

# Harmony Ministries USA, Inc.



*"The Word Made Alive"*

## **BRIDLED FLESH!**

Exercising **Self-Control**  
for **Victory**

Volume 31 March 2017

*News Magazine*



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Dear Reader,

As worldly influences increasingly compete to shape our perspectives it is imperative that Christians recognize that it is the adversary who is battling for our hearts and minds. Self-control is one of the biggest challenges that Christians often face, and in this battle it sometimes may seem that we take three steps forward and two steps backward as we endeavor to be more like Jesus. However, it is important that Christians resolutely stand on the truth of God's Word, lest our testimonies be disqualified when our lives reflect a lack of self-control.

Though our sensibilities are continually bombarded by everything up to and including sexual immorality, drugs, greed, lies, gossip, infidelity, meanness, disrespect and rudeness from the world around us we must remain steadfast, and as the saying goes in pop culture, "*stay woke!*" This means that we need to "Be sober [well balanced and self-disciplined], be alert and cautious at all times. That enemy of yours, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion [fiercely hungry], seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8 (AMP)).

Therefore brothers and sisters, I pray that you will be encouraged and renewed by reading the articles in this March edition of the "*Word Made Alive*", and also that our Heavenly Father continues to transform us into the image of Our Savior Jesus Christ in the realm of self-control.

*"For God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power  
and love and self-control."  
2 Timothy 1:7 (NET)*

Abundant Blessings,

*Cindy T. Brown*  
Editor-in-Chief

# How to Manage the Flesh

*“6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Roman 6:6-11)*

Many believers struggle with their flesh because they lack the understanding of the value of grace and what Father has provided for us. In this lesson I will highlight some of the provisions outlined in this text that will enlighten you on how to keep your flesh under subjection. Notice first of all, that there are some things that you must know – that is, according to scripture, you must consider your flesh to have been crucified with Christ; in other words, when Christ died on the cross you died also. “Know this that our old man was crucified with Him.” There is no activity in anyone that is dead. Paul writing to the church in Galatia gave them the very same instructions “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20) This text makes it very clear that we must consider ourselves to be dead to the flesh, that is, not to yield to its desires. Though we have read these scriptures, the problem has been that we have not been acting on what we read. In his writings, James instructs us to be doers of the word, not just hearers only. If we never



**Pastor Owen L. Alston**

develop the practice of doing what God’s word says, we will always be deceived. Our text goes on to instruct us that when we consider ourselves to be crucified with Him, so that the body of sin might be done away with, then we should no longer be slaves of sin. A slave does not reserve the right to make his own choices; rather his master makes his choices for him. It is necessary to consider yourself crucified with Christ, in order to prevent being a SLAVE of sin. Verse 7 goes on to state “For he who has died has been freed from sin.” When we are born again, we are no longer lead by the flesh but

by the spirit which is the new man. Now remember, "... it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Please listen to me if you will, '... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new." (II Corinthians 5:17) If you covet to bring your flesh under Godly management, then these scriptures must be walked out. In verse 10 - "the death that Jesus died, He died to sin once for all." When Jesus died on the cross, His death legally freed us from the bondage of sin and set us free so that it can no longer be our master. It is now by the power of the Holy Spirit and the word of God that we keep our body in check, so that we can to live unto God and freely fulfill our purpose and calling. "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." (I Corinthians 9:27) "...reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Keeping your body in line with the word is not a matter of

human effort, but a faith journey. The Bible says that the just shall live by faith. (Romans 1:17)

Make a decision to live a holy lifestyle, and don't give the devil any place to keep you under condemnation, for God has already said that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1) beside that your sin has been fully paid by Jesus. "With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—He entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. (Hebrews 9:12 NLT). We know time in three dimensions, that is past, present and future. Our redemption has been secured for *all time*. There is never a time when our redemption is not secured. Learn to trust the Grace of God and what He has already purchased for us through His Son Jesus Christ, stop trying to do these things on human effort, which will always cause you to come up short.

"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;" (I Peter 1:13).



# Member Spotlight

This month's Member Spotlight focuses on Mario Manuel Brown, Sr. Mario, the third child born to Edward and Gloria Brown, was born at Mount Sinai Hospital in Harlem, New York. When he was just three years old his father died, and Mario recalls that it was a difficult time for his twenty-something year-old mother with four young children, "People said that she should separate us and give us up, but she was a woman of faith and she was determined to keep us together." Mario's mother was a nurse, and she worked three jobs to support her family, which meant that the children were often left alone. Mario said that it is, "By the grace of God that we made it and survived as a family, because so many other people I knew in similar circumstances came to a bad end, but God delivered us from those circumstances." After graduating from high school Mario went to college and earned a degree in accounting, and he has been a senior financial manager for the last 19 years. Mario recognizes how God has been with him throughout his life, and states, "With the Lord's favor we stayed together as a family. I know where I used to be and where He found me, and where He has brought me."

In the early 1980's while at a beach outing with his friends, Mario met his future bride Cindy. They did some group dating a few times but briefly lost contact with one another; "not too long after that, we reconnected — I guess it was meant to be!" Mario admits part of his attraction to his wife was that "Cindy's drive and ambition set her apart from other people I knew. Plus, we were both from Brooklyn and wanting to move away ... we were headed in the same direction." This July marks Mario's and Cindy's 33rd year of marriage. They are the proud parents of Mario II, a lawyer currently living in Georgia with his new bride; Corey, an actor who travels between New York and California; and daughter Amber who is a broadcast journalist and has worked in television and radio in New York and New Jersey, and she is also the creator of Harmony Ministries' "B.A.B.E.S. (Brilliant, Ambitious, Beautiful, Effervescent Servants) in Christ" young adult ministry.

It was Cindy who led the Brown family to Harmony after she accepted a friend's invitation to visit the church in 2003. Cindy became a member in 2004



and Mario recalls, "Cindy initially got me to attend a service at Harmony when she told me that the man I knew from the kids' basketball games was the pastor's son at Harmony." When asked why he keeps coming to Harmony, Mario says without hesitation, "I stay for the Word. We were raised Catholic and we always knew Jesus, but I wanted to know more about Him. I wanted to be closer to Him. Pastor stresses a personal relationship with Jesus, not just religion." Mario's favorite Bible verse is Isaiah 40:31, "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint." This verse expresses Mario's belief that "No matter what's going on in your life, it's not for you to worry. Wait on the Lord and He will lift you up."

At Harmony, Mario serves on the finance committee, and on occasion he assists the transportation committee. He is also an active supporter of his daughter Amber's B.A.B.E.S. in Christ ministry. His wife Cindy is the Editor of Harmony's The Word Made Alive news magazine. Mario says that Harmony Ministries "has greatly impacted my life in the area of fellowship, with Pastor's vision of iron sharpening iron and the genuine bonding of brothers in Christ."

# Join us

April 10th through 14th  
for a  
Time of Consecration and Devotion  
And encouraging Fellowship

We will have Prayer at 6am  
Bible class at 10am  
And

Service at 7pm Each Evening  
Each Evening Will Feature A  
Special Speaker

Monday– Pastor Dennis Adams

Tuesday– Pastor Kevin Elsey

Wednesday– Pastor Phil Davenport

Thursday- Pastor Lecarston Chestnut

Friday– Pastor Owen Alston

# Self-Control For Wellness

*God's word declares "But I discipline my body  
and keep it under control..." (1 Cor. 9:27)* by Marilyn Phillips

Self-control is the ability to discipline oneself. Self-will is like a muscle; it can be trained in order to increase its ability. This preparation comes from God's Word and prayer. Our health can be maintained when we follow God's wisdom and instructions. Self-discipline will create peace and balance which ultimately affects our health. One area where we should attempt to be self-willed is our emotions. Don't be easily offended and become angry. This can lead to high blood pressure, stress and cardiac diseases. God's word declares "But I discipline my body and keep it under control..." (1 Cor. 9:27). Continuous overeating and poor choices will eventually result in obesity and poor health. Overspending can lead to financial burden and mental strain. Also, the avoidance of sexual immorality, alcohol, and drugs is important. All these behaviors when controlled can prevent serious health problems and emotional distress. The Bible states, "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Tim 1:7). Practice the control God has al-

ready given you. It will increase.

One of the attributes of a Christ-like spirit is self-control. As we examine the life of Christ we comprehend that He was tempted like us in every situation, but He was able to endure and stay in control. The Word declares, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1Cor. 10:13). The Word also states, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus overcame because He was filled with God's spirit which provided Him the needed self-control. Even unto death, He stayed on the cross. Every segment of his body was torn, yet He endured to the end. He had the choice of removing himself from that pain and suffering but he stayed because He examined the op-



tions. When we experience difficult situations that require us to use self-will we can remember the life of Christ. Can we endure for His sake? Jesus said when He faced the cross, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will but your will be done.” Jesus was more interested in pleasing the Father than Himself. The consequences of our good choices are peace and good health. The Word mentioned, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things, there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

When we constantly request God’s intervention and guidance in our lives, we can aspire to obtain his character. He said, “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me” (John 5:30). As we become one with the Father, self-control will be

manifested in our life. Christ states, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). He also said, “That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me” (John 17:21-23). The All-Powerful One with unspeakable strength and self-control dwells in us. We must ask the father for His guidance in whatever area we need help. He said to us, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Strive for balance and self-discipline in every aspect of your life which will result in peace, joy and good health. God has given all of us the power to exercise self-control. Let’s choose to use it to glorify Him.

### Practical Tips for Self-Control

- 1. Identify the area where you need help most. Know that whatever area you perceive as your weak point. God is super strong and you can rest in his strength. He is just a thought and a prayer away.**
- 2. Recognize the things that would tempt you most.**
- 3. Stay away from sources of temptation.**
- 4. Practice self-restraint. Your willpower will increase as you exercise it.**
- 5. Consciously invest your time in good habits and service.**
- 6. Lean on God’s strength and grace.**



## **Sunday School News**

by Kevin Mosely

*Train up a child in the way he should go:  
and when he is old, he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)*

The goal of the Sunday School is to bring Christ to the children in a relevant and understandable way, so that the children will be able to take the teachings of Christ and apply them to their daily lives, which is why this Spring we will be adopting a new curriculum using the Bible-in-Life curriculum by David Cook, which focuses on four basic goals:

**Motivate - will attempt to tie the children's life experiences to the lesson**

**Learn the facts - teaches the children the facts from the Bible**

**Practice - allow the students to practice the new information**

**Apply - allows the students to connect with the home and school and make use of what they have learned**

Some distinct benefits of this new curriculum include:

**Bible-based**

**God-honoring biblical values covered for Toddler through Adult**

**Scripture knowledge encouraged**

**Church/Home connection throughout Four-Step Lesson Plan**

**Easy to teach and prepare**

**Lesson method results in personal application**

**Relevant to everyday life**

**Age grading based on developmental needs of the student**

**Teacher training videos available online**

Another beneficial feature of the new curriculum is that it offers differentiated instruction to address the fact that different students learn differently. This enables the teachers to more aptly tailor the lessons to their classes and students so that all of the children will benefit from what is being presented each Sunday.

The curriculum also is designed to be age appropriate. Each level from pre-school through high school will have lessons designed for their age group. The preschool/early elementary level is designed on a two year cycle so that there will be time to reinforce their learning before they move on to the elementary/high school curriculum. The elementary/high school curriculum is set up on a three year cycle.

Overall the child will go through the Bible four times as they progress through this curriculum. At each level there is greater depth to what is being presented so that we will be taking the students deeper and deeper in their walk with Christ.

Here is an example of how the curriculum is broken down for this spring:

#### Toddler/2 Units

Unit 19: Jesus Did Good Things – Children will discover some of the good things Jesus did.

Unit 20: Jesus Is Alive – Lessons share about Jesus' resurrection.

Unit 21: We Love God – Lessons teach children about different ways to worship.

#### Preschool & Early Elementary

Unit 19: Jesus Shows His Love – Children learn about God's love and power through stories of Jesus.

Unit 20: Jesus' Friends Show His Love – Lessons tell about Jesus' death and resurrection.

Unit 21: Jesus' Friends Help Others – Lessons teach children about the early church.

#### Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School & High School

Unit 19: Final Days of Jesus – Students learn about Jesus' actions and words leading up to His death.

Unit 20: Jesus Conquers Death – Lessons lead students to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Unit 21: How Believers Live – Students explore the early church.

A final benefit of this curriculum is that there are tie-ins for the home. The parents will be able to follow-up with activities at home to further support the efforts of the Sunday School.

# Getting Hold *of Yourself*

BY CINDY T. BROWN



*“But clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for [nor even think about gratifying] the flesh in regard to its improper desires.” Romans 13:14 (AMP)*

In Romans 12:2 the Lord instructs us to renew our minds so that we may be transformed into the image of His Son Jesus Christ, and it is only by an uncompromising commitment to the Word of God and a conscientious and determined effort to establish a relationship with Him (which we build through daily prayer and worship), that we are strengthened to carry out this renewal process — in other words, *we must practice self-discipline and have self-control in our daily lives.*

Self-control and self-discipline are foundational tools that every believer needs to have in their arsenal when confronting the enemy, and we acquire these through constantly feeding our hearts and minds with the Word of God, so that the truth is always at the forefront of our minds and on the tips of our tongues when we come under attack from the adversary. When Christians are slack about putting the word of truth into their hearts they become easy targets for the enemy, and therefore may find it challenging to live righteous and holy lives. This is because Satan is the

master of deception, and he twists God’s words to make people complacent in wrongdoing, so that deception is imminent where the truth is unknown.

For instance, there are some professed Christians who mistakenly think that as long as they aren’t engaging in behaviors that are considered “blatantly unholy,” then all is well. Sadly, these people often exist within the church body: they are those that tell “small white lies”, engage in gossip, are unfriendly and deliberately mean or rude; some are envious and delude themselves into believing that they are being subtle in their acts to sabotage other Christians! However, these behaviors are actually more self-damaging than anything else because **“Christians” are supposed to know better!** *“For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.” (2 Peter 2:21).*

To be clear, there is really no distinction between these behaviors and other worldly behaviors, and the adversary doesn’t miss a beat in recognizing the open door and marching through it and into your life -- *foul behavior is Satan’s entryway into*

*your life!* But, you might say, 'we are covered by the grace of God, under the blood of Jesus' -- *no doubt about it!* Yet, an impure heart leaves the door open for Satan to have his way with you. All the devil needs to gain access to your life is for you to invite him in through a small chink in your armor. In fact, he lies in wait looking for you to give him that opportunity. Once he has a foothold in your life, he sets up strongholds and wreaks havoc in various forms including sickness, lack, depression, mental depravity, loss, sexual immorality, etc. The Word distinctly cautions us against taking God for granted, *"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."* (Galatians 6:7-9).

The only way not to be deceived by the devil is to steadfastly practice self-control and self-discipline in your daily prayer and worship of our Heavenly Father. Take time each day to acknowledge our Creator. Thank Jesus for everything that He has done. Establish a relationship with our Savior by spending precious time with Him. Also, as it pertains to the people around you, let blessings flow from your mouth and elevate God's people, instead of wagging your tongue to speak evil about them. Only by saturating yourself with the Word of God at every opportunity, and by shunning those things that would lure you into Satan's arena, can you command victory over your adversary. By pouring the word of God into your mind and heart you will become adept at noticing all of the crafty ways Satan uses to draw you in, and you will be able to conquer him by using God's words against him every time he tries to come at you. *"Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"* (Jeremiah 23:29).

One surefire way to curb an appetite for lying and gossip is the next time the urge to malign the character of another brother or sister in your

church family, or even someone outside the church, comes upon you, instead look at yourself in a mirror and say that disparaging thing about yourself (*I can almost guarantee you won't like it!*). The Golden Rule is a very good one to follow: *"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."* (Matthew 7:12-14). Remember that one day, if you are so blessed, you will have to give an accounting for your behavior to our King Jesus, and you really don't want to come up short, *"And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'..."*.

*Peace, Love, and Joy Always!*



# *Practical Steps for Christians to Move from Defeat into Victory*

By: Yvonne Shaw



*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12*

As children of Christ Jesus, we were not created to live a defeated life but a victorious one! Defeat takes place when we take our eyes off Christ and attempt to handle life's issues ourselves, not realizing we are only delaying our blessings. God wants His children to live a blessed life. He does not want us begging and pleading in our prayers for the benefits that He's already given to us; we have to trust and believe His Word. God has already given to us everything that pertains to life. John 10:10 (KJV) tells us where defeat comes from if we allow it. **"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and kill and to destroy."** However, here's the victory we can rejoice because Jesus said, **"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."** Jesus came to teach us how to live a successful life. Draw near to Christ and He will draw near to us, teaching us all we need to know to live in victory. There are so many promises that have been given to us, but in order to access them we have to know the Word. Studying God's Word is not an option: it's the only way to live and have a firm founda-

tion in our lives.

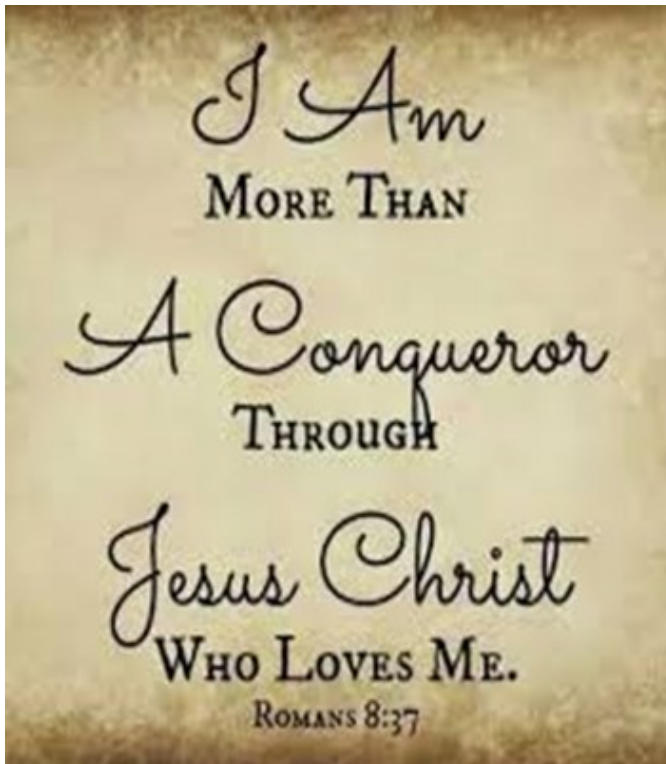
When we are led by the Spirit of God, we triumph over all situations; it doesn't matter what it looks like. The adversary wants us to think we are defeated, and there's no way out so that we give up and surrender. We certainly can be dealing with real issues but when, not if, this happens we have to search God's word for instructions on how to handle the problems. When we look at situations with our natural eyes we become overwhelmed and it's easy to become defeated. But thanks be to God who has given us His Spirit, when we look with our spiritual eyes, we are able to stand on His Word, trust Him and we are victorious in the end!

God never told us that we would not go through trials in our lives. Jesus told us

when we go through situations that He will be with us. **"When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you"** (Isaiah 43:2). When we stand on the God's Word, unmovable, steadfast, we will have the victory. Victory also means keeping our minds focused on the Word of God; if we don't, it becomes the playground of the adversary. God told us that He will keep us in perfect peace if we keep our minds stayed on Him. The road to victory is applying God's Word to our lives, studying the Word and walking in love for God is love. The only way to change our lives and have access to the benefits that God promised us is to build up our faith and trust God. God's Word is **yes** and **Amen**. We live in a society where we try to analyze everything but we can't analyze God's word, it's yes and amen...Trust God!

**"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed"** (James 1:25 KJV).

It's not enough to know the Word: the Bible tells us to be doer's of the Word; let us be examples of the



Word. If we are not filling our spirits with God's Word, what are we filling it with? Let us move forward by putting the past behind us and all distractions that try to take our attention, it's a smoke screen; don't fall for it we are victorious. John 8:12 tells us that Jesus is the light, that light shines within us and we are not defeated by darkness. Let us be examples of the Father for the world to see so the world will know that God is love.

Philippians 4:6 gives us instructions on how to move forward "with prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving, let your request be known to God." So instead of worrying and carrying burdens, move from a place of turmoil to a place of peace by developing an intimate relationship with Christ. When we give God our problems, He gives us His peace. God told us to cast our cares on Him for He cares for us and when we do we are walking lighter with no worries, no burdens, no stress all because we love Jesus enough to believe His word and trust Him. God does not want us to ever surrender to feelings of defeat and despair in spite of the issues that surround us. He has given us his powerful word full of encouragement and hope to strengthen us instead. Ultimately, His will for us is that we live our lives in victory. We are made in His image so that we can experience His love. Jesus wants an intimate relationship with us, one that is united in His love. This is why Jesus came to earth so that He

could restore our purpose of a holy relationship with God.

God sent His Son, Jesus into this world to take our sins upon Himself. Jesus, because of His love for us, became a sacrifice for us. He took our place; He paid the penalty for our sins. We no longer have to live under the penalty of spiritual death. God wants us to spend eternal life with Him. The Bible tells us that Jesus died for us while we were yet in our sins. We don't have to clean up and become perfect before we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. It's when we become born again and turn our lives over to Jesus that He comes to live within us and help us to change.

Jesus prayed that the same love that God the Father has would be in us. "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:26)

- God gives us the **victory**. (Deuteronomy 20:4)
- He makes us more than **conquerors**. (Romans 8:37)
- He causes us to **triumph** always in victory. (2 Corinthians 2:14)
- He brings us these victories **through Jesus Christ**. (1 Corinthians 15:57)
- Victory in Jesus is a **free gift** of God. We don't have to earn it. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- We are made victorious because of **Jesus' love** for us. (John 16:33)



# Advice to *the Weary*

By Deborah Peniston

*For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.*  
(Romans 7:15-20 NKJ)

The Apostle Paul, like many Christians, struggled with self-control. This is surprising for a man who wrote much of the New Testament. He, however, did not hide his struggles. In fact, he eloquently explained the plight of many Christians... that they do what really isn't in their hearts to do. In essence, he identifies humanity's struggle with sin, how many are still sin conscious, and how life in the flesh leads to sin. If this is where you find yourself, then here's some advice for the weary.

First and foremost, Jesus said He would never leave nor forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5) In fact, He

said the Father would give us another Helper, and that He would live with us forever. This "Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will never leave you orphans; I will come to you." (John 14:16-18) The fulfillment of this promise was seen "when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:1, 4a). "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17) Therefore, we can boldly say, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Peter, standing among the brethren on the Day of Pentecost quotes David, "*I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.*" (Acts 2:25)

His words are so relevant to us today. You must always keep the Lord before your face for He is your Helper. You must seek Him daily in all things. Proverbs 3:5 tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all



your heart, and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your path.”

We have been instructed by the Word of God, to crucify our flesh, to live a disciplined life.

Paul writes to the church in Galatia, “But I say, walk and live (habitually) in the (Holy) Spirit (responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit); then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God.)” Galatians 5:16 Amplified

You may ask, how do I do that? Daily fellowship with God and the brethren. Too often communion with the Lord is limited to our prayer time. Remember, you don’t leave Him in your prayer closet because He lives in you. Talk to Him throughout your day. He wants to inhabit your thoughts and give you instruction. He says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27) Likewise, He tells us, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every

sin. Then take those thoughts captive, and just stop what you are doing. It may initially feel forced, but it will become easier, and eventually it will be gone. So even while there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, at some point we mature, understanding salvation, and making a decision to live a life set apart for Christ. Ultimately, we do what we want to do. You must fight your flesh. You must fight for your peace. It is a fight of faith. Colossians 2:6 tells us, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”

It is also essential to keep company with people who share your faith, as seen on the Day of Pentecost. They continued in prayer on one accord. As believers we should make it a habit to gather together and lift each other up. “And let us consider and give attention, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities. Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together (as believers), as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another...” (Hebrews 10:24, 25 Amplified)


*... and remember you can do all things through Christ. You can!*

high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...” (2 Cor. 10:3-5)

You know that thing you do that’s not really in your heart to do. It’s not like you’re ignorant of your flesh and its desires. So when those thoughts arise, see Jesus before your face, and don’t focus on the sin. Focus on Him, who bore all sin in His body on the cross. See Him in you, He who paid the price for you to be free from the shackles of

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.” (Philippians 4:8)

Saturate yourself with the Word and remember... you can do all things through Christ. You can!



*“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run,  
but one receives the prize?*

*Run in such a way that you may obtain it.”  
(1 Corinthians 9: 24-27) (NKJV)*

*By Brenda Benjamin*

You’ve all been to the stadium and seen athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins—run to win. All athletes train hard; they do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You’re after one that’s gold eternally.

I don’t know about you, but I’m running hard for the finish line. I’m giving it everything I’ve got. No sloppy living for me! I’m staying alert and in top condition. I’m not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.

It amazes me just how smart, patient and wise God truly is. I had been having an ongoing conversation with the Spirit of God for the last couple of months about life changes that had to take place in my life as I approach my 70th birthday in June 2017.

I had not been as physically strong as I knew I should have been. I was watching one of my favorite Bible teachers on television one evening and he was teaching about faith and prayer. He gave an illustration where he got on his knees and immediately jumped up without assistance. This man just turned 80 years old in December, 2016. This was remarkable to me, most 80, 70 60 or 50 year olds could not have jumped up as quickly as he did.

The following Sunday at church Pastor Alston is getting ready to bring forth the Word of God and he jumps out of his chair and runs up four steps to the podium. Pastor Alston is about 71 years old, so this really got my attention; I heard the Spirit of God say to me “Do you want to be able to do that at 70 years old?” I said, “Yes, Lord,” because at 69 years of age, I was having a little difficulty getting out of my chair, never mind jumping up from a kneeling position or running upstairs. I thought “why aren’t I that agile?”

The answer that the Lord gave me was found in Galatians 5:16 which says, "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Both my favorite Bible teacher and Pastor Alston are men who are very active, exercise regularly, eat very healthy, get eight hours sleep, and rest their bodies as the Spirit of God leads them.

Then I was led to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, which says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." So then, honor God and bring glory to him in your body.

I knew at that point that it was time to set a new course and get on the pathway that God has planned for me, because I was badly off course. The Word of God says, the following in Psalms 32:8-9, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you." Don't be like a senseless horse or mule that has to have a bit in its mouth to keep it in line!

I knew that it was time to get busy and be consistent in the plan that God has for me. He was waiting for me to get serious and intentional. I gained 36 pounds in the last seven years, stopped exercising on a regular basis, and started making excuses about getting older. I had grown slack in my eating habits, eating too many sweets, sitting too much, and not moving enough.

Some of the excuses that I made were: I pray for an hour every day, read the Word of God daily, have devotion time daily, and listen to teaching tapes daily. But, I wasn't putting God's purpose for my life as a top priority by taking care of my physical body.

God wants His children to live a balanced life, so that we can fulfill the marvelous plan that He has for each of us: spirit, soul (mind, will and emo-

tions) and body.

Being strong physically is part of God's plan for each believer. In Proverbs 31:17 it says, "She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms." Also in 1Thessalonians 5:23 it states "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I have begun my journey to physical fitness. My daughter has become a health coach and is helping me in the process of completing a 21 Day Challenge of Nutritional Boot Camp which has been awesome. I am eating fruits, vegetables, good protein, drinking 8-10 glasses of water every day. Working out 5-6 days a week, drinking delicious protein shakes and feeling the best I have felt in years. I am moving better. No sore joints or muscles and jumping out of chairs. Praise God!

The question has been posed to me, "What is the outward manifestation of a disciplined Christian life?"

My answer is as follows in Galatians 5:24-25, "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

I am so excited about turning 70 years old because God has given me a new beginning and a promise to live a long, disciplined, joyous, healthy and satisfied life while I am here on earth. I will be running through the 70 mark with gusto and jumping up from praying knees! Hallelujah!



**\*\*\* PRAYER OF SALVATION \*\*\***

**DO YOU KNOW...?**

**GOD LOVES YOU**

**JESUS DIED FOR YOUR SINS**

**YOU CAN RECEIVE JESUS NOW AND KNOW GOD'S LOVE**

The basis of the Prayer of Salvation comes from Romans 10:9-10, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

However, I would like to direct you to Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Grace is mentioned over 100 times in the Bible. Grace is God's unmerited favor and because of God's grace, we receive eternal life and a promise of heaven. Grace is necessary for salvation as we cannot do enough good works or make enough right choices to earn our salvation. The Bible teaches that we are justified by the grace of God (Romans 3:24; Titus 3:7). Justified means declared not guilty. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, all charges against us are dropped and we are free from sin. When God forgives our sins, the record is wiped clean. It is as if we had never sinned.

A preacher once explained grace with this acronym:

**God's - Riches - At - Christ's - Expense**

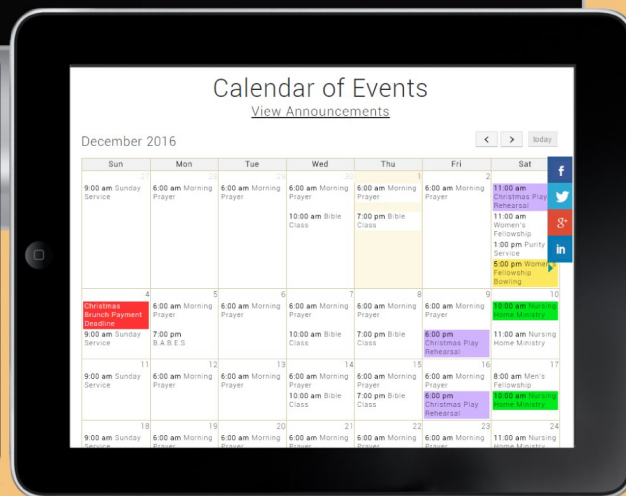
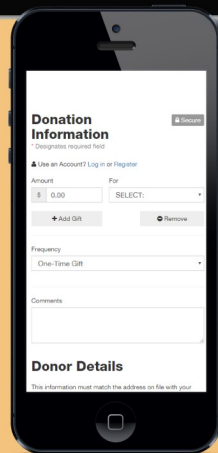
**PRAY THIS PRAYER OUT LOUD:**

Heavenly Father, In Jesus' name I repent of my sins and open my heart to let Jesus come inside of me. Jesus, You are my Lord and Savior. I believe you died for my sins and you were raised from the dead. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Thank you Father, for saving me in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you've prayed this prayer of salvation with true conviction, you are now a follower of Jesus.

Welcome to the family of God! We encourage you now to find a local church where you can be baptized and grow in the knowledge of God through His Word, the Bible.

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# Learning From the Mistakes of Solomon the Wise

BY MICHAEL CLAUSEN

*“Therefore, give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?’...’Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.” 1 Kings 3:9-12 (NKJV)*

The scripture referenced above may be longer than would normally be the heading for a magazine article, but it is important in its longevity. King Solomon was, by the grace and gift of God, the wisest man to ever walk the earth. “...there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.” 1 Kings 3:12 (NKJV) This blessing however, and the specific nature of the gift of wisdom, did not deter Solomon from messing up – big time.

One would think the wisest man ever would be, by this very nature, smart enough to avoid getting himself into trouble. His father, King David, specifically warned him to “... keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses...” 1 Kings 2:3 (NKJV) Yet this

was not the path Solomon elected to walk. In Genesis God creates man and woman and defines marriage as this pairing. While polygamy was often practiced at the time, the mixing of the people of Israel and the other people of Canaan was prohibited because it would cause there to be worship of other gods by God’s own people. This is exactly what happens to Solomon, even though he would have known better, being the wisest man ever.

Just like Solomon we do things how we want, not necessarily what God says to do, or what we are being taught to do. How many people have we gone out and told about Christ? How many people have we brought to church? Are we tithing? Are we being good stewards of all that God has given us?

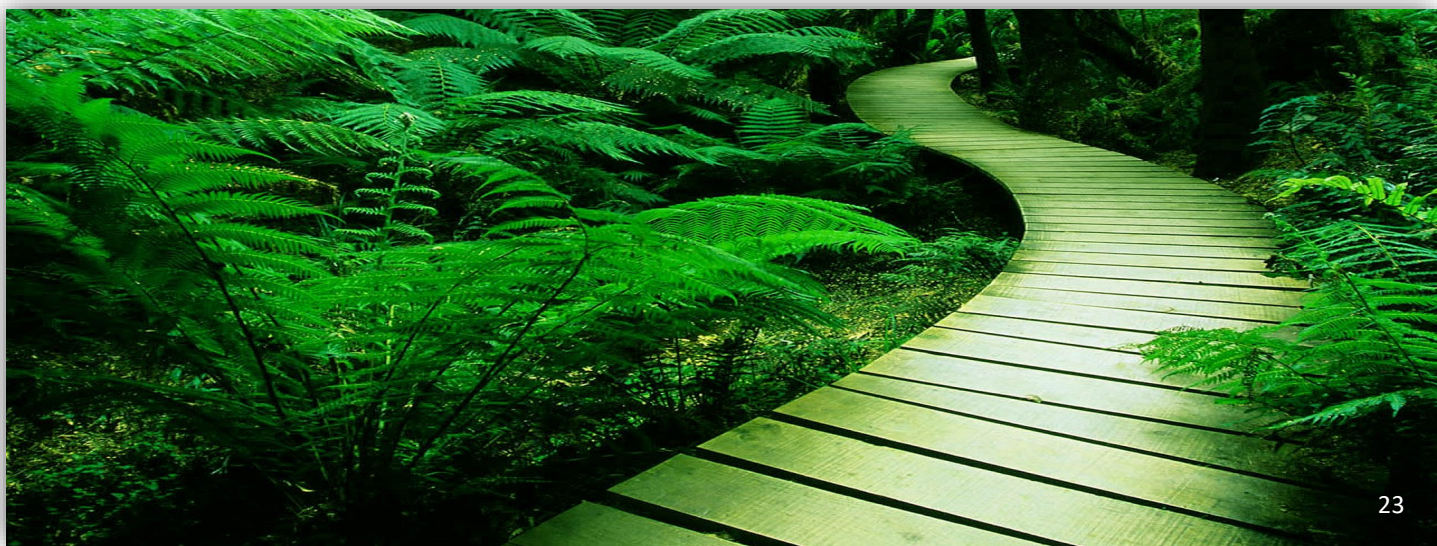
We do what we want, picking and choosing how and where we feel like obeying. Not only did Solomon know what he was supposed to do, and not do, he was given the wisdom from God; he especially knew that what he was doing was going to end badly.

Solomon started off strong. He went about following the instructions of his father David, killing off the people that David said needed to be taken care of after he died. He went on to build the temple that David had put up the supplies and money to build, following the instructions as to how the temple was to be built. He amassed more wealth than anyone in the world, history tells us more than anyone even today! The people of Israel were so well to do that silver was considered to have no value because there was so much of it laying around. People from all over came to Solomon for judgement where no one else had been successful. The Queen of Sheba came to see for herself what others had told her, not believing that wisdom and riches could be true in one man. She said, after seeing it for herself: "... It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However, I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness." 1 Kings 10:6-9 (NKJV)

So where did Solomon go wrong? He thought he could do anything he wanted. After all, had it not been God himself who gave him the wealth and respect above the wisdom he had asked for? Why shouldn't he make the marriage bonds that made

peace between Israel and other Nations? Why should he not take what he wanted for himself? Even God gave him things he didn't deserve or ask for. Sometimes we think and act the same way. Why, after all, shouldn't we have all the things we want? Why shouldn't we do what we feel like doing, and not do what makes us uncomfortable? We are the heirs of Christ are we not? We should have all the good things in life so that the rest of the world wants to be like us and turns to Christ. This is only partially true. Yes, God wants us to have the good things in life. He wants us to have the envy of the rest of the world, in so turning them to Christ. The problem lies in the fact that we don't do what we are supposed to do to deserve the good things. We don't tithe. We don't pray as much and as fervently as we ought. We show off our nice things, but don't act in a manner that would make someone want to have what we have above and beyond the flashy cars and nice suits. We don't reflect Christ in our actions as we have been taught to do by Christ Himself.

I don't for one second pretend to be the shining example of what we should be doing. I am as guilty as the next person of laying down on the job. But the Lord has placed it in my heart that this is the very essence of what has been working against my receiving the full blessing that He has in store for me. We all need to stop being as selfish as Solomon and begin again to work toward showing the true image of Christ inside of us. We need to learn from the mistakes of our forefathers, even the ones unto whose family we have been engrafted. It's too late for Solomon to change, he had his day. Our day is today; our time is now. We have a chance to make the changes and live every day for, and like, Christ. Who is with me?



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**TO:**

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***Weekly Service***

**Monday through Friday Early Morning Prayer & Devotion 6-7am**

**Saturday Morning Prayer & Devotion 8-9am**

**Wednesday Bible Class 10am**

**Thursday Evening Bible Class 7pm**

**Sunday Service 9am**

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***Youth Ministry Department***

**Youth Group 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month.**

**Purity Program meets 1st Saturday of each month at 1:00pm**

**Special Programs To Be Announced!**