

# Expository Files

Editors: Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley



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## *Front Page*

### *Start Today*

Warren E. Berkley

*Sin* is the defiance of God's authority. It is the choice to do my will instead of His.

It is our disease in the human race and Christ is the only specialist who is Himself the remedy. Not only must we see this – we must help others to see it. We should be willing to repeat these words to people: “Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jno. 1:29)

Now let me talk to Christians today. We have named the problem; we have come to terms with sin, by hearing, believing and obeying the gospel. In that obedience to the gospel, not only did we find forgiveness of sin – **we accepting the challenge to share the message with other sinners.** We were called out of sin by the gospel – not only for us to find the remedy, but to share it; to reach those still lost.

This is why it says – of the early Christians in Acts 5:42 – that ***“they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”***

Each one of us should be participants in evangelism – not only through means of our collective work, but as individuals. Each one should be a personal evangelist.

Here's a place to start – **send an e-mail to someone you know today.** Ask if you can begin a conversation with them about the gospel. If the

conversation begins, simply use your Bible to show the problem, the solution and the application. You can do it.

*Paul's Good Life And Clear Writings ~ Affirmed For All To Consider*  
*2 Cor. 1:12-14*  
*Warren E. Berkley*

The apostle Paul suffered a strained relationship with some in Corinth. He had to write some hard things to them, for their good (see 1 Corinthians). Second Corinthians is dominated by Paul's response to his opponents.

Two things are probably at work in the history of Second Corinthians: {1} The carnal attitudes exposed in the first epistle, and {2} some hardened enemies of the cross of Christ who came into Corinth, offering their bold derision of the apostle. Here is part of Paul's response:

*"For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. For we are not writing any other things to you that what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus,"* 2 Cor. 1:12-14.

**There is a kind of boasting that is legitimate.** Inordinate pride that expresses itself in self-elevation is wrong (see Rom. 1:30). Boasting of one's evil is evil (Psa. 52:1). Boasting arrogantly of the future is sinful (Jas. 4:16). But there remains a very specific realm of boasting that is legitimate. In 2 Cor. 10:13, Paul teaches that there is a very narrow area of legitimate boasting. He calls it "a sphere which God appointed us – a sphere which especially includes you." That sphere is the work and faithful workers who "preach the gospel" (see 2 Cor. 10:13-18).

The content of 2 Corinthians shows, when men speak against the cause of Christ, that demands that we boast about the Lord's work, and that we defend legitimate efforts to advance the cause of Christ. The only boasting Paul participated in was this defense of the work and the workers.

In that context he said, "...our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly

sincerity...” The opponents of the work and the workers put Paul in this position. His response is to say to the Corinthians: Here is the testimony of our conscience, confirmed by our conduct in the world and our consistent writing!

The work of Paul and his coworkers came from a good conscience, and in practice that work was the simple matter of sincerely doing the work of the Lord.

**While we must vigilantly shun self-centered boasting, there are times when we are really obligated to defend our participation in the Lord’s work,** our efforts to enlarge the borders of the kingdom and spread the truth. There are times when we are justified in stating our good motives and calling attention to the testimony of our work. This is not the immature, embarrassing bragging of self-righteousness (battles won, enemies defeated, a resume of accomplishments with a demand of praise)! No, this is simply the response to charges against your involvement in the Lord’s work, asking that people consider our conduct. Of course, all such matters will ultimately be settled “in the day of the Lord Jesus.” But there is nothing wrong with defending our present involvement in the Lord’s work.

When people question what we do, we are within our rights and actually under obligation to explain: *“I’m a Christian. What I’m doing is, obeying Christ. I read and study the New Testament and join with others who want to be obedient to Christ. I am not involved in any human religious order, denomination or cult. I’m simply a Christian, and I want to do what the New Testament teaches we are to do.”*

We need not walk around with a placard. But when misunderstood, misjudged, accused or misrepresented, we can respond as Paul did.

Met by charges from enemies of the cross (and perhaps not fully understood by his friends), Paul simply states the testimony of his conscience and life. There is no claim of perfection, no boast of personal successes, no expression of malice toward detractors. Rather, a straightforward testimony of conscience.

One expression of Paul’s sincerity was, the clarity of what he wrote. He said to them: “For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end (as also you

have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

We can infer, some of those who were opponents of the apostles, claimed that Paul’s writings were not sufficiently clear and subject to multiple interpretations.

People continue to say such things about the writings of Paul today. On the subjects of women, marriage, the second coming and even grace and law, modern critics like to talk about inconsistencies, errors and human agenda.

While some of Paul’s writings may be “difficult,” (see 2 Pet. 3:14-16), when faithful Bible readers do the work, read the text and maintain objectivity, the writings of Paul are both clear and consistent. He is calling attention to that here in 2 Cor. 1. While men with their agendas are disposed to put wrong constructions on what Paul wrote, that is not the fault of the inspired writer. Paul’s motives, sincerity and authority all came together in his good life and his clear, powerful writings.

In doing the Lord’s work today, we may face similar challenges and threats. Second Corinthians is a valuable handbook for us in knowing how to respond – without self-centered boasting, but with legitimate boasting about the value of good work done by good people.

Barnes wrote about this: “I trust that my conduct will be such as to convince you always that I am actuated by such principles. I trust you will never witness any departure from them -- the language of a man of settled principle, and of fixed aims and honesty of life. An honest man can always use such language respecting himself.”

*Mercy*  
*Hos. 6:6*  
*by Jay Bowman*

As we go about the business of serving God, there are many distractions along the way. We go to church, we sing, we pray, we listen to the sermon or class, we take the Lord’s Supper, and we suppose we have done our duty. We have done “God’s will in God’s way”. But, because of the repetitive nature of these acts, we sometimes go through the motions without any participation of the mind and heart. In Hosea 6, the prophet complains that

Israel had done this. They thought that, if they offered the prescribed sacrifices, they could devote their affections to themselves and even to idol gods.

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings (Hosea 6:6 NKJV).

The Hebrew word for “mercy” in this passage is a hugely important term in the Old Testament, something like “agape” in the N.T. The word is “hesed” (H2617). It is used 248 times in the O.T. In the KJV, it is translated “mercy” 149 times, “kindness” 40 times, and “loving kindness” 30 times. It is translated by other similar words 27 times.

Thus, in our passage, the word expresses a tender affection that should be directed to God. In Matt. 9:13, the Pharisees criticized Jesus for eating with tax collectors and sinners. He reminded them of this passage in Hosea. They were offering sacrifices. They practiced their religion with incredible fastidiousness, but they didn’t love God. And they had no tender compassion for their fellow man. Their religion was defined by pickiness and faultfinding.

**“I desire”** – The whole idea of religious activity is to give God what He desires.

**“Mercy”** – “Hesed” may include loving kindness, loyalty and holiness. In the Maccabean period, the righteous were called the “Hasidim”, “godly”, “devout”.

**“Not sacrifice”** – Of course, God did want sacrifice. He instituted sacrifice at the dawn of creation. From Adam to Christ, He required animal sacrifice. This is one of those “not/but” statements in which one thing is negated in order that something else may be emphasized. He desired sacrifice, but He desired hesed, “loving kindness”, even more. Note the last line: “...more than burnt offerings”.

**“The knowledge of God”** – “Knowledge” can mean accumulated facts. But, in the Bible, it often means more. It refers to an intimate personal relationship. It is good to know a lot about God. Many atheists know about God. But they have no personal relationship with Him. They have no love for Him. God desires that we walk with Him in close personal fellowship.

So, we need to avoid this robotic execution of religious deeds and words. Whatever we do for God, it is important to remember that worship offered without thought and feeling is empty, futile and unacceptable.

***“Whoever Loses His Life Shall Save It”***

***Matthew 6:25***

***By Jon W. Quinn***

Its not an easy statement to believe. Jesus' statement is a paradox. How does one go about saving his life by losing it? Such a concept can only be valid with Jesus, the Son of God!

The road to success in life and as a disciple of Jesus is not one that most would expect. The promises of Jesus are real and all important. We had better believe them and live by them even if most in the world do not. Consider our text:

*24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*

*25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

*26 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:24-26).*

Jesus said a lot of things like this. For one example, He said "Blessed are the gentle for they shall inherit the earth." That, too, is a road less traveled. One of life's ironies is that we get some things by giving them up. Jesus said I can become richer by giving up some of earth's treasures and lay up for myself treasures in heaven. It is true! (Matthew 6:19-20). But one must first grasp the significance and wonderful value of spiritual treasures to truly comprehend Jesus' promise here. We can become "richer" by giving away some of our money. We see this principle demonstrated repeatedly in the Scripture... (re. Abraham's offer to Lot; David's "I will not sacrifice to the Lord that which costs me nothing"; The rich fool who hoarded his goods and died taking nothing with him).

**A Physical and Spiritual Creature Called "Man"**

The Scriptures teach, and I think every human being is at least dimly aware of the fact, that we are more than the sum of our body parts. There is

the physical, outer part of us, that which the Bible calls “temporal”, and the spiritual, inner person which the Bible says is “eternal” (that is, without end).

There is not only this life “under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:3), but at death “the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it” (ECCL. 12:7).

Only when one recognizes the importance of the eternal, unseen part of the human being will this principle make sense... only to those spiritually minded (Matthew 10:28). Some things only benefit us in this life, but better things benefit us in both this life and the next. Paul said, “...for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” (1 Timothy 4:8). The question we all want an answer to is: how can we get the best out of both worlds? And are we wise enough to realize that the eternal riches of the next world are worth more than the temporary riches of this world?

### **Giving God First Place**

When temporary things become less important and eternal things become more important to us, then we will begin to grasp the meaning of Jesus' statement. A godly vision of the faith that leads to everlasting life is the way to “love life and see good days” right now (1 Peter 3:10-12).

Faith puts God first because it believes His promises and assurances. It is the conviction of things not yet seen. But just because they have not yet been seen does not mean they are not of tremendous value already. There is an old saying that “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” But that does not hold true if the bird in the hand soon vanishes away but the two in the bush can be ours forever.

Those things for which we hope instill within us a joy and, if our faith is strong enough, even exultation that we have put God first. We will think of ourselves as rich and blessed, though outwardly we may not seem so. It is as Jesus Himself said to the church at Smyrna, “I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich)...” (Revelation 2:9).

### **We Need to be Liberal!**

Wow! I never thought I'd write those words. But in one sense, it is true. It is not true in the sense of being doctrinally liberal or morally liberal. But it is certainly true in the sense that the New Testament teaches with the words, "you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God." (2 Corinthians 9:11; see also Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 8:2 and 9:13).

With our blessings, we could be building "bigger barns" (as Jesus described it in one of His parables-Luke 12:16-22) when greater happiness could be had by giving up some of that in favor of spiritual pursuits or kingdom matters. The "carnal" man has appraised his life and put a higher value on physical things than on the spiritual. This will not result in the depth of joy and confident strength possible in this life, and will result in complete and utter tragedy in the life to come (Romans 8:5-9; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16).

### **Laying Hold of Life Indeed**

Jesus had predicted that He would be put to death and also said that the apostles would face similar treatment. When Peter objected to the idea that Jesus would die, Jesus responded "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." To the apostles, as well as all faithful disciples, we must face the fact that the world expects us to renounce Jesus, or at least reject His teachings, to be acceptable, to be politically correct, to be popular, or sometimes, even to stay alive. But if one does renounce Christ, or even merely ignore Him and His will, the things he will have saved will be next to valueless in the very near future. But if one will go so far as to lose his life rather than deny the Lord, he will find what life really is (1 Timothy 6:19).

Also, principle applies not only to life itself, but anything we consider important in life. We must be willing to lose the temporal things of life, if need be, that we may faithfully and loyally follow Christ. It might involve losing comfort or physical security. It might mean forgoing something pleasurable or some source of momentary happiness. It might cost us acceptance with family, friends or associates. It might cost us physical wealth. These are the things of this life. We must put following Christ above them all (Mark 10:28-31). The Christian never gives up anything for Jesus' sake without gaining something better. And no one reaching heaven will be disappointed.



Being a disciple of Jesus has many wonderful benefits. And, we are only at the beginning. We can scarcely imagine what glories will be in the world to come, where as one hymn suggest, we exult as “the ages roll on”. We may lose our lives, but in the end, we will save them.

***In Spirit and Truth***  
***John 4:19-24***  
***By Ethan R. Longhenry***

We, as Christians, speak often of worship, and constantly turn to John 4:24 to demonstrate the need for us to worship God in spirit and in truth. Most of the time when we speak of such matters, we are referring to the "acts of worship" done in the setting of the assembly. Yet, when one examines the New Testament to see what it says regarding worship and the assembly, we can see that the text delineates between two forms of worship: proskuneo, direct worship, the rendering of obeisance to and prostration towards (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:25, Revelation 4:10, and many others), and latreia, indirect worship, the spiritual service rendered to fellow humans and to God (cf. Romans 12:1). The New Testament never confines worship to the assembly, for anything we do in service to God is worship proper: in fact, very little is said regarding "worship" explicitly in the "assembly," and the purpose of the assembly is primarily the encouragement and edification of the brethren (1 Corinthians 14:26, Hebrews 10:24-26), with direct worship also taking place. Indeed, the passage that we most often refer to demonstrate the authority of worship explains these things the best: John 4:19-24:

The woman saith unto him, “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Jesus saith unto her, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

John 4:24, of course, is often taken out of its context and used to demonstrate the need to engage in worship to God in the assembly with both soul and mind according to the determination of God from the Scriptures.

While the passage certainly supports this argument derived from it, are we to accept that such is the sum total of Jesus' message to the Samaritan woman and to us? Let us examine this passage further along with the rest of the New Testament to see.

Before we begin, let us examine the context of the passage, and particularly the nature of the interaction between Jesus and the Samaritan woman and the question she asks.

We first learn of the Samaritans in 2 Kings 17:22-41, where the Kings author demonstrates that the Samaritans were the Mesopotamian peoples whom the Assyrians settled in the land of Israel when they exiled the ten tribes. At first, they did not recognize the LORD, but once the LORD established His presence by sending lions through the people, they requested to know more about the God of the land, and the Assyrians sent a priest of Israel. These people, according to the Kings account, kept worshipping their other gods but added the worship of Yahweh. In Ezra 4:1-10, we see that the Samaritans wanted a hand in helping to build the Temple in Jerusalem, and when rebuffed, did all that was in their power to halt the project.

More on the Samaritans can be gained from Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews. In book 11, chapter 8, Josephus records that the Samaritans gained approval from Alexander the Great to build a temple on Mount Gerizim; in book 13 and chapter 9, after the Jewish leader John Hyrcanus conquered the area 200 years later, Josephus records that the temple was not being used.

The Samaritans exist until this day; they only accept the first five books of the Old Testament as authoritative, and believe that Mt. Gerizim, not Jerusalem/Mt. Zion, is the right place to worship God. They sacrifice animals on Mt. Gerizim to this day.

Having seen such things, we can understand why the Samaritan woman was surprised that Jesus, as a Jew, would give the time of day to her, a Samaritan (John 4:9), and why she would ask Him regarding where God was to be worshipped. It is also important to note that Jesus does affirm that salvation comes from the Jews, and that the Jews worship what they know while the Samaritans worship in ignorance (John 4:22), a strong affirmation of the worship in Jerusalem.

If Jesus had just responded with verse 22, there would be little else to talk about. Jesus' response, however, looks toward the future and speaks in transcendental terms, and we should certainly look into such matters.

Jesus begins by effectively rendering the question of the Samaritan woman moot: the days are coming when God will not be worshipped in either Jerusalem or on Gerizim. This presents a strong contrast to what has existed so far in the Jewish covenant, where ritual and location were strongly emphasized.

Jesus then goes on to establish that God is spirit, that God seeks those who would worship Him in spirit and in truth, and this will be coming and is actually present now. The timeframe is manifestly a reference to Jesus and His covenant, since the language is similar to that used of the Kingdom in Luke 17:20-21. The passage also demonstrates that God does desire us to worship Him, and to be the ones doing so "in spirit and in truth." But what, precisely, does this mean?

The standard answer, of course, is that we are to have our spirit engaged in our assembly worship and that our assembly worship is to be done according to the standard of God. This is all well, good, and true, but you could say that just as easily about the old covenant (cf. Isaiah 1:10-21, Hosea 6:4-7). What is Jesus' larger point?

When we consider passages that speak of worshipping God in spirit, we turn to Romans 12:1:

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.*

The word "service" here is the Greek *latreia*, that indirect worship to God that we are to continually offer to Him. When we consider this evidence—and consider how worship is never explicitly associated with the assembly, and that the thrust of the assembly is encouragement and edification of the saints, the picture begins to get clearer; Jesus is affirming in John 4:20-24 that in the new covenant, worship will not be relegated to a building and the offering of animals and other rote rituals, but will be represented by people serving God according to His standard. As God is a spirit, and not physical (in an earthly sense), so the worship God desires is according to the spirit,

and not according to the physical. When we are the living and holy sacrifice God wants us to be, we are worshipping God in spirit and in truth, and we can be the people God has earnestly sought.

Everything said here certainly applies also to how we should compose ourselves in the assembly; after all, all spiritual acts done in the assembly are indeed worship, both directly and indirectly. In fact, the distinction made between proskuneo and latreia is somewhat tempered by the fact that Jesus refers to this worship in John 4 with proskuneo. So, just as proskuneo worship is also latreia worship, since direct worship is spiritual service, and under the new covenant, our latreia—spiritual service—is called proskuneo. When we act in service to God according to His standard, we humble ourselves and render obeisance to Him, and can be the people whom He has sought.

Perhaps we need to give consideration to what the Scriptures say about our worship as Christians and change our perspective on what we view as worship versus what we do not consider as worship, and change our attitudes and vocabulary accordingly. Let us seek to be the people whom God has sought, worshipping Him in spirit and in truth at all times.

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*Topic Page*

## **Should God Wait?**

Gary Henry

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth,  
before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say,  
"I have no pleasure in them."

Ecclesiastes 12:1

**Solomon, a king who was hardly naive about what the world has to offer, counseled that we should remember our Creator while we are young.** To defer dealing with God until we are out of our youth is a costly error. And if we've not yet decided whether we're going to take God

seriously, there is something we need to know: *the question only gets tougher the longer we delay answering it*. We're only deceiving ourselves if we think we need to take care of more important matters first. There is no such thing as a more important matter than God.

Particularly in our youth, the thing that tempts us to postpone dealing with God is the myth that godliness requires us to forfeit our pleasure. Because the life of serious spirituality seems so dull, it's only natural to defer doing anything about it until after we've drunk as deeply from the world as we want to drink. Our adversary would like us to believe that the only young folks who follow God are the losers who don't know what they're missing. One of the saddest things about this myth, however, is that it misrepresents a God who has never wanted anything but our good and who has never forbidden anything except what would hurt us or degrade us. We'd do well to go back and reconsider Ecclesiastes. The very God whom Solomon advised us to "remember" is also the God who said, "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth" (**Ecclesiastes 11:9**).

Many of the reasons for taking a responsible approach to God in our youth are powerfully *practical*. One of the most practical (and also one of the most important) is that the basic shape of our personal character is set while we're in our younger years. The ideal time to commit ourselves to godly principles and begin adjusting our lifestyles to those principles is when our minds and hearts are still open and we've not yet begun to suffer "hardening of the categories." If we say no to God at the time when it is most crucial to say yes, it is not likely that our minds will be changed by anything later on -- except circumstances that are truly tragic.

If you refuse to be made straight when you are green,  
you will not be made straight when you are dry.

African Proverb

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[www.wordpoints.com](http://www.wordpoints.com)

## **Plan of Salvation** **By Jon W. Quinn**

## Plan #1

Announced by the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to new believers in Christ who asked what they must do:

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."  
(ACTS 2:38)

## Plan #2

On the back page of a tract, sinners were urged to pray this prayer to be saved. This prayer is not found in the Bible; nor were alien sinners commanded to pray for their forgiveness.

The Sinner's Prayer:

"O' Lord, I accept that I am a sinner and that Jesus died for my sins. I now accept Him into my heart as Lord and Savior asking for your mercy and forgiveness in His name. Amen."

The editors of Expository Files are happy with plan #1 and thankful to the God of all grace for it. We cannot recommend Plan #2 at all, but will change our minds when this prayer can be shown to us in the Bible.

The Final Page 13.11

***He Who Promised is Faithful***  
***By Jon W. Quinn***

Things we buy, from laundry detergents to cars, come with guarantees. A guarantee is a contract that makes certain promises. Of course, these promises are only as good as the people making them.

Jesus Christ has also made some guarantees. For example, He promised that He would come again to receive His disciples and take them home to the Father (John 14:1-3). Jesus has always kept His promises in the past - including the most difficult of promises to keep. For example, He promised to rise from the dead. He kept that promise. We have no good

reason to doubt His promise to come again. The Scriptures say, “Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who has promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23).

Jesus made other promises as well. He has promised, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that disbelieves shall be condemned.” (Mark 16:16). We should believe this promise as well. He is trustworthy. He is the Lord. The Savior knows how to save. He has promised victory and eternal life to those that trust Him. He who has promised is faithful!