

HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 8

Who Is at the Controls?

Allen Webster



*If life is a flight through time,
who is in the cockpit?*

*If life is a joyride,
who is behind the wheel?*

*If life is a voyage,
who is at the helm?*

soul” philosophy was only a little ahead of its time.

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

Decisions determine direction (Joshua 24:15). Direction determines destiny (Matthew 7:13–14). Will we ascend or descend at the judgment? It depends on who makes our decisions.

ME

Invictus is commonly quoted by valedictorians at high school graduations across America. It sums up the philosophy of many youth as they begin their adult lives. It was written by William Ernest Henley, an early humanist who was crippled since his childhood in Gloucester, England. His “Master-of-my-fate-captain-of-my-

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeoning of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed. . . .*

*It matters not how strait the gate.
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul.*

Frank Sinatra’s song “I Did It My Way” is often requested at funerals. From the beginning of adult life to the end of it, many say, “I make my own choices—no body tells me what to do.”

Bible examples abound of those who had self on life's throne. Note the personal pronouns of a certain rich man:

What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? So he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry'" (Luke 12:17-19).

God called him a fool (Luke 12:20). Another rich man had the "me" philosophy and awoke in torments (Luke 16:23).

Self-will took Nebuchadnezzar from his throne (Daniel 4:30-37) and kept Moses from Canaan (Numbers 20:8-12). Felix trembled at the thought of giving control to Christ (Acts 24:25); Agrippa came close to handing over the reins, but not close enough (Acts 26:28). The prodigal is not the only young man who has let such thinking take him to the far country and into the pigpen of sin (Luke 15:11-32).

We will never be able to pull ourselves from the mire into which sin has sunk us. The man who says he is in control of his life is mistaken. The devil allows him to think so, but serving self is sacrificing at Satan's altar. There are no free men in sin's death camp (Romans 6:17, 23).

When we were young, our fathers may have allowed us to "drive" in the driveway while sitting in their laps. We felt we were in control, but if the car veered, Dad quickly took over. Many are sitting in Sa-

tan's lap, "steering" their lives to a lake of fire. "Me" is not a safe guide for life (Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23).

MEN

Others allow public opinion to make their decisions. How many should make Saul's confession? "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice" (1 Samuel 15:24).

Adam gave in to Eve and let forbidden fruit get him into a jam (Genesis 3:6). Abraham feared Abimelech enough to tell a lie (Genesis 20:11). Aaron made a golden calf at public demand (Exodus 32:21-24).

In the New Testament, Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, but he was too much of a people-pleasing politician to stand by his decision (Matthew 27:2-26). Many rulers believed on Jesus but would not confess Him, "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43; cf. 5:44). Even Barnabas gave in to peer pressure and disassociated himself from Gentiles (Galatians 2:13).

We must strongly resist the pressure to conform to the world's mold (Romans 12:1-2). Evil companions are bad for good morals (1 Corinthians 15:33), so we should stay away from them as much as possible (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Pitching tents toward Sodom has left behind the smoking ruins of many families (Genesis 13:12; 14:12; 19:16, 24, 26,

31-36). Any who love the opinions of father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters more than Christ, cannot be His disciple (Luke 14:26; cf. 18:29-30). Men do not have a safe guideline for crossing the chasm that divides earth and eternity (Matthew 7:13-14).

MESSIAH

A third choice is to allow Christ to rule life. He stands knocking at the door of every heart (Revelation 3:20), but He will never force entry (cf. Luke 24:28-29). He drafts no soldiers, and presents no subpoenas for His mediatorship (Matthew 22:37; 2 Corinthians 5:14). One who comes to Jesus must renounce all (Revelation 12:11), take up his cross, and follow as closely as he can in the Master's steps (Luke 14:26-27; 1 Peter 2:21-22).

The choice is difficult, but it is never regretted (2 Corinthians 7:10). His truth sets us free (John 8:32); His life is abundant (John 10:10); His rule is not burdensome (1 John 5:3). Joshua gave God his life (Joshua 24:15) and was never disappointed. Paul gave Christ his heart and never looked back (Acts 9; 2 Timothy 4:6-8; cf. Luke 9:62).

The truth is, "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other" (Luke 16:13).

Who is at your controls?





Children's View of Love:

"I think you're supposed to get shot with an arrow or something, but the rest of it isn't supposed to be so painful." —Manuel, age 8

On what falling in love is like: "Like an avalanche where you have to run for your life." —John, age 9

"If you want to be loved by somebody who isn't already in your family, it doesn't hurt to be beautiful." —Anita, age 8

"It isn't always just how you look. Look at me. I'm handsome like anything and I haven't got anybody to marry me yet."

—Brian, age 7



A Merry Heart Doeth Good

A husband, trying to prove to his wife that women talk more than men, showed her a study which indicated that men use about 15,000 words a day, whereas women use 30,000 words a day. She thought about it, and then she told him that women use twice as many words as men because they must repeat everything they say. Stunned at this, he said, "What?"

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 Plain Truth about Money

Small children are often fascinated with money because it is shiny and small enough to go into their mouths.

Eventually they reach a time when they learn that money has the power to buy things. That is a new reason for them to like money. In their teen years, their thinking can be dominated by a desire to possess money to impress others or to buy things that dad and mom will not buy for them. As adults . . . well, suffice it to say that a lot of adults are fond of money.

Money in and of itself possesses no moral qualities. It is neither righteous nor unrighteous. It is an inanimate object, a means or tool that can be traded for something else.

It is one's attitude toward money that adds an element of morality. Consider the following six truthful statements about money. May they serve as a reminder and warning.

Money cannot buy love. Back in the 1960s, the Beatles sang, "I don't care too much for money, 'cause money can't buy me love." It was true then; it is true now. Money may impress and attract folks to a money-possessing person, but money does not buy genuine love.

Money does not grow on trees. How many times did our parents tell us that when we wanted something we could not afford? Because it is true that we cannot get money by snapping our fingers, we need to be good stewards with the funds that God has placed in our hands (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:2). Paul wrote, "Owe no

one anything" (Romans 13:8). Christians ought not to get themselves into debt that they cannot pay.

Money is not the root of all evil, but the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). The love of money is covetousness, and covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). A love affair with riches has ruined friendships, marriages, and even congregations.

Money cannot save a soul. Money can be used to support preaching (2 Corinthians 11:8-9). It can be an instrument to edify the faithful, but it cannot save.

Money will not accompany us when we leave this world. Regardless of how much one has, money stays behind—we cannot take it with us. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Timothy 6:7).

Money is not success, and success is not possessing money. Oh, if we could only help folks to see this! Some rich people will go to hell. Some poor folks will go to heaven. One's eternal destiny is not determined by financial status. Listen to what the Lord told Joshua about success: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8). *That* is true success.

Let each resolve to accept these truths about money, and beware of "the deceitfulness of riches" (Mark 4:19).

—Roger D. Campbell



Let's Pull Together

At a county fair, townspeople held a horse-pulling contest.

The first-place horse moved a sled weighing 4,500 pounds. The second-place finisher pulled 4,000 pounds. The owners of the horses decided to see what the horses could pull together, so they hitched them and found the team could move 12,000 pounds! By working separately, two horses were good for only 8,500 pounds. When coupled together, their synergism produced an added 3,500 pounds. It is a hard lesson, but unity consistently produces greater results than individual endeavors. "Teamwork divides the effort and multiplies the effect."

—Our Daily Bread. Special Edition, Day 15

How About the Grown-ups?

"Daddy, I want to ask you a question," said little Bobby after his first day in Sunday school. "Yes, Bobby, what is it?" "The teacher read the Bible to us. It was about the children of Israel building the temple, the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, and the children of Israel making sacrifices. Didn't the grown-ups do anything?"

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

God Always Has an Answer

It is easy to get discouraged when things go wrong, but we must not lose heart.

God is at work in the world, even in the midst of pain and trial. The next time your world is burning down, remember that it just may be a smoke signal to summon help. God has a positive answer for any negative thought we have:

We say: "It's impossible."

God says: "All things are possible" (Luke 18:27).

We say: "I'm tired."

God says: "I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

We say: "I can't do it."

God says: "You can do all things" (Philippians 4:13).

We say: "I'm not able."

God says: "I am able" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

We say: "It's not worth it."

God says: "It will be worth it" (Romans 8:28).

We say: "Nobody really loves me."

God says: "I really love you" (John 3:16).

We say: "I can't go on."

God says: "My grace is sufficient" (2 Corinthians 12:9; Psalm 91:15).

We say: "I can't figure things out."

God says: "I will direct your steps" (Proverbs 3:5–6).

We say: "I can't forgive myself."

God says: "I forgive you" (1 John 1:9; Romans 8:1).

We say: "I can't manage."

God says: "I will supply all your needs" (Philippians 4:19).

We say: "I'm afraid."

God says: "I have not given you a spirit of fear" (2 Timothy 1:7).

We say: "I'm worried and frustrated."

God says: "Cast all your cares on Me" (1 Peter 5:7).

We say: "I don't have enough faith."

God says: "My Word will give you faith" (Romans 10:17).

We say: "I'm not smart enough."

God says: "I will give you wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:30; James 1:1–5).

We say: "I feel all alone."

God says: "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

ASAP

Ever wonder about the abbreviation ASAP? It brings to mind hurry and stress—"Get this done as soon as possible." Let us give it a new meaning.

There is work to do, deadlines to meet. You have no time to spare, but as you hurry and scurry—ASAP (Always Say A Prayer).

In the midst of family chaos, quality time is rare. Do your best; let God do the rest—ASAP (Always Say A Prayer).

It may seem like your worries are more than you can bear. Slow down and take a breather—ASAP (Always Say A Prayer).

God knows how stressful life is; He wants to ease our care. He will respond to all our needs—ASAP (Always Say A Prayer). —Author Unknown

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication."

EPHESIANS 6:18



The Crucifixion from A to Z

A reminds us of His arrest like a common criminal and the legions of angels who could have been summoned by Jesus.

B is for the betrayal by a “friend,” the murderer Barabbas, the blood that Jesus shed, and the beating that He endured.

C makes us think of the cross on Calvary, the Jewish high priest, Caiphas, before whom Jesus was tried, the shameful crown of thorns, and the Roman centurion who concluded, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”

D is for the desertion by His disciples and the darkness that enveloped the whole earth for three hours just before His death.

E reminds us of the enmity of the religious leaders, Christ’s excruciating pain, and the eeriness of the darkness.

F makes us think of the Father’s agony in heaven that day and the forgiveness that Jesus desired even for His killers.

G stands for the Garden of Gethsemane, the place of betrayal, and Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion.

H is for Herod and the hypocrisy of those who condemned Him.

I calls to mind the innocence of our Lord and His name, Immanuel, meaning “God with us.”

J is for Judas, the trusted friend who turned betrayer, and John, to whom was committed the care of Jesus’ mother.

K reminds us of the kiss of infamy placed upon the King of kings.

L brings to mind the lies that they told, and the matchless love that caused the Lord of lords to give His life “a ransom for many.”

M is for me (He died for me!), the mocking mob, and His mother, Mary.

N helps us to think of the nails that were driven through His hands and His feet, as well as the ninth hour when He died.

O calls to mind His opponents who appeared victorious.

P has to remind us of Pontius Pilate who released the guilty and killed the innocent, and the purple robe the soldiers placed upon the Lord in an act of derision.

Q is for the quaking of the earth as the shameful deed was done.

R has to do with the rejection of Jesus by His own disciples and the release of the infamous Barabbas.

S stands for spitting in the face of the very Son of God, the terrible scourging, the spear that was thrust into His side, and the elite Sanhedrin who sanctioned such an unbelievable crime.

T is for the tomb in which His body was placed, the thorns, His thirst, the false testimony, and the traitor.

U reminds us of the unjust trials and the unspeakable shame.

V helps us remember the vicious vengeance of His enemies, the veil of the temple that was rent at His death, and the great victory over death that Jesus would soon display.

W stands for the water Pilate used to try to wash the guilt from his hands, and the fact that Jesus died for the whole world’s sins.

X stands for examining ourselves, which we do as we remember His death during the Lord’s supper.

Y reminds us of the yells of the riotous mob as they cried out, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!”

Z is for the zeal of His executioners.

—Byron Nichols, *The Voice of Truth International*

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



Bible Quiz

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Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark “Quick Scriptures on Basic Bible Topics” 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. 25:6 Marriages and Weddings: 1. Rebekah (Genesis 24:64–65); 2. He turned water into wine (John 2:1–10); 3. He sent his armies to destroy them and burn their city (Matthew 22:2–7); 4. Daughters (Exodus 21:7–9); 5. Hosea (Hosea 1:2); 6. She had children while Hannah had no children (1 Samuel 1:2); 7. Give your daughter (Dinah) to my son (Shechem) as a wife and make marriages with us (Genesis 34:8–9); 8. He married an Ethiopian woman (Numbers 12:1); 9. No (Matthew 22:30); 10. World, please (1 Corinthians 7:33).

V. 25:7 Jesus, Jesus, Jesus: 1. The Bible does not give a number (Matthew 2:1–12); 2. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:15); 3. Micah (Micah 5:2); 4. The chief priests and scribes (Matthew 2:4–6); 5. Isaiah (Isaiah 11:1–5); 6. Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9); 7. 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12); 8. John the Immerser (Matthew 3:13); 9. In the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13); 10. The Spirit (Matthew 4:1); 11. Vinegar (Psalm 69:21; Mark 15:36); 12. Zechariah (Zechariah 12:10); 13. Isaiah (Isaiah 53:12); 14. They shall see God (Matthew 5:8); 15. The kingdom of God, and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33); 16. Abraham’s (Genesis 12:1–3); 17. Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14); 18. Shepherds living in the fields with their flocks (Luke 2:8–20); 19. No. They came to Him in a house (Matthew 2:11); 20. Herod (Matthew 2:13–16).

Rulers in the Bible

Find answers in the following passages: 1 Samuel 31:4; 1 Kings 2:1–2; 11:42; 2 Kings 20:5–6; 22:1; 23:29–30; 2 Chronicles 22:2–3; Esther 2:16; Matthew 2:19–20; Acts 12:21–23. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Smote by the angel of the Lord and eaten of worms. _____ | therefore, and prove yourself a man.” _____ |
| 2. Reigned for 31 years after becoming king at age 8. _____ | 7. King whose death prompted the angel of the Lord to appear in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. _____ |
| 3. King who married Esther. _____ | 8. Reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. _____ |
| 4. Killed himself by falling on his sword. _____ | 9. King whose mother was his counselor to do wickedly. _____ |
| 5. Prayer was heard—15 years added to his days. _____ | 10. King who was killed at Megiddo and taken in a chariot to Jerusalem where he was buried. _____ |
| 6. King who told his son, “I go the way of all the earth; be strong, _____ | |

Starts with the Letter “R”

Find answers in the following passages: Genesis 8:7; 9:13–14; 22:13; 24:67; 29:16; Exodus 13:18; 14:21–22; Matthew 23:8.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. The title of a Jewish teacher. _____ | 5. A bird sent out from the ark. _____ |
| 2. The younger daughter of Laban. _____ | 6. The wife of Isaac. _____ |
| 3. The token of God’s covenant with Noah. _____ | 7. A sea crossed by the Israelites. _____ |
| 4. What Abraham offered up instead of Isaac. _____ | |

CONSIDER THE CHILDREN

Children are precious. They were brought into this world through no desire of their own. Many are abused, used as pawns, neglected, denied, and betrayed. Such is not fair.

Dr. R. F. Hertz, a British psychologist, engaged in a research project of wide interest. He has asked almost 100,000 children between 8 and 14, from all walks of life, in 24 countries, to list 10 rules of behavior for parents. Here is the list:

- Do not quarrel in front of children.
- Treat children with equal affection.
- Never lie to a child.
- Develop tolerance between parents.
- Maintain comradeship between parents and children.
- Treat your children's friends as welcome visitors in the house.

- Always answer children's questions.
- Do not blame or punish children in the presence of their friends.
- Concentrate on your child's good points. Do not overemphasize his failings.
- Be constant in affection and mood.

This list should cause parents to stop, look, and listen. Read it again carefully, thoughtfully, and with self-inspection and evaluation. How are children treated in your home? They deserve the best.

God gives this advice: "Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

—Carroll Sites



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.

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- I Want to Look Upon His Face
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- Mary and Jesus at a Party



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The Reason We Have Two Ears and One Mouth



Our Alligiance to God Should Show on Sundays



Is the Kingdom the Same as the Church?



Kingdom of Christ



Saving the Church



Mary's Little Lamb No More



Was God Praised in the Worship Service Today?

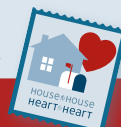


Cleanliness Is Next to Godliness

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VOLUME 25:8



Are Illnesses Such as Alzheimer's Disease from God?

“As Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’” (John 9:1–2).

The disciples expressed a common belief of that day, that illness is often, if not always, punishment for sin. The disciples even considered that the man may have caused his own blindness by his sin in the womb!

Jesus made it clear that the man's illness had nothing to do with sin or punishment from God. He said, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him” (John 9:3). Jesus then gave the man his sight, and he worshiped Jesus as the Son of God.

From where does illness come? Many times lifestyle has an effect on health. Smoking, promiscuous sex, poor dietary choices, a sedentary lifestyle—and many other things have ill effects on health. As people mature, many make choices they hope will help avoid illness. Most will never know how much a healthy lifestyle has already protected them from the diseases that plague mankind.

For many illnesses, medical science has no good explanation as to cause. Certainly, smoking increases one's chances of getting lung cancer, but nonsmokers get lung cancer also.

Illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease are being studied. Doctors at some point may have suggestions as to what may lower risk of this disease, but there does not seem to be any good scientific explanation yet on how to avoid it.

When the patriarch Job lost his possessions, his family, and his health (Job 1–2), his three friends assumed that God was punishing Job for his great sins. Eliphaz told Job, “Remember, now, whoever perished, being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off? Even as I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. By the blast of God, they perish, and by the breath of His anger they are consumed” (Job 4:7–9). His friend Zophar went so far as to say, “Know therefore that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves” (Job 11:6).

While there are consequences for sin, in actuality, Job was suffering precisely because he was a righteous man. “The Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?’” (Job 1:8). Job wanted to know why he suffered, but even when God spoke to him out of the whirlwind, He never told Job the reason.

We live in a world that is under the curse of sin (Genesis 3), and illness is one consequence of Adam's choice, a choice we also make (Romans 3:23). Nothing indicates, however, that God punishes anyone with a particular disease today. Illness is not an indication of God's punishment, and good fortune is not necessarily an indication of God's approval.

God will help us cope with the difficulties of disease and suffering if we will turn to Him. Those who suffer and those who care for them deserve our prayers and support.

—Bob Prichard

Ten Facts about the Church of Christ

We read of it in the New Testament (Romans 16:16).

It exalts Christ as the only head of the church (Ephesians 1:22).

It has no creed but Christ and binds no name on its members but the divine name, Christian (Acts 11:26).

It speaks where the Bible speaks and is silent where the Bible is silent (1 Peter 4:11).

It pleads for the unity of all believers in Christ (John 17:20–21; 1 Corinthians 1:10).

It is not a denomination, nor a group of denominations, but simply the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18).

Its founder is Christ Himself (Matthew 16:18).

Its aim is to save souls by gospel preaching (Romans 1:16).

Its worship is patterned after the New Testament (John 4:24).

It teaches that scriptural unity can be attained on all disputed doctrinal questions (1 Corinthians 1:10).





Every Man's Book

The Bible is every man's book. To know the Bible and to handle it correctly is one of the greatest accomplishments within the reach of any person.

One may know English, astronomy, literature, music, sociology, and philosophy, but if one does not know the Bible, one has failed in the only subject that brings all things into the proper relationship and enables one to know life at its best. The best evidence of the inspiration of the Bible is found between its covers. No one will ever be a useful Christian without being a student of the Bible. Matthew Henry said, "The Scriptures were not written to make us astronomers, but to make us saints."

The Bible is not intended solely for some special group. It is every man's book; it was written for the average person. Scholars may study it, but it is not written for scholars. No one ever outgrows the Scriptures. The more one studies them, the wider and deeper they become. The Bible enables every reader to look into eternity.

It is no wonder that Paul urged Timothy to study the Scripture, "rightly dividing [handling aright] the word of truth," so he might be an approved workman before God (2 Timothy 2:15).

The Bible acknowledges man's faults; it is patient with man's weaknesses; it is honest with his virtues and his hopes. To own the Bible is to be rich. To study, to know, and to trust the Bible is to find life. To study the Bible is to be wise; to obey it, to be strong.

—Franklin Camp



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Be our guest this Sunday!

