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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 6

A publication of the... Churches of Christ

Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18
Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5
Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2
Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22
Organization:

Christ as head – Eph. 5:23
Elders oversee local church –
Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5
Deacons as servants –
Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13
Members compose body –
Col. 1:2

Name (group):

Church of God – Eph. 3:15
Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23
Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16
Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4

Name (individuals):

Disciples – John 15:8
Saints – Rm. 1:7
Brethren – Lk. 8:21
Children of God – Gal. 4:26
Christian – Acts 11:25-26

Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37

Rule of Faith & Practice:

Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Worship: Jn. 4:24

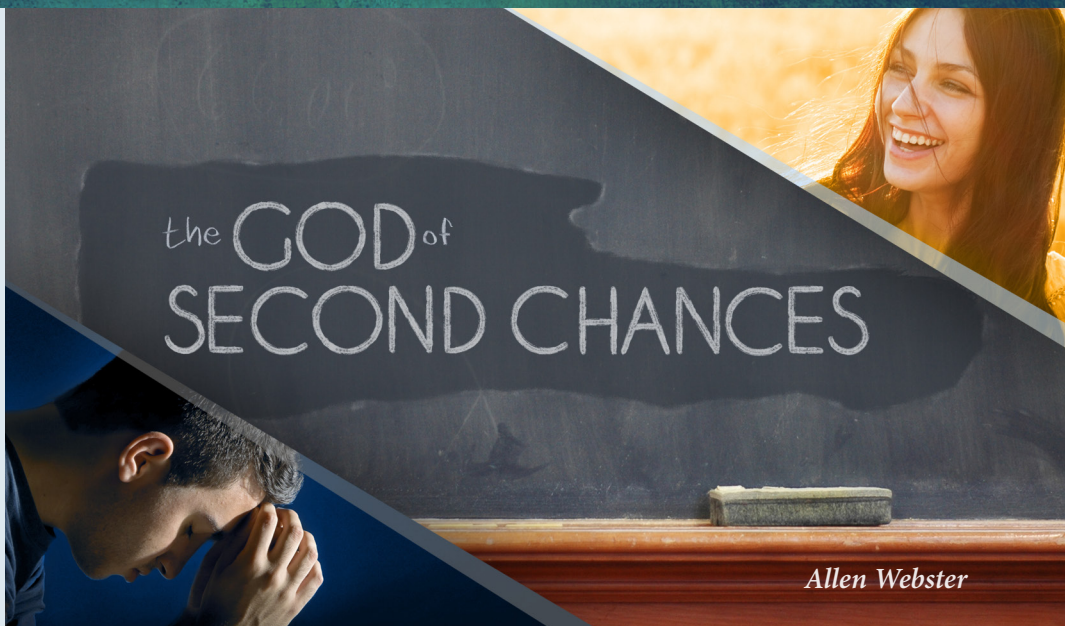
Sing – Eph. 5:19
Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17
Teach – Acts 5:42
Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26
Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2

Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16

Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

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Allen Webster

A reporter asked Winston Churchill what prepared him to risk political suicide by speaking out so strongly so early against Adolph Hitler. Churchill said he thought it might have been the time he had to repeat a grade in elementary school.

“You mean you failed a year in grade school?” the reporter asked incredulously. Churchill retorted, indignantly, “I never failed anything in my life. I was always given a second opportunity to get it right.”

Most of us need a “second opportunity to get it right.” God is more than willing to give us that opportunity. He is rich in mercy, love, and grace (Ephesians 2:4). He especially delights in mercy: “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Micah 7:18).

A GOD WHO RUNS: A PLACE AT GOD’S TABLE

One of the all-time greatest stories ever told is that of a son who ran away from home with his pockets full of his father’s hard-earned money. Predictably, he famously and foolishly spent it all.

Read again Jesus’ lovely story (Luke 15:11–20). Let’s try to imagine how it might have happened in that Jewish family so long ago.

Hungry, sad, and alone, the boy finally resolved to go back to his father’s farm and see if he could get on as hired help. As he trudged mile after mile, he rehearsed what he would say and wondered what the reaction would be. Would his father refuse to see him? Would he send out a servant to tell him that he had made his bed and now he had to lie in it?

As he rounded the last curve, he saw the home place far in the distance. With his heart in his throat and a knot in his stomach, he thought, *Here we go.*

His father was the first to spot him—his dim old eyes out-seeing far younger ones because they were sharpened by longing and love. He had glanced down that road a thousand times before. This time he did a double take. Is that a dot on the horizon? Who is coming to the farm? It looks like ... could it be? Yes!

Then something unusual happened. Perhaps field hands leaned on hoe handles to watch. In the barn, a worker stopped with a hay bale halfway to its

landing spot. Kitchen staff stepped on the porch to better see.

The master was running.

They had never seen that before. He had pulled up his long robe and taken off down the road toward town. Their eyes followed his path to see where he was going, and they saw in the distance a lone silhouette.

As the father drew near, he threw his arms around the boy, kissing him—and you can almost see his wide smile as he sized up the young man. Then a cloud crossed his lined face as a closer examination noted the loose fit of the clothes, the rank smell of his body odor, and the new sadness around those once-innocent eyes.

The father interrupted the boy's prepared speech about wanting a servant's job if one was available. The master barked commands to the servants as they neared the house: *Get the boy something to eat! He needs new clothes! Get ready for the party we'll soon have. My son that was dead is alive!*



Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son was given to show us that God gives second chances. To some extent, we have all worn that prodigal's clothes. We've all smelled of the pig pen and felt hunger gnaw at us as sin's feast turned into its inevitable famine (James 1:15). We can vividly recall the excitement of the trip to that distant sin-city, and many of us have lived long enough to long again for what we left behind. We've seen the disappointment in our Father's eyes over our bad decisions and foolish mistakes. We've come back with hat in hand.

Others are wondering if the welcome mat is still out for them. *No matter*, we pic-

ture the Father saying, *Just come back. My love is unwavering. You could never be persona non grata here. Come home. There's plenty of bread on the table, plenty of love to go around.* God just longs for the family to be complete again. He pines away waiting for us to make the first move (Revelation 3:20). When we do, He enthusiastically rushes to meet us well on our side of the halfway mark.

A GOD WHO WAITS: FILLING HEAVEN'S MANSIONS

Christ's second coming is presently delayed by God's long-suffering. Peter wrote of the Lord's promised return: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Of course, if we received what we deserve for our sins, we would all be swiftly and summarily condemned (Psalm 37:38; James 2:13). There would be no second chances. But God gives us both grace and space to repent (Ephesians 2:8–9; Revelation 2:21). Desiring that no person be eternally lost, He leaves the door of repentance open to all (Acts 17:30–31; Romans 2:4–5). He wants as many with Him in heaven as can be persuaded to make a reservation for a mansion there (John 14:1–3; Revelation 21:1–4).

Our sins could never be greater than God's grace. Our failures could never surpass God's love. The mistakes in our past do not predict our future. Remember, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

A GOD WHO STAYS: TROPHIES OF GOD'S GRACE

God never gives up on us—even if we give up on ourselves. He is eternally optimistic that we will come back. He stays to help us through the long maze of a journey from earth to heaven. Take to heart His promise: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5; cf. Matthew 28:20).

How do we know God will give us another chance? He has a great track record in that department. You could say that the Bible is a "trophy case" that contains the greatest feats of grace the earth saw in its first four thousand years. Each story is a remarkable reminder that God gives second chances.

- God took a cowardly liar named Abraham and made him the father of the faithful (Genesis 12–20; 18:19; Romans 4:16; James 2:21).
 - He made a deceiver named Jacob the cornerstone of a holy nation (Genesis 27; 46:8–26).
 - He turned an eighty-year-old murderer named Moses into one of the greatest leaders the world has ever seen (Exodus 2:11–14; 5:1).
 - He used a murdering adulterer named David to write songs that would strengthen and encourage His people for three thousand years (2 Samuel 11–12; Psalm 23).
 - He took a self-pitying, despairing prophet named Elijah and salvaged him for great works of service (1 Kings 19).
 - He made a hate-filled prophet named Jonah a successful missionary to the world's then greatest city (Jonah 3:5–10).
 - He took a woman who had been divorced five times and who was living with a sixth man and used her to bring a city to the Savior's feet (John 4:15–30).
 - He honored a hated tax collector named Zacchaeus with an in-home visit and a place in the book read by all generations (Luke 19:5–8).
 - He tapped an arrogant fisherman named Peter who cursed and denied His Son the night He most needed Him to be the keynote speaker in the greatest revival the world has ever seen (Mark 16:7; John 21:15–17; cf. Acts 2).
 - He commissioned a disappointing young man named John Mark who left Paul in a lurch to write one of the four greatest books ever written (and possibly the most read of all time—since it is the shortest of Christ's biographies) (Acts 13:13).
 - He gave a man named Paul a second chance who had before done everything within his power—legal action, character assassination, deprivation of human rights, verbal/physical abuse—to destroy Christ's church and dishearten God's children (1 Timothy 1:13–16).
- All of God's success stories are not told in Scripture. God takes people from unusual failures to amazing successes all the time. Many will happen this week. Could He right now be making a space for you in His trophy case?
- What would you do with a second chance? We are about to find out . . .

A Prostitute in Faith's Hall of Fame

Hebrews 11 is commonly called "Faith's Hall of Fame." Rahab the harlot is listed there (11:31) among those who possessed great faith in God. She hid the spies Joshua sent into Jericho before Israel attacked the city.

Hebrews 11 and Joshua 2 both describe her as a "harlot." Some who cannot accept that God would use a person of such character say the Hebrew word for *harlot* can mean "a female innkeeper" or "hostess." This may be true, but the inspired Hebrews writer leaves no doubt. The Greek word is *porna*, which means "a woman who sells her body for sexual purposes" (Thayer). She was a prostitute.

God's spies did not go into Rahab's house for evil purposes. They just needed an inn for the night. As a result, Rahab became a believer, changed her way of life, and served God (Hebrews 11:31).

Why is it difficult to think that God could see into the heart of a sinner (even a prostitute) and know that if she were presented with the opportunity to repent, she would? Peter says that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

The lesson for us is that we do not choose those people whom we think the gospel will touch, and we do not shun those whom we think will not respond. God accepted and changed the prostitute, so who are we to think that the gospel cannot do as much and more? (Romans 1:16).

The lessons Jesus taught in the parable of the great feast (Luke 14:16-24) show that Jesus solicits anyone who will repent and do His will.

Rahab, a harlot? Yes, but she didn't stay one. She became an ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:5). —Unknown



CLOCK watchers



Shortly after he opened his first plant, Thomas Edison noticed that his employees had gotten into the bad habit of watching the factory clock, which was the only clock in the plant.

To the indefatigable inventor who never thought about the time a task took, this was incomprehensible. He did not express his disapproval verbally. Instead he had dozens of clocks installed all around the plant. His goal was not to make it easier for his workers to see a clock. He made sure that no two clocks had the same time. Soon clock watching led to so much confusion that nobody cared what time it was.

I have a suspicion that one reason that God does not tell us when the second coming will be is that He knows we are clock-watchers. Just as people were busy thinking about how much time they had left at work or until lunch break, so we might be tempted to focus only on getting ready when the time was near. Instead we are called to be the people of God every minute of every day—not to get ready but to be ready.

—Michael Moss



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



Big Mosquitoes

When my grandson, Billy, and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, “It’s no use, Grandpa. The mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights.”

“A merry heart doeth good.”

PROVERBS 17:22



What Children Remember

Conduct your home so children will remember that

- Father and mother were kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32).
- Home was a happy place, governed by the law of love (Psalm 119:165).
- Each child was treated fairly and required to obey his or her parents (Ephesians 6:1–4).
- Sunday was a day of worship (Acts 20:7).
- The Bible, God’s law, settled everything (Psalm 33:4).
- Home was a place where friendships were dear, but truth was dearer (Proverbs 18:24; 23:23).
- Although mother and father worked hard, they took time to read the Bible daily and pray (Hebrews 10:22).

There is still time for many of us to create good memories for our children.

—Unknown

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Parents Have to *Live It*

At one point during the game, the coach said to one of his little players, “Do you understand what cooperation is and what teamwork is all about?” The little boy nodded.

“Do you understand that what really matters is not whether we win or lose, but that we play together as a team?” The little boy nodded again.

“Good,” the coach continued. “And, when a strike is called, or you’re thrown out at first, you don’t argue, curse, attack the umpire with a bat, or throw dirt in the opposing team members’ faces. Do you understand all that?”

The little boy said, “Well, sure, coach. That’s what you taught us.”

“Good,” said the coach. “Now, please go over there and explain all that to your mother.”

I’ve been to a few Little League games when the above conversation needed to take place. It’s sad to see parents who act in an irresponsible manner, for they are teaching their children (and others’ children) to behave in a similar manner.

God has given those of us who are parents an awesome responsibility—not only to teach our children what is right, but also to live in such a way that they can see that we are willing to practice what we’ve been teaching them to do.

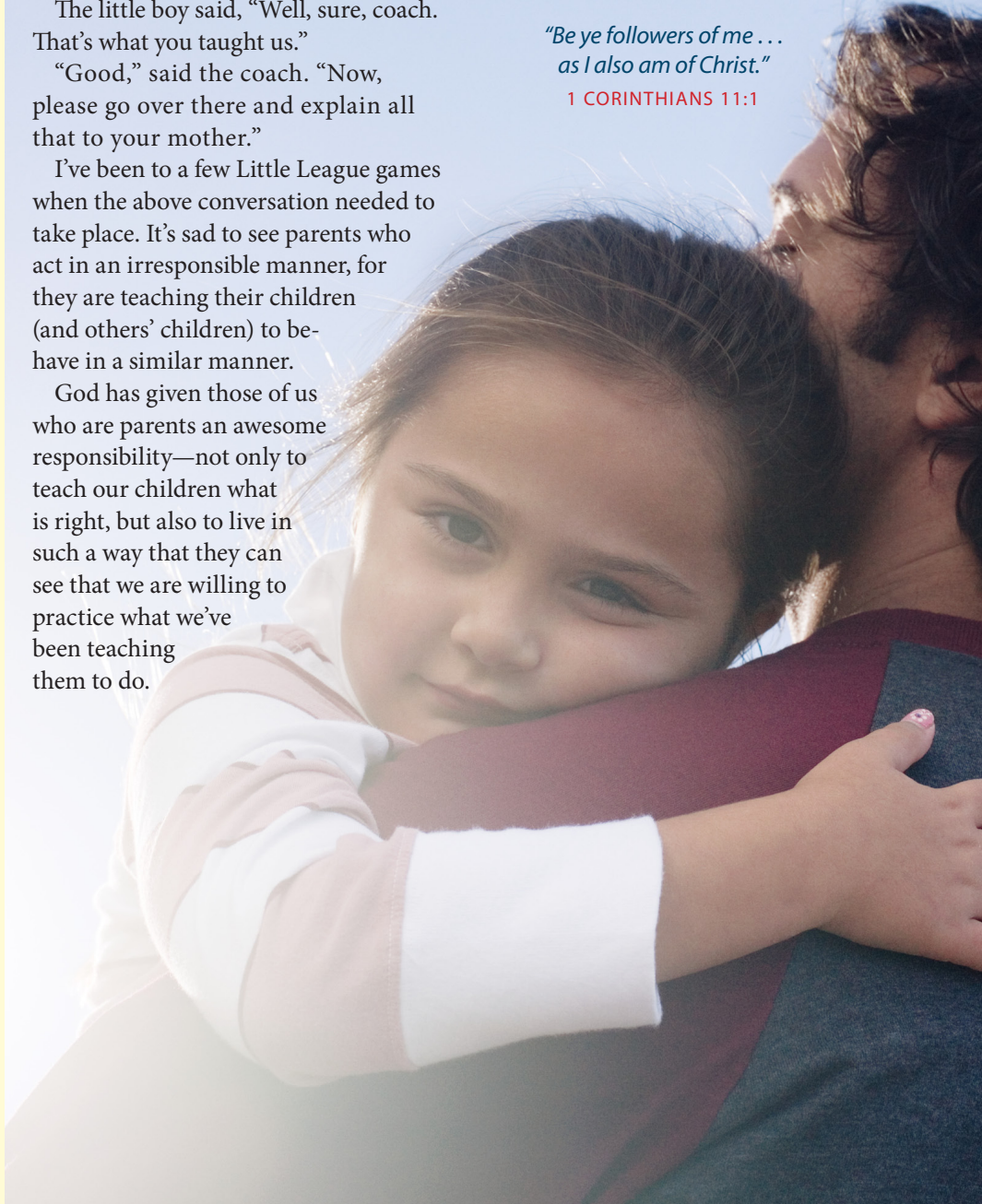
Moses told the parents of Israel to take the laws which God had given them and “teach them diligently unto thy children” (Deuteronomy 6:7). But before telling parents to do that, he warned them: “Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it” (Deuteronomy 6:3).

Before we can teach the love of God to our children and others, it must be in our own hearts. May God bless all parents as each strives to do just that. May your life be so filled with a desire to follow God, that your children will listen to all you have to say to them.

—Alan Smith, “Thought for the Day”

“Be ye followers of me . . . as I also am of Christ.”

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1



JESUS' APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

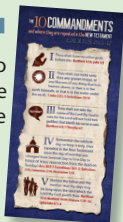


Jesus appeared to ...

1. Mary Magdalene and other women at the tomb (**Matthew 28:8–10**).
2. Peter (**1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34**).
3. Cleopas and a companion on the road to Emmaus (**Luke 24:13–35**).
4. Ten apostles (**Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–25**), then to all eleven (**John 20:26–29**).
5. Seven apostles by the Sea of Galilee (**John 21:1–23**).
6. His disciples and a large gathering (**Matthew 28:16–17; 1 Corinthians 15:6**).
7. James (**1 Corinthians 15:7**).
8. A large group at His ascension (**Luke 24:49–53; Acts 1:3–11**).
9. Stephen during his stoning (**Acts 7:55–56**).
10. Saul on the road to Damascus (**Acts 9:3–6; 22:6–11**).
11. John at the Isle of Patmos throughout **Revelation**.

Bible QUIZ

VOLUME 19:6



Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a FREE Bible bookmark. We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the Ten Commandments 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: Money and Treasure in the Bible: 1. A farthing (Matthew 10:29); 2. God (Genesis 43:23); 3. 20 pieces of silver (Genesis 37:28); 4. Lords of Philistines (Judges 16:5); 5. Trouble (Proverbs 15:6); 6. Trouble (Proverbs 15:16); 7. Heart (Matthew 6:21); 8. Good (Luke 6:45); 9. Heaven (Mark 10:21); 10. Vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7); 11. Candace (Acts 8:27); 12. 100 pence (Matthew 18:28); 13. 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 27:3); 14. All evil (1 Timothy 6:10); 15. Peter (Matthew 17:24–27); 16. Two farthings (Luke 12:6); 17. Two mites (Mark 12:41–42); 18. Samuel (1 Samuel 8:1–3).

Paul, Barnabas, and Timothy

Directions: Find your answers in Acts 4:36–37; 7:58–59; 9:3–5, 8–9; 11:24; 13:46; 14:11–12; 15:37–38; 16:1, 3, 16–23, 37–38; 17:16, 19; 20:9; 21:39; 28:1; Romans 15:16; 1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Timothy 1:5.

1. The apostle Paul was born in what city? _____
2. Paul was a citizen of _____.
3. Paul (Saul) was present for the stoning of _____.
4. What road was Paul traveling on when Jesus appeared to him? _____
5. What happened to Paul after Jesus finished speaking to him? _____
6. Paul was sent to preach to the _____.
7. Who did the people at Lystra think Paul and Barnabas were? _____
8. Why were Paul and Silas thrown in a Philippian prison? _____
9. In what city did Paul speak on the Areopagus—Mars' Hill? _____
10. Who fell out of a window when Paul was preaching? _____
11. On what island was Paul shipwrecked on his voyage to Rome? _____
12. To what tribe did Barnabas belong? _____
13. What country was Barnabas from? _____
14. What does the name Barnabas mean? _____
15. Barnabas is described as a _____ man, full of the Holy Spirit and _____.
16. When Paul suggested to Barnabas that they go back and see the people from their previous journey, who did Barnabas want to take with them? _____
17. Who was Timothy's mother? _____
18. Timothy's father was a _____.
19. What did Paul do to Timothy because of the Jews? _____
20. Because of health reasons, Paul encouraged Timothy to drink what instead of only water? _____
21. How many books of the Bible did Timothy write? _____

<http://quiz.christiansunite.com/quiz.cgi>

Can't Stop Now

The famous engineer and inventor, Robert Fulton, returned to America from Paris in 1805 to test his invention of the steamship.

In 1807, he was ready to take the steamship *Claremont* on a trial run up the Hudson River between New York City and Albany.

In the excited crowd watching the proceedings, there was a negative, pessimistic, doubtful old man. While preparations were made to start, the old man kept repeating, "They won't ever get her started." The steamship, however, was started, and began its trip up the river to the cheers of the crowd. The doubter was then heard to say, "They won't ever get her stopped."

There are two kind of doubters: the active, investigative doubters who are willing to study evidences before reaching a conclusion, and the lazy, prejudicial doubters who are unwilling to consider any possible evidences.

Be a good doubter. Consider the reasons you should believe the Bible and be a member of the church you read about therein.

"Learn of me."
MATTHEW 11:29



Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front of House to House / Heart to Heart.

Recommended Resource



The Light Network is a network of podcasts (online radio shows) dedicated to encouraging, enlightening, and empowering you in your service to God. With programming for men, women, new Christians, and much more, there's sure to be something you will enjoy! New content is added daily! To check it out, go to www.thelightnetwork.tv

I want to learn more about the Bible!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Phone: _____

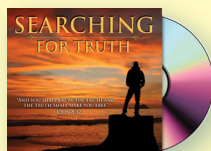
Email: _____

Prayer requests or comments: _____

I would like:



A Bible Correspondence Course

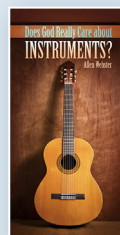


A DVD Bible Study



An In-Home Bible Study

New Tracts!



Does God Really Care about Instruments?



The Rich Man, The Desperate Man

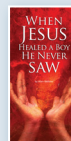


Don't Get Carried Away



Why Do Bad Things Happen?

More subjects:



When Jesus Healed a Boy He Never Saw



Love Thy Neighbor



Next Week's Best Seller



Asleep in a Storm



A Brief Introduction to the Bible



Closet Christianity



How To Stop Worrying



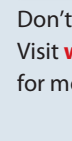
Have You Read the Only Book God Ever Wrote



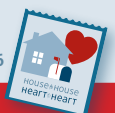
Are We Rushing through Worship?



The Good Shepherd



Don't see the topic you need? Visit www.housetohouse.com for more subjects.



Trust the LORD

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5).

The pressures and anxieties of life can lead us to trust worldly wisdom rather than in our all-knowing God. However, real peace and strength are only found when we place our confidence in Him (Psalm 32:10; 125:1). We should trust the Lord

In Everything. “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:6). Some revel in their independence; others think they are self-sufficient (Revelation 3:17). Nothing could be further from the truth! We are insufficient (James 4:10) and are desperate for God’s help. “The Lord shall help them . . . because they trust in him” (Psalm 37:40).

For Everything. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:5). Every good and perfect gift comes from the heavenly Father (James 1:17). It is easy for us to think that everything we attain is solely through our own efforts, but that is not so, for in God we live and move and have our very being (Acts 17:28).

With Everything. “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:21). Some people cling to possessions or pride as though they were going to have them forever. To the faithful child of God, the Father must come first (Matthew 6:33; Luke 14:25–33).

Through Everything. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17). We must trust God even in the midst of trials, for although we may not understand the purpose of those difficulties, He will get us through them. “The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate” (Psalm 34:22).

May we truly be able to say, “In God we trust!”

—Mike Vestal, Midland, Texas

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.”

PROVERBS 3:5

The Power of Sin

Sin is not stagnant. It never stays in one place, person, family, community, or country. A judge may sequester a jury, and a doctor may quarantine a disease, but no man or earthly power can isolate sin. Sin stalks its victim as a hunter does his prey. Sin slithers like a snake, inserting its venom of death into the veins of those who bear the image of God. Sin marches like locusts over the landscape of humanity, leaving a world of human wreckage in its wake. Sin is a vulture feasting on its own handiwork. Adam and Eve’s transgressions initiated a stream of sin that proved torrential in its power and worldwide in its scope.

—Frank Chesser, Montgomery, Alabama

Would you be free from the power of sin? There is power in the blood. Come to Jesus!

“Come unto me.”

MATTHEW 11:28

The Safe Channel

While riding a ship on one of the Great Lakes, a passenger became very alarmed at the number of rocks along the shoreline. Fearing that the ship would get too close to one of them, the passenger asked the captain, “Do you know where all those dangerous rocks are?”

“No,” replied the captain, “but I know where the safe channel is.”

This is true in religion. The safe channel is the one we can clearly see in Scripture.

The name *Christian* is the safe name to wear (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Romans 16:16; Matthew 16:18; 1 Timothy 3:15; Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16; Acts 26:28–29; 4:12).

The doctrine of the New Testament is the safe doctrine to teach (2 Timothy 3:14–17; Acts 2:42; 2 John 1:9; Romans 1:16; Galatians 1:8–9; Revelation 22:18–19; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1–4).

Worship that follows the apostles’ example is safe worship (Acts 2:42; John 4:23–24; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23–30; 16:1–2; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19–20).

The plan of salvation the apostles taught is safe to teach sinners today (Romans 10:17; Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–16; Acts 2:38; 8:34–39; 18:8; 22:16; Romans 6:3–4; Galatians 3:27; 1 Peter 3:21).

Following the New Testament carefully, without adding to it or taking from it, is the path that is right and cannot be wrong. If this approach appeals to you, we invite you to investigate the church of Christ (Romans 16:16). “Come and see” (John 1:39).



Please recycle House to House by giving this copy to your family or friends.

