (John 1:39). ❖

I Am Thankful for Hot Dogs



I am thankful for

the wife who says it's hot dogs tonight because she is home with me and not out with someone else.

the husband who is on the sofa being a couch potato because he is home with me and not out at the bars.

the teenager who is complaining about doing dishes because it means she is at home, not on the streets.

the taxes I pay because it means I am employed.

the mess to clean after a party because it means I have been surrounded by friends.

the clothes that fit a little too snugly because it means I have enough to eat.

my shadow that watches me work because it means I am out in the sunshine, and for a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters that need fixing because it means I have a house.

all the complaining I hear about the government because it means we have freedom of speech.

the parking spot I find at the far end of the parking lot because it means I am capable of walking and have been blessed with transportation.

my huge cooling bill because it means I am comfortable.

the lady behind me in church who sings off key because it means I can hear.

the pile of laundry and ironing because it means I have clothes to wear.

weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day because it means I have been capable of working hard.

the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours because it means I am alive.

—submitted by Frances Shipp, Weaver High School, Weaver, Alabama

"In every thing give thanks"

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18



The Knots Prayer

Dear God:

Please untie the knots
that are in my mind,
my heart, and my life;
Remove the have nots,
the cannots, and the do nots
that I have in my mind.

Erase the will nots,
may nots, and
might nots
that may find a home in my heart.

Release me from the could nots,
would nots, and
should nots that obstruct my life.

And most of all,
Dear God,
I ask that you remove from my mind,
my heart, and my life all of the am nots
that I have allowed to hold me back.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Author Known but to God

"I can do all things through Christ"

PHILIPPIANS 4:13



No More Worries

I decided to stop worrying about my teenage son's driving and take advantage of it.

I got one of those bumper stickers that says "How's my driving?" and put a 900 number on it.

At 50 cents a call, I've been making \$38 a week.

"A merry heart doeth good ..."

PROVERBS 17:22

Home PAGE



Breaking Commandments

I bumped into an old friend and asked if she was planning to attend church; she just shook her head sadly.

"I haven't gone in a long time," she explained with obvious resignation. "Besides, it's probably too late for me. I've probably already broken all seven commandments."

"Let him that is athirst come"

REVELATION 22:17

Dad Said ...

Dad told us kids "save to spend," but it is permissible to borrow if investing (education, house purchase). The point was to not overextend and become a slave to a lender.



- Save through coupons. It is common sense that if we save one dollar, we have another dollar to our name, but if we earn another dollar we have but 70-80 cents to our name due to taxes. Coupons are good at any age.
- Be financially prudent during the good times, not just the tough times. By doing so, the tough times are not as tough.
- Regardless of the tough times, continue to support the Lord's work as we are able.

—Marshall Danby, Roan Mountain, Tennessee

"He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart"

PROVERBS 11:29



For more material on the home ,go to www.housetohouse.com.

The World's Longest Marriage



Meet Herbert and Zelmyra Fisher of North Carolina. They have been married 86 years and hold the *Guinness World Record* for the longest marriage of a living couple. Zelmyra is 101 years old and Herbert is 104!

The happily married couple teamed up with Twitter on Valentine's Day to answer relationship questions.

1. What made you realize that you could spend the rest of your lives together? Were you scared at all?
With each day that passed, our relationship was more solid and secure. Divorce was NEVER an option—or even a thought.
2. How did you know your spouse was the right one for you?
We grew up together and were best friends before we married. A friend is for life—our marriage has lasted a lifetime.
3. Is there anything you would do differently after more than 80 years of marriage?
We wouldn't change a thing. There's no secret to our marriage, we just did what was needed for each other and our family.
4. What is your advice to someone who is trying to keep the faith that Mr. Right is really out there?
Zelmyra: Mine was just around the corner! He is never too far away, so keep the faith—when you meet him, you'll know.
5. What was the best piece of marriage advice you ever received?
Respect, support, and communicate with each other. Be faithful, honest, and true. Love each other with ALL of your heart.
6. What are the most important attributes of a good spouse?
Zelmyra: A hard worker and good provider. The 1920s were hard, but Herbert wanted and provided the best for us. I married a good man!
7. What is your best Valentine's Day memory?
Zelmyra: I cook dinner EVERY day. Herbert left work early and surprised me—he cooked dinner for me! He is a VERY good cook!

Herbert: *I said that I was going to cook dinner for her and she could relax—the look on her face and clean plate made my day!*

8. You got married very young—how did you both manage to grow as individuals yet not grow apart as a couple?
"Everyone who plants a seed and harvests the crop celebrates together." We are individuals, but accomplish more together.
9. What is your fondest memory of your 85-year marriage?
Our legacy: 5 children, 10 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great grandchild.
10. Does communicating get easier with time? How do you keep your patience?
The children are grown, so we talk more now. We can enjoy our time on the porch or our rocking chairs—together.
11. How did you cope when you had to be physically separated for long periods of time?
Herbert: We were apart for 2 months when Z was hospitalized with our fifth child. It was the most difficult time of my life. Zelmyra's mother helped me with the house and the other children, otherwise I would have lost my mind.
12. At the end of a bad relationship day, what is the most important thing to remind yourselves?
Remember marriage is not a contest—never keep a score. God has put the two of you together on the same team to win.
13. Is fighting important?
NEVER physically! Agree that it's okay to disagree, and fight for what really matters. Learn to bend—not break!
14. What's the one thing you have in common that transcends everything else?
We are both Christians and believe in God. Marriage is a commitment to the Lord. We pray with and for each other every day.

—Twitter

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

MATTHEW 19:6

What Is a Christian's Responsibility to the Government?



A Christian is to (1) Obey civil authorities. "Obey magistrates" (Titus 3:1). "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers" (Romans 13:1). "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man" (1 Peter 2:13).

(2) Obey the civil government "for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13). Because "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1), resisting such authorities is equal to resisting God's ordained arrangement (13:2). "For so is the will of God" (1 Peter 2:15).

(3) Obey every aspect of civil law. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13). "Every ordinance" would include what the civil authorities might decree about building codes, littering highways, tax obligations, the size of passport photos, how far a church building must sit away from a street, and you name it. We

may be tempted to label some laws as unreasonable or ridiculous, but the law is the law.

If I have the right to disregard a law that I count as inconvenient or excessively costly, then why would another person not have the right to disregard a different law? What is it that ensues when people decide to use their own gut feelings to determine with which government ordinances they will comply, and which they will disregard? The word is "chaos" or "lawlessness."

(4) Obey civil authorities at all levels. Peter's Spirit-guided instruction to submit to civil ordinances was, "whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers" (1 Peter 2:13-14). This shows all branches and levels of civil government fall under the category of "the powers

that be" to whom we are to submit ourselves. In our country that would include national, state, district, county, and city laws.

(5) Obey civil authorities, unless they conflict with God's law. Because God's people are to act "as obedient children" at all times (1 Peter 1:14), if man's laws are at odds with the teaching of the Bible, God's children are to obey the Bible. "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Remember, though, we are not at liberty to disobey a government law simply because we do not like it. A saint's decision not to submit to a civil law must be based on a "thus saith the Lord" and not on his own personal likes or preferences. —Roger Campbell

To ask a Bible question or view previously answered questions, go to www.HouseToHouse.com.

Bible QUIZ

Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a FREE Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose "A Look at God's Library" bookmark as a way of saying "thanks" for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).



Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Questions Taken from the King James Version

Answers to Last Issue: Location, Location, Location: 1. Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1); 2. Paradise (Luke 23:39-43); 3. Hades (Luke 16:19-31); 4. Damascus (Acts 9:1-9); 5. Jacob (Genesis 28:10-12); 6. Elijah (2 Kings 2:11); 7. Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-2); 8. Bethel (2 Kings 2:23); 9. Assyrians (2 Kings 18:11-12); 10. Babylon (2 Kings 25:21); 11. Jericho (Joshua 6:1-20); Hebrews 11:30; 12. Eden (Genesis 2:8); 13. Mt. Sinai (Exodus 31:18); 14. Ai (Joshua 7:1-12); 15. Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:19-20); 16. Cana (John 2:1-11); 17. Jerusalem (John 12:12-14); 18. Canaan (Exodus 3:8; Joshua 5:6-12); 19. Ethiopia (Acts 8:27); 20. Jericho (Luke 10:30); 21. Lion's Den (Daniel 6:8-16).

Old Testament Bible Characters

Directions: Find your answers in these verses (not in order): Genesis 3:20; 4:8; 5:24; 6:13-14; 22:1-13; 29:30; Exodus 2:5-10; Numbers 20:8-11; Judges 7:5-7; 15:4-5; Ruth 1:20-22; 1 Samuel 9:2; 16:7-13, 23; 17:49-50; 2 Samuel 11:1-17; 1 Kings 3:10-13; 11:40; 12:1-17; 17:1-6; 2 Kings 6:1-7; Job 1:8-22; Psalm 23:1; Daniel 6:20-21; Jonah 1:17

- _____ Fed by ravens
- _____ Built an ark
- _____ Kept in an ark as a baby
- _____ Unloved wife of Jacob
- _____ Mother of all living
- _____ Wisest king
- _____ Foolish son of Solomon who split the kingdom
- _____ Persecuted by Satan; known for patience
- _____ Struck the rock instead of speaking to it
- _____ First human to die
- _____ First human never to die
- _____ Offered son as sacrifice (God stopped him)
- _____ Used foxes to set a field on fire
- _____ Defeated Midianites with soldiers who got down on 1 knee
- _____ Daughter-in-law to Mara (Naomi)
- _____ Judge who anointed David to be king
- _____ Stood head and shoulders taller than his army
- _____ Prophet who caused an ax head to float
- _____ Swallowed by a great fish
- _____ Future king Solomon tried to kill
- _____ Killed a man to cover his sin of adultery
- _____ Played the harp to sooth Saul's troubled soul
- _____ Felled a giant with a sling and a stone
- _____ Wrote the Shepherd Psalm (Psalm 23)
- _____ Survived a night with the lions

Exploding Book

God's Book has power. I've seen it "explode" and blow beer out of a man's refrigerator. I've seen this book "explode" and blow the hate out of a man's life. I've seen this book "explode" and transform people's lives.

The power of the Bible is amazing. When it's preached, the Bible is like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces (cf. Jeremiah 23:29). It penetrates our deepest consciences and exposes our sins, stubbornness, hypocrisies, misunderstandings, and motivations (cf. Hebrews 4:12).

I know that the Bible is true because many years ago, God saved a 19-year old boy whose life was going astray. He's the one who's writing this article.

And in the years I've been studying the Bible, I have seen this book change the lives of so many different people. It can change your life, too.

—Howell Ferguson, Bells, Tennessee

*"The gospel of Christ ... is the power of God
unto salvation"*

ROMANS 1:16

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- ▶ Biblical Christianity —Mack Lyon
- ▶ Marriage Enrichment: Building a Successful Relationship —Sam Jones
- ▶ Are You Sure You Are Saved? —James Watkins
- ▶ Evolution Is Religion, Not Science —Dr. Michael Houts (NASA scientist, PhD MIT)
- ▶ The Triune Nature of God —Mike Vestal
- ▶ A Teenager Named Joseph —Allen Webster

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- I want to learn more about your Bible school and programs.
- I have a prayer request: _____
- I have a Bible question: _____
- I want to know more about what God requires for salvation. Please have someone schedule a personal visit with me.

I want to learn more about the Bible!

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

Bible Study Helps:

- Enroll me in a Free Survey of the Bible Home Study Course. *Pressure-free . . . work on your own at home.*
- I want to see the *Visualized Bible Study* series (an in-home personal study). *These popular videos have been seen by people of all religions all over the world.*
- I would like a daily Bible reading schedule.

Tracts:

- NEW!** Is the Church Jesus Built on the Earth Today?
- NEW!** What the Disciples Learned on a Field Trip
- NEW!** Learning to Listen May Save Your Marriage
- NEW!** Glorifying God as Men
- Mary's Little Lamb No More
- Was God Praised in the Church Service Today?
- I Need the Prayers of Those Who Love Me
- Who Should Win Back the Erring?
- What to Expect When You Visit the Church of Christ
- The Doctor Who Never Lost a Case
- What Does God Do with His Trash?
- Give Your Tobacco to a Billy Goat (teen smoking)
- Three Tears from a Savior's Eye
- How to Change Your Personality
- Death Hurts, but Jesus Helps
- Solomon's Eleven Reasons to Avoid Loose Women
- Where the Omnipresent God Isn't
- Irony of Calvary
- Did He Not Also Die for These?
- Looking for Love
- Seven Things God Hates (Lies)
- Don't Bet on It!
- Salvation Is Free, but Not Cheap
- What Teens Want
- Watered-down Baptism
- Jesus Was Not a Farmer
- How to Stop Worrying
- Happiness Guaranteed!
- When Jesus Went on a Picnic
- Back issues of *House to House/Heart to Heart*



In 1958, a New York City father named Robert Lane decided to call his baby son “Winner.” The Lanes, who lived in a housing project in Harlem, already had several children, each with a fairly typical name. But Robert Lane apparently had a special feeling about this boy. Winner Lane: How could he fail with a name like that?

Three years later, the Lanes had another baby boy, their seventh and last child.

For reasons that no one can quite pin down today, Robert decided to name this boy “Loser.” Robert wasn’t unhappy about the new baby; he just seemed to get a kick out of the name. First a Winner, now a Loser. But if Winner Lane could hardly be expected to fail, could Loser Lane possibly succeed?

Loser Lane did in fact succeed. He went to prep school on a scholarship, graduated from Lafayette College in Pennsylvania, and joined the New York Police Department where he made detective, and, eventually, sergeant. Although he never hid his name, many people were uncomfortable using it. To his police colleagues today, he is known as “Lou.”

As for his brother, the most noteworthy achievement of Winner Lane, now in his 50s, is the sheer length of his criminal record: more than 30 arrests for burglary, domestic violence, trespassing, resisting arrest, and other mayhem.

What’s in a name? Names can reveal one’s character and even shape it. Names can provide a goal for which a person may strive to achieve. By contrast, one can fail to live up to a name that he has been given.

What’s in a name? There is *conviction* in a name that we all wear due to our wrong choices: *sinner*. “For ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

What’s in a name? There is *salvation* in the name of Jesus. “Neither 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).

Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). When we respond in trusting obedience by believing in Him (Acts 16:30-31), turning from our sins in repentance (2 Corinthians 7:9-10), confessing His name before men

(Romans 10:9-10), and being baptized (immersed) in His name, Jesus gives us a new name: *Christian*.

Wearing the name “Christian” indicates that we have been forgiven of our sins and it also gives us a goal for which to strive: Christ-likeness. God has promised that as a Christian walks in the light of His Word, that He will continue to cleanse that one of his sins (1 John 1:7).

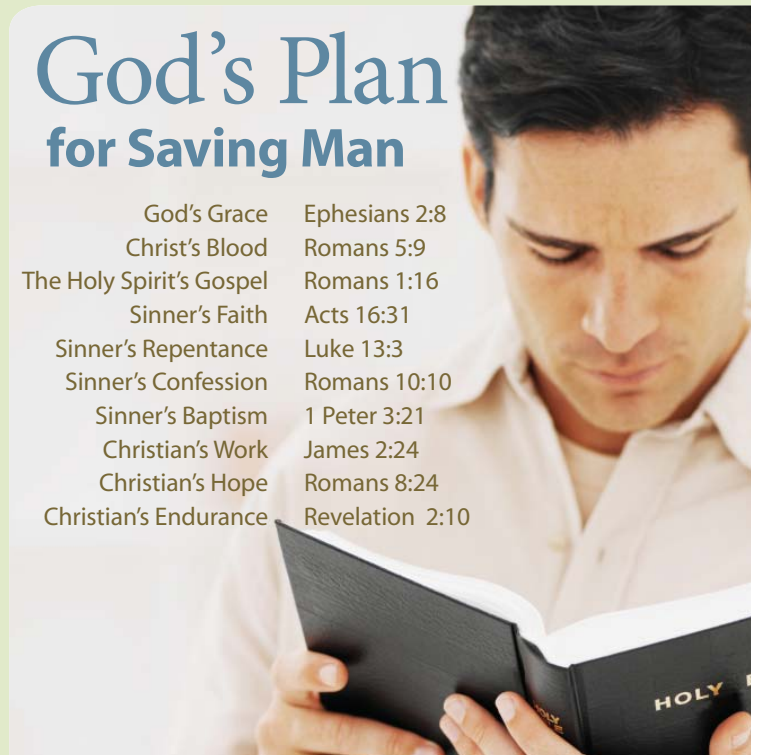
What’s your name? Labels can hurt; titles can reward. But the name above every name is Jesus, and He wants to be your Savior so that He can give you a new name, a name filled with glory and honor as well as responsibility, the name “Christian.”

Won’t *you* become a Christian today?

—Connor McLean and David A. Sargent, Mobile, Alabama

God’s Plan for Saving Man

God’s Grace	Ephesians 2:8
Christ’s Blood	Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit’s Gospel	Romans 1:16
Sinner’s Faith	Acts 16:31
Sinner’s Repentance	Luke 13:3
Sinner’s Confession	Romans 10:10
Sinner’s Baptism	1 Peter 3:21
Christian’s Work	James 2:24
Christian’s Hope	Romans 8:24
Christian’s Endurance	Revelation 2:10



Thoughts from the HEART

Daddy, I'm Engaged!

Saturday night I received a phone call from my daughter. After I said "hello," on the other end of the line I heard my daughter excitedly say, "Daddy, I'm engaged!"

But how can that be? It was just last week that I was holding her in my arms for the very first time, surprised by her big dimples. It was just yesterday that she was swinging on her swing set in the backyard, singing at the top of her lungs for the whole neighborhood to hear. How could the little girl that I just taught to ride a bike be getting married?

My, how time flies! But I should already know that. James told us that when he said our life is like a vapor that appears for a short time and vanishes away (James 4:14).

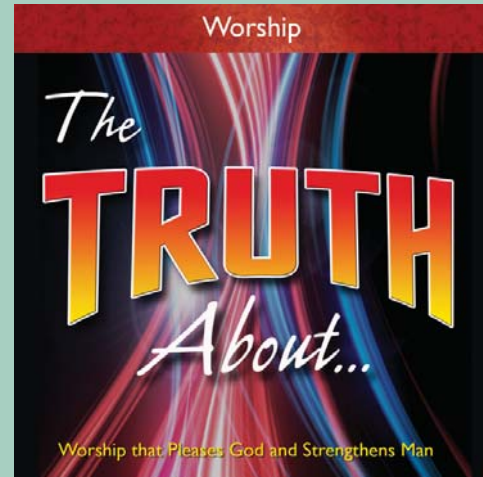
The phone call I received from my daughter on Saturday night was a reminder for me to make the best use of the time we have, not just with reference to our families but to our God as well. Before we realize it, we will all receive a "call" from God.

When that call comes, will you be prepared? Give it some thought.



—Steve Higginbotham, Knoxville, Tennessee

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