

HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 2



THIS IS GOING TO STING A LITTLE

Allen Webster

Nurses always say it . . . and they always *underestimate*. The needle looks a lot longer and feels a lot bigger on the receiving end.

Why did they ever invent needles? After all, these are modern times. Men have walked on the moon. We can be on the other side of the world overnight. Yet they still have not figured out a way to take the sting out of medical practice. Needles are necessary.

Life has internal stings as well—broken hearts, crushed ambitions, crashed dreams. These usually smart for much longer than the kind nurses inflict. Do you ever wonder, “Why me, Lord? I’m a Christian. I walk the straight and narrow way. I try to avoid trouble and sin. But now I have been *stung*. Why me?” There are things we may not fully understand until we get to

heaven, but we do get some insights into this question from God’s Word. Do the stings of life have a positive purpose?

LIFE’S STINGS CAN CAUSE US TO SOBER UP

Our world runs from troubles like superman from kryptonite. The third biggest business in the world is entertainment (behind the U.S. Government and the Catholic church). America’s philosophy is “eat, drink, and be merry,” for tomorrow we die (Ecclesiastes 8:15; Luke 12:19–20). “Get away from it all. Escape!” Those who do not try to escape, try to hide. Millions try to escape life’s stings by drowning them in a bottle only to get a different kind of sting (cf. Proverbs 23:31–32).

The world wants to laugh. It hates to mourn. Jesus said, “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and

weep” (Luke 6:25) and “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4). Jesus wept. He was “a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:2–5, 7). We have no record that Jesus ever laughed out loud (once He “rejoiced in the Spirit,” Luke 10:21). He was angry (John 2:13–17; Mark 3:5), hungry (Luke 4:2), and thirsty (John 4:7; 19:28), but never laughing. We do, though, have a record of His tears (John 11:35; Luke 19:41–44; Hebrews 5:5–7).

It is altogether too easy for us to imbibe the world’s spirit if everything always goes our way. Our roots tend to run horizontally as long as there is plenty of water. But we need the stability of a vertical root system. That is why God sends dry spells. He wants serious-minded people in His family. Aged men are to be “sober, reverent, temperate” (Titus 2:2). Aged women are to be “reverent,” teaching “good things” to younger women (2:3). “Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded” (2:6). The word *sober* (*sophronizo*) means “circumspect; sensible; mature.” Sorrows help us develop sober mindedness.

I walked a mile with Pleasure, she chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser for all she had to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow, and ne’er a word said she,
But, oh, the things I learned from her when Sorrow walked with me.

—Robert Browning Hamilton

LIFE’S STINGS CAN CAUSE US TO LOOK UP

“Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance, the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth” (Ecclesiastes 7:3–4). The word translated “is made better” (*yatab*) means “make well, sound, beautiful, happy, successful, or right” (Strong, 3190, 49). Sorrow can turn us to God. The person who is incapable of genuine tears is also incapable of real joy.

“The soul would have no rainbow had the eye no tears.” —John Vance Cheney

“All sunshine makes a desert.”

—Arab proverb

“Into each life some rain must fall.”

—Longfellow

The prodigal did not look back toward home until his money ran out (Luke 15). It was only after he knew the pangs of hunger and the stench of the pigpen that he decided that there was more to life than riotous living. Abe Lincoln is credited with saying, “I have often been driven to my knees by the sincere conviction that there was nowhere else to go.” So it is with many people. Bee stings make us look for the medicine cabinet. Life’s stings make us look for the Great Physician.

LIFE’S STINGS CAN CAUSE US TO CHANGE UP

Many have not considered the need to change and get right with God until stung with painful circumstances. The Philippian jailer went to work one night totally unaware that in a few hours, circumstances would bring him to consider suicide (Acts 16). But an earthquake came, and he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. He knew that the Romans would require his life for theirs and thought he would save them the trouble. But out of the darkness Paul’s voice came: “We are all here.” Thus, he had a change of heart and was receptive to the gospel. Just minutes before, he was disinterested. Now he asked what he needs to do and quickly obeyed it (16:31–34). What happened? He was stung with the unfavorable circumstances of life, and it made him change up.

We may not fully understand the reason for the stings of life as they happen. But as the old song says,

Farther along we’ll know more about it,
Farther along we’ll understand why;
Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine,
We’ll understand it all by and by.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Not until each loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly,
Will God unroll the pattern and explain the reason why

The dark threads are as needful in the Weaver’s skillful hand

As the threads of gold and silver for the pattern which He planned.

My life is but the weaving between God and me.

I only choose the colors He weaveth steadily.

Sometimes He weaveth sorrow and I in foolish pride.

Forget He sees the upper and I the under side.

Remember, “The crown of all crowns was made of thorns” (cf. James 1:2–4).

Interestingly, the New Testament speaks of stings (*kentron*, Greek, used five times). By examining these, we find how to remove many of life’s stings. It is twice translated “prick” (Acts 9:5; 26:14 KJV). As one is pricked with a needle to be cured of many illnesses, one’s conscience must be pricked with the gospel so he can be cured of the soul’s diseases. Three times it is translated “sting” (1 Corinthians 15:55–56; Revelation 9:10). Paul explains that Christians avoid the sting of death, “‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:55–57).

Yes, this world is going to sting a little, but there will be no needles in heaven.



How Do I Choose a Church?

One radio station in Nashville does nothing but talk radio. As an avid talk radio listener, I am always interested in the questions and comments of those who call in. On one show, the host deals exclusively with emails that listeners have sent in. One that caught my attention the other day was a lady who asked, “How do I choose a church?”

The host suggested she consider looking at churches as communities, and that she simply needed to find one that had people who most suited her needs for friendship. While friendliness in a church is important, this approach lacks much in the area of content.

“How do I choose a church?” is a fair question. The only way to answer it adequately is to appeal to Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16).

One needs to find a church that is founded by Jesus (Matthew 16:18). Jesus told Peter that He would build His church. Thus, the church is the possession of Christ. It is not man-made; it is the bride of Christ (Romans 7:4).

One needs to find a church that has only Christ as its head (Colossians 1:18). Many man-made denominations have men who serve as living heads of the church. As the head of the church, Jesus is the only authority (Matthew 28:18–20) to which a church can appeal for an answer about its work, function, and membership.

One needs to find a church that offers the biblical method for membership. The New Testament church did not vote on whether a person was allowed membership. The Bible teaches that scriptural baptism adds one to the church (Acts 2:47). When one puts Christ on through faith (Hebrews 11:6), repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38), and baptism (Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26–27), he is added to the church that Jesus died to establish (Acts 20:28). One must be in fellowship with God be-

fore he can be in fellowship with other Christians (1 John 1:6–10). It would be wrong to fellowship one who is in rebellion to God’s commands (3 John 1:9–11).

One needs to find a church that chooses to wear a biblical name (Ephesians 3:14–16; cf. Romans 16:16). When a church wears a name that cannot be found in the Holy Bible, it is an offence to God. The “whole family in heaven and earth is named” for Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:15).

One needs to find a church that has the proper mission (Ephesians 3:10). The primary mission of the church is evangelism (Matthew 28:19). Many churches have forgotten their work. While fellowships and friendships with other Christians are good, they are not good reasons to attend church. The church should be engaged in benevolence and edification, but teaching Christ and His gospel is paramount (Matthew 28:19; cf. Romans 1:16).

One needs to find a church that teaches sound doctrine (1 Peter 4:11). This means directly appealing to Scripture in a “thus saith the Lord” manner (2 Timothy 3:16–17). If a church teaches things contrary to God’s Word, one needs to find another church!

One must find a church that worships God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). God desires our worship, and we need to be certain that we worship in a way that pleases Him.

There are many ways one could choose a church—from throwing darts at the churches listed the Yellow Pages to asking a radio talk show host! There is only one right way—open up God’s Word and examine what God desires of the church, and then seek that model out and attend regularly. —Johnny O. Trail



Every Good Gift

A poor man was given a loaf of bread. He thanked the baker, but the baker said, “Don’t thank me. Thank the miller who made the flour.”

So he thanked the miller, but the miller said, “Don’t thank me. Thank the farmer who planted the wheat.”

So he thanked the farmer. But the farmer said, “Don’t thank me. Thank the Lord. He gave the sunshine, rain, and fertility to the soil, and that is why you have bread to eat.”

Regardless of how sophisticated or how advanced we may be scientifically, we still cannot create; we still cannot make a kernel of wheat. That has to come from God. God gives the things we need to live on this planet. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17; cf. Acts 17:24).

—Albert Memmi

God’s Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God’s Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ’s Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit’s Word: Romans 1:16

Sinner’s Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner’s Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner’s Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner’s Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian’s Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian’s Work: James 2:24

Christian’s Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian’s Endurance: Revelation 2:10





“The most priceless possession of the human race . . .”

This comment is found at the beginning of *Halley's Bible Handbook*, written by Henry H. Halley in 1962. He writes:

“Everybody ought to love the Bible. Everybody ought to read the Bible. Everybody. It is God's Word. It holds the solution on life. It tells about the best friend mankind ever had, the Noblest, Kindest, Truest Man that ever trod this earth.

“It is the most beautiful story ever told. It is the best guide to human conduct ever know. It gives a meaning, and a glow, and a joy, and a victory, and a destiny, and a glory, to life elsewhere unknown. There is nothing in history, or in literature, that in any wise compares with the simple annals of the Man of Galilee, who spent His days and nights ministering to the suffering, teaching human kindness, dying for human sin, rising to life that shall never end, and promising eternal security and eternal happiness to all who will come to Him.

“Most people, in their serious moods, must have some wonderment in their minds as to how things are going to stack up when the end comes. Laugh it off, toss it aside, as we may, that day will come. And then what? Well, it is the Bible that has the answer. And an unmistakable answer it is. There is a God. There is a Heaven. There is a Hell. There is a Savior. There will be a Day of Judgment. Happy is the man, who, in the days of his flesh, makes his peace with the Christ of the Bible, and gets himself ready for the final take-off.”

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



Revisionist History?

Below is a compilation of student bloopers collected by teachers from eighth grade through college.

- Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock. After his death, his career suffered a dramatic decline.
- Nero was a cruel tyranny who would torture his subjects by playing the fiddle to them.
- Writing at the same time as Shakespeare was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote Donkey Hote. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote Paradise Lost. Then his wife died and he wrote Paradise Regained.
- One of the causes of the Revolutionary War was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. Finally the colonists won the War and no longer had to pay for taxis.
- Delegates from the original 13 states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin discovered electricity by rubbing two cats backwards and declared, “A horse divided

against itself cannot stand.” Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

- Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves by signing the Emasculation Proclamation. On the night of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assassinator was John Wilkes Booth, a supposedly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.
- Meanwhile in Europe, the enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltaire invented electricity and also wrote a book called Candy. Gravity was invented by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn when the apples are falling off the trees.
- Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

“A merry heart does good.”

PROVERBS 17:22

Just for Fun David and Goliath



David defeated Goliath by slinging a stone and hitting him in the forehead. Read the full story in 1 Samuel 17.

Sling facts:

Slings were common weapons of war during this time period.

Slings and stones could be deadlier than bows and arrows.

Sling stones can be thrown over 60 mph.

Some warriors wrote inscriptions and insults on their stones.

BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

Be silent.

HABAKKUK 2:20

Shut out distractions
(phones, websites, TV).

COLOSSIANS 3:2

Pray.

MATTHEW 6:6

Erase all doubt.

ROMANS 1:20

Have faith.

HEBREWS 11:1

I AM WHO I AM.

EXODUS 3:14

He is all-powerful.

LUKE 1:37

He is all-knowing.

1 JOHN 3:20

He is a help in times of
trouble.

PSALM 46:1-3

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 26:2

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Church History Timeline" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 25:12 Starts with the Letter "Q": 1. Quail (Exodus 16:12-13); 2. Quartus (Romans 16:23); 3. Quaternions (Acts 12:4); 4. Queen (1 Kings 10:1); 5. Quarrel (Mark 6:19); 6. Quench (Ephesians 6:16); 7. Quick (Hebrews 4:12); 8. Quiet (1 Peter 3:4); 9. Quietness (Ecclesiastes 4:6); 10. Quiver (Psalm 127:5); 11. Quickly (John 13:27-28); 12. Quake (Matthew 27:51). **Kings and Things:** 1. Solomon (1 Kings 3:3); 2. Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1); 3. Hiram (1 Kings 7:13-14); 4. Hiram king of Tyre (1 Kings 5:1); 5. Ahijah (1 Kings 14:1-2).

V. 26:1 A Big Hairy Deal: 1. Goat's hair (Exodus 26:7); 2. Leprosy (Leviticus 13:3); 3. Samson's (Judges 16:17); 4. Camel's hair (Mark 1:6); 5. Nazarite vow (Numbers 6:1-6); 6. Absalom (2 Samuel 14:25-26); 7. Solomon (Song of Solomon 6:5); 8. Baldness (Isaiah 3:24); 9. Benjamin (Judges 20:15-16); 10. Hair (Jeremiah 7:29); 11. It was not singed (Daniel 3:26-27); 12. White, black (Matthew 5:36); 13. Covering (1 Corinthians 11:15); 14. Arranging (1 Peter 3:3).

Starts with the Letter "H"

Directions: Find answers in the following passages: Exodus 20:12; 2 Samuel 14:26; Psalm 9:17; 19:10; 46:1; Proverbs 4:23; 13:15; 16:18, 16:20; Matthew 5:6; 24:36; John 14:2; Romans 10:17; Ephesians 1:22; 5:25-28; 6:17; Titus 2:4-5; Hebrews 6:11; James 2:25; 4:10; 1 Peter 1:4; 1:16 (answers not in order). Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

- Absalom cut this only once a year.
- Whoever trusts in the Lord, _____ is he.
- The way of the unfaithful is _____.
- Rahab was a _____.
- A _____ spirit goes before a fall.
- Jesus is the _____ of the church.
- Faith comes by _____ the Word.
- We must keep our _____ with all diligence.
- A Christian's inheritance is reserved in _____.
- The wicked, and nations that forget God, are turned into _____.
- We must take the _____ of salvation to wear.
- God is a very present _____ in time of trouble.
- "Be _____, for I am _____."
- Aged women are to teach the young women to be _____.
- God's Word is sweeter than _____.
- Children are to _____ father and mother.
- A faithful Christian can have full assurance of _____.
- No one knows the day nor the _____ of Jesus' return.
- Jesus said that in His Father's _____ were many mansions.
- "_____ yourselves in the sight of the Lord."
- Blessed are those who _____ for righteousness.
- A _____ must love his wife as his own body.

“Momma, Can We Cuss?”



First, let me tell you why the question above is so sad. The querist was a 10-year-old boy on the same football team as one of my sons. I did not hear him ask it, but a mom sitting near me was telling another mom about her conversation with the child. The boy saw raw language as a rite of passage into manhood. How profoundly misguided. But he did not ask to cuss all the time—just on the way home from football. She said, “Sure.”

Her answer is appalling for two reasons. First, it shows she has been brainwashed by situation ethics. The idea that something can be sinful (though I do not think she would be of such strong conviction of foul language) in one context but not in another is textbook situationism. Is stealing okay if one really wants those shoes and the department store will never miss a few dollars? Is assault

acceptable if the person assaulted is annoying? It is sad that the mother missed an opportunity to discourage wrong behavior and permitted it instead (cf. Jeremiah 10:23). Her answer is also appalling because it reflects an erosion of morality by many in a position of great responsibility with children, including parents, teachers, and coaches.

Her own language betrayed her weakness in this area. Are you picturing a lower class, redneck type? Think again. This woman and her husband are well-to-do, well-placed members of our community. They have a surface facade of decorum and sophistication but are betrayed by what comes from within. That is not to judge their hearts but simply to quote Jesus, who said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed

evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man” (Mark 7:20–23).

So many of those involved with our boys’ football games have remarkably high moral standards. At this same scrimmage, my son reports of the team being led in not one but two prayers. The coaches have yet to say, even under the stress of a game situation, so much as one curse word. We are glad to have such role models for our son. —Anonymous

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers”

EPHESIANS 4:29

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at gbntv.org.

I want to learn more about the Bible!

If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Prayer requests or comments: _____

I would like:



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- ☐ Why doesn't God do something?
- ☐ Is One as good as Another?



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☐ Repent



☐ Confess (5 steps of Salvation)



☐ Be Baptized (5 steps of Salvation)



☐ Look. There's God



☐ In Pursuit of Hope



☐ I'm Looking for a Church That Is Not So Negative

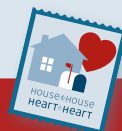


☐ Don't Get Carried Away

Don't see the topic you need?

Visit www.housetohouse.com for more subjects.

VOLUME 26:2



Every Day is a Vacation with Her

I had never before seen the gentleman before. He was in a wheelchair, so I yielded to him as we entered the men's room at the Sugarland Visitor's Center near Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Just outside the door his wife was talking with another lady about his physical condition and their vacation, perhaps their last. As he came out, the lady said, "Mr. Jones, I sure hope you have a good vacation." In a somewhat labored but discernible voice, he said, "Every day is a vacation with her!" How thoughtful and sweet! The smile on his wife's face betrayed her gratitude for the compliment.

If more husbands and wives spent more time saying such things to each other, fewer marriages would end in divorce. Selfishness is a stake driven into the heart of many marriages. Yet here was a gentleman, who may have had reason to feel sorry for himself, doing his best to make his wife feel better. I am convinced this is a part of what the Good Book means when it states, "Husbands, love your wives" (Ephesians 5:25).

Marriage, home, and family are important parts of God's plan for the human race. Not only did God institute marriage, He also regulates it through

His Word (see Genesis 2:15–25; Matthew 19:3–9; Colossians 3:18–21). The Bible is still the best marriage manual. While there are many ingredients in God's recipe for a good marriage, the "three Cs" are crucially important.

Commitment. Webster defines *commitment* as "an agreement or pledge to do something in the future." When a man and woman pledge their love and loyalty to one another, they become obligated to each other. Some who say, "I do," don't! Commitment must be taken seriously. No marriage can succeed without it.

Companionship. Spending time together is critical. *Fellowship* (which Webster gives as a synonym for *companionship*) is as important in the home as in the church. It gives strength and encouragement. Serious problems are not as likely if a husband and wife work hard at developing companionship.

Communication. It is not enough just to be together; that togetherness must include communication. All members of a family need to know they are loved, respected, and appreciated.

All of us need to occasionally hear, "Every day is a vacation with her (him)!"

—Edward Anderson



Pretty Flowers for You

I ran into a stranger as he passed by.
"Oh excuse me, please" was my reply.
He said, "Please excuse me too;
I wasn't watching for you."

We were very polite, this stranger and I.
We went on our way and we said good-bye.
But at home a different story is told—
how we treat our loved ones, young and old.

Later that day, cooking the evening meal,
my son stood beside me very still.
When I turned, I nearly knocked him down.
"Move out of the way," I said with a frown.
He walked away, his little heart broken.
I didn't realize how harshly I'd spoken.

As I later lay awake in bed,
troubling thoughts went through my head.
While dealing with strangers, courtesy I use,
but the family I love, I seem to abuse.

I went to look on the kitchen floor
and found some flowers near the door.
Those are the flowers he brought for me.
He picked them himself: blue and yellow
to see.

He stood very quietly not to spoil the
surprise; and
I never saw the tears that filled his little eyes.

By this time, I felt very small,
And my tears began to fall.
I quietly went and knelt by his bed,
"Wake up, little one, wake up," I said.
"Are these the flowers you picked for me?"

He smiled, "I found 'em, out by the tree.
I picked 'em because they're pretty like you.
I knew you'd like 'em, especially the blue."

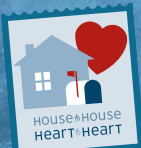
I said, "Son, I'm very sorry for the way I acted today;
I shouldn't have yelled at you that way."
He said, "Oh, Mom, that's okay.
I love you anyway."

I said, "Son, I love you too,
And I do like the flowers, especially the blue."

"Let your speech always be with grace."

COLOSSIANS 4:6





House to House Heart to Heart

2/21



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