

Faith of Our Youth

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever"

January 2000

Volume 7 Issue 1

SEEKING ENCOURAGEMENT PART 2: FROM THE BRETHREN

by Kevin Morton

What do you do when you have a problem you just can't seem to handle by yourself? Where do you turn when life seems overwhelming? Who do you seek out to ease your pain? In Part One of "Seeking Encouragement" we discussed how understanding our Lord can be and how we can always go to him with our problems. In Part Two, we will discuss another powerful source of encouragement—our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Every one of us has problems and every one of us suffers from time to time. Whenever I have troubles, I've found that it really helps to talk to someone about them. Even if this person doesn't have the answer to my problem or can't fix it, just being able to express my feelings to them, just to know that there is someone who will listen and who cares, leaves me with a good feeling. Galatians 6:2 tells us to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." By talking about our problems with others, at least part of our burden can be lifted and shared, making it lighter and easier to handle.

Think of all the brethren in the church who are willing to listen to us and talk with us when we need them, even if they don't know us extremely well or aren't close to us. As Christians, we are to "comfort each other and edify one another" (1st Thess. 5:11). This means that there will always be someone in the church to help, to listen, and to comfort us in times of need.

Many times, brethren will listen to our problems and will, in fact, be able help us and to offer advice to us. Even though they may seem unique, most of our problems have been experienced by oth-

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Sons of God with Feet of Clay

by Louis Garbi

Author's note:

In previous articles of the "Melodies" section we have considered many things about the value of singing unto the Lord. In this article I would like to examine one of the reasons why God wants singing as opposed to instrumental music.

Man has to know his place before God. It has always been this way. Cain and his offering were not respected because he did not "do well". He put himself before God. On the other hand, Abram did not consider his advanced years as a mark of privilege. This ninety nine year old man fell on his face when the LORD appeared to him.(Gen.17:1-13) Jacob testified before Pharaoh, "...few and evil have been the days of the years of my life..."(Gen.47:9) Moses took His sandals off when he walked on holy ground (Ex.3:5) The altars built outside of the Tabernacle's court were not to be built of "hewn stone"; "...for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it." (Ex.20:25). God desired men to see the lowliness of their humanity. He made it clear that He would reject their vain notions of form and beauty. Men of faith have always honored the sovereignty of God. They humbled themselves by obeying His word, and by falling down before Him. They acknowledged their inferiority.

We scanned examples from the Old Testament. The principles therein are even more pronounced in all aspects of upholding the gospel. "...God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world

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The Greatest Gift

by Stephanie Moody

It's Sunday, the first day of the week. It's approximately 11:15 AM. Brother Joe just finished passing around the collection basket, and then Brother Jim led the congregation in a song.

The song is over, and Brother Joe stands before the congregation as he does about once every couple of months for this portion of the service. He was on the schedule this morning to do the Lord's Supper.

Joe enjoys participating in services. He loves to edify his brethren in any way he can. He has a hard time preparing for the Lord's Supper. He wants to come up with a new angle, something different to say about it that may better direct the minds of the congregation toward Jesus, something that will help them to know and to feel their strong dependence on God and His Son.

As members of the body of Christ, we are to partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week, and remember the great sacrifice God made through His Son in order that we can be in Heaven with them someday. (I Cor. 11:23-26, Acts 20:7) We are often told the story of Jesus' crucifixion (Matt. 26:36-28:20; Mark 14:26-16:20; Luke 22:39-24:53; John ch. 18-21), but does it sink in every time?

Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection are so personal to each and every one of us, and yet do we

give much thought to what it means to us? It's an emotional story, and one that is very real. It's a story that should touch our hearts every time we hear or think of it.

God makes a simple request that on the first day of the week we come and remember the death of His Son. Sure, many of us are at services and partake of

God makes a simple request that on the first day of the week we come and remember the death of his Son.

the Lord's Supper, but are our thoughts on the right things? Are our minds and hearts where they should be?

This is something that I struggle with. Jesus died for ME! He did it for me, my parents, my sister, EVERYONE. He didn't have to do it, but He did it because He loves, me because He loves all of us. It's so amazing, so personal, but I feel that we often take it for granted.

Every once in a while you will read or hear something that brings the story of Christ "back to life." It renews your strength and energy, your feeling for what Christ has done for you. The Lord's Supper is no longer a part of the "Sunday routine," but something you put your whole heart in to. It's a small portion of time that you can give to God. Another way you can praise and glorify God.

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Member of Martinsdale Church of Christ

The Little Things

by Miles Wood

In this article, I would like to expound on some thoughts Stephanie Moody presented in her poem, "Jesus is Sitting Beside You."

Today, there are many "big" problems in the Church. I would like to concentrate on the "little" problems. The "little" problems are the killer problems. They are the ones that slowly eat away our spiritual defense. I would like to mention some of these in the expression, "Would Jesus...?"

Would Jesus watch a movie with just one profane word, even if it had a good moral?

Would Jesus drive five miles over the speed limit, even if he was running late?

Would Jesus be seen at the prom, or school dances, whether he danced or not?

Would Jesus watch the daytime soap operas, the late night talk shows, WCW, WWF, or anything in between?

Would Jesus go to a party if he knew alcohol would be there?

Would Jesus buy a raffle ticket, even if the money was going to a good cause?

Would Jesus read a horror or romance novel?

Would Jesus play violent video games?

Would Jesus wear gaudy or suggestive clothing?

Would Jesus do, watch, or wear any of the above mentioned things? Would you, if Jesus was with you? Jesus IS watching your every step.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil." (I Thess. 5:22)

♦ ♦ ♦

Member of Brookfield Church of Christ

ers. By talking to others, we just might find that person who has had a similar problem in the past, and because of their experience, will be able to help us understand and deal with our problem. Also, different people have different perspectives on things. Someone that we share our problem with may see a solution or have some thought that we had not previously thought of. This idea could help us solve our problem, or at least help us deal with it. Our brethren in Christ can and will give us encouragement. All we have to do is ask.

We also need to be prepared to help our brethren whenever and however possible. We are commanded to love one another (1st John 3:11; 4:7, Heb. 13:1, Romans 12:10, John 13:34-35). This includes offering encouragement to our brethren, just as they offer encouragement to us. 1st John 3:16 tells us that we "ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." If we should be willing to die for our brethren, shouldn't we also be willing to listen to them and encourage them? As Christians, we need be on the lookout for those who are troubled and offer our encouragement to them whenever possible, even when we are not asked to do so. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). This may include offering to do something for them, asking if they would like to talk, or simply saying something nice about them. It's amazing how much joy even the smallest compliment can bring to us when we are feeling downhearted.

The most effective and powerful way to encourage our brethren is to pray for them. If a brother or sister comes to us with a problem, whether we have advice for them or not, it is important to pray for them and to let them know that we are praying for them. This alone can be a great comfort to them. God has a solution for EVERY problem (John 15:7). Who is better suited to help us with our problems than God? NO ONE!

Remember, as Christians we should never be afraid to approach our brothers and sisters in Christ with our problems and we should never turn away or avoid a brother or sister who seeks our help with their own problems. By striving to keep the attitude of encouraging, helping, and strengthening one another, we will be able to overcome the troubles and trials of

this world and have joy with one another and with our Lord in the next.

I hope these words have been beneficial to you. I enthusiastically invite any further questions or comments on this subject. For further study on this topic, consult Acts 20:35, James 1:19, Romans 15:1-3, Matt. 7:1, Romans 1:11-12, 1st Peter 3:8, Hebrews 10:24, 2nd Cor. 1:3,4, Proverbs 17:17, Hebrews 3:13, Acts 11:23, Col. 2:1-5.

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Member of Ottawa Church of Christ

Burdens Can be Shared

- A. When you see a need, respond.*
- B. Offer to help, ask to serve. Isaiah said, "Send me."*
- C. Things often needed are:*
 - 1. Donate a meal or offer to be their cook.*
 - 2. Offer to be a maid (cleaning the house).*
 - 3. Offer your taxi service (transportation).*
 - 4. Be a comforter (just visit/companionship).*
 - 5. Run errands (be a gopher).*
 - 6. Offer to sub for caregiver, an hour, a day.*
 - 7. Offer to mow the lawn.*
 - 8. Offer to be a babysitter.*
 - 9. Help caregiver's family.*
 - 10. Send/bring fruitbasket or flowers.*
 - 11. Use your telephone, just call and show "I care."*
 - 12. Pray for the need. God hears!*
 - 13. Offer to write letters or read to them.*

- outline by Kenneth Thompson

My Mission

by Eric Rogers

God created me for his service. He has committed some work to me, which he has not committed to another (Rom. 12:6-8). I have my mission that I must fulfill in this life "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). I will love the Lord (Deut. 6:5)

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connections between persons. He has not created me for nothing (Matt 5:13-16). I shall do this destined work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, using myself as an example. I will, therefore, trust him--whatever, wherever I am.

I can never be thrown away and made useless. If I am in sickness, my sickness serves. If I am in sorrow, this is my task. God does nothing in vain. He knows what he is about, He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. H may take away my loved one. He will test me but not to the point it is unbearable. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair" (II Cor. 4:8). Still, he knows what he is about. He has committed some work to me, which he has not committed to another (Rom. 12:6-8).

I have my mission.

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Member of Ozark Church of
Christ

FOOY (continued from page 8)

truth and righteousness. These are Christians who love the law of the Lord and meditate in it day and night—with a strong desire and sense of responsibility to share the fruit of their "sacred" gleanings. Effective "sacred" teaching comes from the overflow of sincere seeking minds—reflective souls dedicated to knowing and pleasing the heavenly Father. I know there are many—from the youth to the aged—whose study and mediation of "Scared Scriptures" have filled the hopper of their minds with various subjects of vital importance to all. We invite you to accept this opportunity to share your "sacred" overflow with those of like-precious faith.

The editor and publisher of *Scared Scriptures* will be Jeremy Morris, under the supervision of the elders of the Riverside Road church in Ozark, Missouri. Distribution, at this point, will continue in the same manner as the FOOY publication. Bundles will be sent—at no cost—

to each congregation for distribution and sharing. The success of *Scared Scriptures* will depend on you directing some of your "sacred" overflow toward this effort. The editor will be expecting your writings of edification for publication.

A very special thanks is extended to all the contributors to the FOOY message over the past six years. You stirred our spirits and gave us hope in the future of the church. Continue serving God as the #1 priority in your life. It's the key to success for lives that are filled with increasing responsibilities of family and occupation.

Dear Fellow Christians, do not forget that the Lord has prepared a table before us—anointing our heads with oil—causing our cups to overflow. Therefore, we are must share the overflow with all who dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Dwain R. Stoops

Requesting your assistance

As stated in Brother Dwain's Editorial, changing the scope of the publication allows for a greater dispersal of edification and exhortation. However, such a change also requires other changes.

I have agreed to remain as Editor of *Scared Scriptures*, however, a change in my personal life, namely a girl called Sarah, has taken away a good part of my free time. While I am honored with the responsibilities of the publication, I now need some assistance.

We would like to establish a list of assitant editors of those brothers willing to help edit the various articles submitted for publication. While we do not wish to set out qualifications, please consider your abilities if this appeals to you.

This publication, like all present and past, simply intends to edify the Church through the written word. Your assistance in this endeavor would be invaluable.

JACW

Christian Conviction

by Jeremy Morris

In the days of the early church, even the passive examiner of the scriptures could understand that conviction was not an issue for Christians. From the initial persecution at the hands of Saul, we are told, "Saul made havok of the church...therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:3, 4). Facing a real threat of death, only conviction could keep men and women steadfast in their beliefs. Those lacking conviction, soon wilted, unable to sustain themselves and their ungrounded beliefs.

Much has changed over the centuries in this land we sojourn in; yet, for those holding fast to faith that overcomes this world, true Christian conviction can never become diluted or replaced by modern conveniences or distractions. Of a truth, in this nation, our great blessing of religion peace may in fact bring forth apathy and indifference in our hearts.

Jesus conveyed, in the parable of the sower, a message of conviction's necessity in the life of a follower of God. Recall the seeds falling on the rocks that immediately came to life before quickly withering away in the sun's heat. Of these, Jesus explained, "these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13).

Today, we who hold our place in the building fashioned by God's hands, must examine ourselves and those around us, and test the level of conviction in our hearts. Unfortunately, an age of false tolerance and deceitful self-satisfaction has developed perceptions rooted in unscriptural doctrines. Conviction, the notion of holding fast to and firmly believing in absolute truths, has become a thing to despise instead of cherishing.

But be not so deceived brothers and sisters. God is not amused with watered-down versions of his principles. There is but one Almighty God who has established a steadfast and unchangeable means of finding him and serving him.

Paul spoke of "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Such unity, such peace, is thereafter

described as coming from convictions of singular truths, not of personal affinities to multiple options. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:3-6).

To proclaim salvation can be found in many forms in many religions, and still attempt to wear the name of Christian, defies the message of He who you call yourself after. Only Jesus Christ stated in word and in power his divine nature as the Son of God. Only Jesus Christ is described as showing his love and servitude in the ultimate fashion.

To serve Christ, as a Christian, is to deny all others and honor the man who is now king with full conviction.

And even in this, we must still charge to adhere to the one church bought by the blood of the Lamb. "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1). There is one true church which can be identified as strictly adhering to God's Word faithfully and completely.

"Not so," some say. "We're all serving the same God but in different means." Such is the doctrine of demons persuading many to cast off conviction and serve what is convenient. Denominations exist because of man's stubbornness and pride. Can the church be divided? Can two means of salvation both be acceptable? God forbid. How easily we forget the admonition to the Corinthians. "Speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you" (I Cor. 1:10).

Let us be fully persuaded in the gospel of Christ and in so being, let us be fully convicted of these truths and words of life. My Savior took his conviction to the cross, how can I do anything less.

May the God of Heaven give us wisdom and strength in this holy endeavor.

*"God is not amused
with watered-down ver-
sions of his principles."*

Dear God

Lyrics: Craig Hensley

Music: C. Hensley

Praise be to you, Oh Almighty God
 Praise be to Fa-ther God who has giv-en love e-tern-al to all of His chil-dren.

You've giv-en me strength to car-ry through.
 He gives strength and— He gives com-fort. My Lord, my God, stay be-side me and guide me.

When I am down You pick me up. Love un-par-ai-leled.
 Praise be to Fa-ther God who has giv-en love e-tern-al to all of His child-ren.

When I am strong, strength is from You. Praise Your match-less name.
 He gives life and— He gives Spir-it. My Lord, my God, live in-side me and guide me.

My dear God give me the strength to serve you eve-ry day.

Dear God

Glo - ry, Glo - ry to the name the name a - bove all names.

The first system of musical notation consists of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff begins with a '2' above the first measure, indicating a second ending. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Praise be to God.

The second system of musical notation continues the piece. The treble staff has a long note with a fermata over it, corresponding to the word 'God' in the lyrics. The bass staff provides harmonic support.

Craig Hensley
March 1999

SONS OF GOD (continued from page 1)

and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." (I Cor. 1:27-29) We need to ask ourselves what it means that "no flesh should glory in His presence". The above passage contains three examples of earthly glory: the wise, the mighty, and the things that are. The way of the world is to be impressed by these things. In the protocols of business, society, and government they are important. We wouldn't be pleased to visit the state Capitol only to see a Quonset hut. And if the price is right, we want to go to the fanciest stores. My mother used to say, "God probably made me to be poor because He knew my taste was too good." Most of us like the finery of life and high station, if we can get it. However, the "things that are" mean nothing when it comes to serving God.

The apostle Paul warned the church at Philippi about the problems of mixing faith with things held in earthly esteem. "For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so." (Phil. 3:3-4)

From there, he listed a number of things he possessed in his former way of life which greatly enhanced his profile before man. Men thought him to be very close to God because of these things. He thought the same. After Paul was converted to Jesus, he changed his mind. "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ." (Phil. 3:7-8) Sometimes we feel assured of ourselves because of social status, financial status, or degree of education. Who would argue that these are not desirable? But there is no holiness bestowed in worldly prestige. We do not want to be guilty of confusing godliness with gain.

Collective prestige also comes into play in the religious world environment. Together, we can buy fine, holy looking surroundings. God wants us to see our need for Christ, rather than to feel holy because of some artificial atmosphere. Candy for the eyes and ears is no substitute for the fruit of the Spirit. "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's

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hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things." (Acts 17:24-25) Does God rejoice in sculpted architecture? Does the stained glass and tinkling bell help Him to know that He is loved? Does the sounding of the organ and the carefully orchestrated choir satisfy Him? Or can the School of Divinity produce glory to God? Only in our dreams is God pleased with these things. However, it is easy to feel more religious when we add external supports to our practice. Much of what man mingles in his religion is there because it gives a sort of "confidence". We can feel that the situation is more holy, because it is impressed upon the senses. This is the very heart of paganism. Imagine the beauty of the ancient Tabernacle and Temple, and all things associated. The Gentile religious

world imitates these things, as well as the splendors from idolatry. These seem a lot more tangible than "faith working through love". They also cause us to forget that we are but the creation of God. We have no business pleasing our notions of religion. What was valid under the previous covenant had its place because God authored that form of worship. To incorporate that as well as the things of paganism is not to worship Him. After all, without His approval all we have to give is vanity and pride.

Why go beyond singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord? Why use the plucked harp, the hammered piano, or the clear trumpet? It would be like Abram falling on his face with a velvet pillow, Jacob declaring his own holiness to Pharaoh, or Moses slipping into some Gucci footwear to walk on holy ground. God wants us

to serve Him as His children with feet of clay. When we hear our sometimes faltering voices, we can hear the sincerity of the words, "Just as I am without one plea." (Just As I Am by Elliot & Bradbury) The harmony of brethren who have peace with one another, is harmony indeed. Instrumental accompaniment may sound nice, but it does not adorn us with the doctrine of Christ.

The song for this issue was written by Craig Hensley. It is titled Dear God. You can hear a midi representation, and get a rough copy of the score at this Internet address:

<http://www.lakeozarks.net/~tikvah/deargod.html>

Listen to how it sounds. Take it to heart, and sing it.

♦ ♦ ♦
Evangelist of the Church

Final FOOY Editorial

The first issue of Faith of our Youth (FOOY) was published in July 1994. It's conception inspired by an energetic group of youthful Christians eager to write about their faith in the LORD. As with life, things change. The FOOY generation is quickly maturing into young families and adults of faith—advancing beyond their adolescent mien of faith—blending into the church family comprised of Christians in various stages of maturation and responsibility.

Realizing that all people from the youth to the aged have special needs, it is the desire of the Riverside Road church family to change the focus of FOOY to include the writings of faith of all generations. This

will be the final issue of FOOY. The next issue you receive will be titled *Sacred Scriptures*. It's focus will no longer be a spotlight on youth—instead it will be a flood light illuminating a wider spectrum of "sacred" truths of interest to all who are seeking God. *Sacred Scriptures* will be dedicated to the worship and praise of our Almighty God—providing opportunity for all Christians to share their insights of life's most important questions: "Who is God?" "What is He all about?" And, "How does all that affect my life?"

Sacred Scriptures will feature writers who are people of faith—whose "sacred" cups are overflowing with

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