

Expository Files



Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley - Editors

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The Front Page

By Faith the Walls Fell
By Jon W. Quinn

In Heb. 11:30 the Holy Spirit reminds us of how the conquest of ancient Jericho took place. He says, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days." This event, recorded first in Joshua 6, illustrates that it is only active faith that brings the needed results. The people had to do more than merely believe in their heads that God would give them the city; they had to act in obedience on their belief. They had to meet God's conditions by marching around the city as He had directed them to do. Still, they all recognized it was God's power, not their own, which caused the walls to crumble!

Today, salvation from sin by faith requires God's power, and again is conditioned upon our active faith. People were told to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name for the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38). This obedience, though necessary, does not earn salvation anymore than marching around Jericho merited the falling down of the walls. It is simply the way people are told to act upon their faith in God to forgive. God ordained salvation by His grace and He ordained Israel's victory by grace. In both cases, He required obedience. Both victory and salvation are by God's grace and through His power and accomplished in His own appointed way.

Maintaining a Healthy Body
(Ephesians 4:15-16)

By Jon W. Quinn

Proper exercise and diet are important to maintaining a healthy body. The lack of proper exercise can cause muscles to lose their strength and lead to heart problems. What foods we eat and avoid will also have great effect on the body. So, since this is a very important topic, we are going to consider some important guidelines to follow in order to achieve and maintain better health. If these guidelines are followed, the body will be more sound.

So Many Organs

The body is a very complex organism and there seems to be so many things that can go wrong. A healthy heart does not mean one can see well. Good hearing does not insure that one can breathe easily. A body full of healthy members with the exception of one poorly functioning organ will likely suffer consequences, and one poorly functioning member could easily lead to distress and failure of other members. The body needs all of its parts to be functioning well or else it will suffer from disability of some sort.

Fitted and Held Together

“...but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:15,16).

Well now, the proverbial cat is out of the bag. I have not really been discussing the health and care of the physical body at all, but using the Scriptural analogy of comparing the local church to the body.

In this passage, the body, or local church, is said to be “fitted” together. This means to be fitly framed or joined together into a working arrangement. As the bones are “fitted” into a skeletal system to create a working arrangement, the members of a local church are likewise to be joined together into a working arrangement. The New Testament gives us instructions on exactly what this arrangement is, and we should follow it. This will help the body to maintain good spiritual health and growth.

The passage also describes this body, the church, as being “held together.” This describes the members functioning as a unit.

The bond that holds the body together is supplied by “every joint” and comes from Christ. This occurs through the mutual sharing of faith and confidence with respect and love for one another. It is up to each individual part to make sure it (he or she) is properly nourished and exercised so that the individual member as well as the body may grow (2 Peter 1:5-11).

Growth of a local congregation cannot be any better than the sum total of the growth of its individual parts. Each useless, non active part saps the strength and health from the body. No brother or sister should look upon themselves as unnecessary or render themselves useless.

Consider One Another

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:23-25).

Another ingredient to maintaining the health of the (spiritual) body is for each member to regularly assemble with the saints. There is a need for mutual assistance and encouragement, at least that is what the Lord says though I have heard people who evidently think themselves wiser deny it.

This encouragement, which the Bible also refers to as “edification” is available at the assemblies of Christians, and it is God's will that disciples gather with the local church when it assembles. We need the stimulation to love and good deeds, and we also need to be stimulating others to the same thing (Colossians 3:12-17). When we forsake assembling ourselves together, we hurt ourselves as well as our brethren... and we disobey God.

You Are Christ's Body

“Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:27; cf. vss 14-27).

There are three points made in the context of the above passage for preserving the health of the body.

- a). The body is not one member, but many (v. 14).*
- b). There are many members, but one body (v. 20).*

c). *Christians make up the body, and are individually members of it* (v. 22).

The passage also affirms that there is a divine purpose for each and every member. Though responsibilities, obligations, opportunities and abilities may vary, all are important for the smooth operation, growth and health of the body. By the way, ability plus opportunity equals responsibility in the Lord's kingdom; "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." (Mark 9:41).

The member that is not doing his part is adversely effecting the health of the body. One who would detract from another member's usefulness by considering him/her insignificant forgets that "God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired." (1 Corinthians 12:18). One who considers himself as insignificant is also wrong for the same reason.

If There Is Any Fellowship of the Spirit

"If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus," (Philippians 2:1-5).

The final guideline we will consider to maintaining a healthy (spiritual) body is that of having the same attitude toward our brethren as Christ did. Selfishness and conceit are out. They are as viral infections to the physical body. The antibodies to rid ourselves of the disease are prescribed by the Lord. He prescribes that we maintain the same love and the same mind toward one another, united in spirit, intent on one purpose; to be like Christ in our relationships with others, honoring Him as Lord.

Jesus and the Widow's Son ***(Luke 7:11-17)***

By Wayne S. Walker

Jesus performed many miracles during His earthly ministry. While these miracles did extend a benefit to their recipients, and thus demonstrated Jesus's compassion on mankind, their main purpose was to confirm His claim to being the divine Son of God. He showed power over nature by stilling the tempest and feeding the 5000. He also showed power over disease by healing all kinds of sicknesses and other abnormal physical conditions. He even showed power over Satan by casting out demons. However, some of the most poignant scenes among the miracles of our Lord are where He showed His power over death by raising people to life again.

On such incident is recorded in Luke 7:11-17, where Jesus raised the son of a widow who lived in the city of Nain. Nain was a city of Galilee, on the northwest slope of the Hill of Moreh, the same place where Gideon attacked the Midianites, who had invaded Israel and encamped near there. It is about six miles south of Nazareth, and the name still adheres to the modern village of Nein. We can probably picture this event or at least feel the emotion of it because we have all lost someone to death; not an only son as this woman, but a parent, sibling, other dear relative, or perhaps a close friend. What can we learn from this account of Jesus and the widow's son?

First, we see death in verses 11-12, where the body of a young man who had died was being carried out of the city on a bier or open coffin. Physical death is an appointment that God has made for all mankind, result from the introduction of sin into the world (Genesis 3:17-19). Physical death is not so much a punishment for sin but rather a consequence of the fact that sin exists. It is "appointed for men to die once" (Hebrews 9:27). What is this death? It is more than just a cessation of life, and it is certainly not annihilation or extinction, as some claim. Rather, the basic meaning of the word is "separation." At death, the body and the spirit separate, the body going downward and the spirit returning to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Man is a dual being; the body is dead when the spirit is separated from it (James 2:26).

As undesirable and fearful as physical death can be, there is something worse, which is spiritual death, to be "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). What is this spiritual death? Like physical death, it is a separation, though not of body and spirit but of the soul from God because of sin (Isaiah 59:1-2). It is a problem that all responsible human beings face

because "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Yet, there is something even still worse, and that is the fact that if something is not done about this condition of spiritual death, it will result in eternal death--separation from God in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8). Thus, while we certainly need to make preparations for the time of physical death, we need to be more concerned about the problem of spiritual death. Physical death ends only this life, but spiritual death has consequences for all eternity.

Second, we see sorrow in verse 13 where the mother, a widow, was weeping for her only son. We recognize that physical death brings sorrow because when we lose someone we love, it makes us sad. Many of Solomon's statements in Ecclesiastes (3:1-2, 5:13-16, 7:2-4) emphasize the sadness brought about by death. Even Jesus felt the sorrow of losing a loved one. After Lazarus died, when Jesus saw all the mourning by Martha, Mary, and the others, "Jesus wept" (John 11:32-35). That is why death is referred to as an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:25-26). However, Jesus, by His death, freed us from the fear of death and the bondage that it brings (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Yet, for the Christian, there is another side to death. Yes, we sorrow, but not as others (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Why is our sorrowing different? We know that if one dies in the Lord, it is not just the end of earthly life, but the beginning of something far better (Revelation 14:13). So in such instances, our sorrow is tempered with joy. Just as physical death brings about sorrow, there should be sorrow for spiritual death. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). Jesus is not talking about just mourning for lost loved ones but mourning for sins. It is this godly sorrow that produces repentance unto salvation (2 Corinthians 7:9-10). When we mourn because people are lost to physical death, there is not much else we can do. But when we mourn because of being in a state of spiritual death, it can lead to repentance unto salvation.

Third, we see a resurrection in verses 14-17 where Jesus commanded the young man to arise and he sat up. Why did Jesus raise this individual from the dead? In John 20:30-31 we are told that all of Jesus's miracles that are recorded were written so that we might believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God. Again, this demonstration of Jesus's power certainly brought great comfort to the grieving mother and it also showed Jesus's compassion, but it

had a much greater purpose than that. Notice the reaction of the people--they rightly concluded from this event that a great prophet had arisen.

We have these instances in scripture of physical resurrections, and in like manner God has made it possible for those who are spiritually dead to undergo a spiritual resurrection (Romans 6:3-5). If those who are dead in sin follow the pattern of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection by dying to sin and being buried in baptism, they can rise to walk in newness of life. This gives Christians the hope of a future resurrection from the dead that will result in eternal life. Of course, all, both righteous and wicked, will be raised when the Lord returns (John 5:28-29). However, those who have been raised to walk in newness of life can look forward at the end of time to being raised to be with the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:50-57, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17, 1 John 2:25). Just as Jesus raised this widow's son, someday He will return to raise all the dead and take His people home to be with Him forever.

Funerals are always sad occasions, but Jesus turned this one into a time of joy. We need to be prepared for death, not only in making provisions for our own funeral and burial, but also in making provisions for our souls to escape spiritual death and walk in newness of life, so that when our bodies are raised from the dead, we can have eternal life with Christ in heaven. In order to do this, those who are not yet Christians need to be buried with Christ by baptism into death, and those who have become Christians need to make sure that they walk in newness of life.

The Two Commandments

Matt. 22:34-40

Warren E. Berkley

³⁴*But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”* Matt. 22:34-40

This exchange between Jesus and a lawyer took place during the busy and intense last week before the crucifixion. Various groups of enemies arrayed themselves against Jesus, coming to Him with their challenges and trick questions. He perfectly responded to each one. And His purpose remained, to prepare people for the kingdom, by exposing sin, urging repentance and inviting all to obey God.

In this situation the question was, “which is the great commandment in the law?” This reflects the understanding that they (the Jews) were under law to God, specifically the law of Moses. God had given the nation a comprehensive body of law to govern them, not only spiritually but in their civil existence as a preparatory nation in God’s overall plan. In giving that law, God had said: “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,” (Ex. 19:5,6). Based on that law God gave to the Israelites, the question posed by the lawyer is, “which is the great commandment?”

Jesus responded, not just by picking out two commandments at random. He cited one commandment that pertains directly to man in relationship with His God: **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”** He said, “This is the first and great commandment.” This statement by the Lord identifies a priority that deserves our recognition today. First, get right with God. And don’t miss the totality of this: “Love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the total man loving the total God. God didn’t hold back in giving to us; we shouldn’t hold back in giving to Him. Hendriksen said, “God’s whole-hearted love must not be answered in a half-hearted manner.”

From Pulpit Commentary: “The love of God is the first of all the commandments. We must not be contented with our spiritual state unless we are sincerely and earnestly striving to obey it. The measure of that love is the measure of the whole heart and soul and mind: the heart, the centre of our being; the soul, the seat of the affections and desires; the mind, the home of thought and reason. The love of God must dwell in all these parts of our

complex nature, filling the whole man with its gracious sanctifying influence; we must try to love him with the whole strength of all our highest faculties. Such love, the first duty of the Christian, is also the source of his sweetest, holiest joy. There is no earthly joy like that which flows from the love of those dearest to us; and as the love of God is of all forms of love beyond comparison the highest, so the joy which streams from that love is of all joys unutterably the deepest and the most blessed. It is the foretaste of heaven, for the joy of heaven is to love God perfectly, and to know and feel the great love of God. Peter says that those who love him now ‘rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’ And if that be true of those who now see him not save by faith, what must be the entrancing gladness of those who see him face to face, as he is, in his kingdom?”

But there was another command: **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** This is “like” the first in that love is enjoined (with all that biblical love expresses in attitude and action). This is to be directed to “your neighbor.” This expression is not narrow (the people across the street), but comprehensive of all your fellow human beings (see Lk. 10:25-37 & Gal. 6:10). This means, once we are right with God, that fellowship with God and acceptance of His authority provides a way for us to serve our fellow man in the highest sense. Loving God is first. Once that is settled and because of that, we are equipped to engage ourselves in the best service to others. God first, then others.

It is futile to attempt to serve mankind absent faithfulness to God. “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.” (1 Jno. 4:20-21).

“On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets,” (verse 40). Everything God obligated His people to do, as recorded in the Old Testament, was an extension of either loving God or loving man. There are really two things God requires: (1) to respond proper to Him, and (2) to respond properly to others. Some will ask, *where is self in this?* Loving God as you should (with all that means) will generate a healthy self-concept. And when that love for God prompts appropriate service to your fellowman, you will be loving your neighbor “as yourself.”

God is God, and man is man, so it behooves us to love God and make this our highest priority; out of this love for God, that must develop this healthy and active love for people --- everything else relates to these two basics.

Believe It Or Not...

John 4

Stuart N. Tullis

Maybe you've heard something along these lines: "Christianity is for the weak-minded." Or maybe you heard it a different way: "I know the evidence is against God, but I accept God on faith," or "Oh yeah, I used to believe in God, but then I went to college." Many people perceive that an increase in knowledge leads to a decrease in faith.

Such a statement is fraught with error, yet there are reasons for this perspective:

- Certainly colleges have done a great deal to destroy faith in God, but it is not through learning accurate facts that disprove God as is implied by people. It is through the perversion of the facts by the insertion of opinion as fact.
- Accepting God against all evidence is not Biblical faith. Biblical faith is *not* "blind faith". Faith is built on assimilation of all the evidence and then drawing the correct conclusions (Rom. 10:17). Furthermore, the evidence supports the existence of God, it does not deny such.
- Christianity is for all men (Titus 2:11). In fact, some of the greatest minds of Bible times were converted to Christianity (Paul, Nicodemus^[?], Gamaliel^[?]), and the greatest minds of the ages understood that there must be a God.

John wrote...

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

(John 20:30-31 ESV)

We know that this belief is not mere mental assent, rather a trusting obedient faith in Christ.

You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder!

(James 2:19 ESV)

But do we realize that this belief is not a one time act, but rather a constantly emerging growth of faith in Christ Jesus as Lord?

**Unless our faith is growing,
and the evidence is showing;
hot air we're merely blowing
when to heaven we say we're going!**

John shows throughout the gospel account that bears his name that faith comes by hearing and applying ourselves to learning from Christ. In the fourth chapter, he employs examples to prove that if a faith is not nurtured, it will fail and eventually die out.

Skepticism gives way to belief...

Though a person may be a skeptic at first, through listening to Christ he can develop a living faith. Consider the “Bad Samaritan” in John 4:6-29. She was rather skeptical as she approached the Lord. Here was this Jew traveling through Samaria, and she knew that Jews had nothing to do with Samaritans. Imagine her trepidation as she made her way to the well where He was resting. She was alone, He was alone, and this was uncommon for both. Generally speaking, women went to fetch water together. For some reason, this woman was unaccompanied. Perhaps her reputation in Sychar was such that many or most of the women of the town would have nothing to do with her. On His part, for a Jew to pass through Samaria was strange enough, but for Him to stop at a Samaritan well would be analogous to a “white” man drinking from the “colored” fountain in the 1930's -- it just didn't happen. And beyond this, in a land and time marked by racism between these two groups, a Jewish man would not often be found alone in a Samaritan village. She may have come to the well rather cautiously, as one would skirt slowly around an unfamiliar dog. The setting itself was enough to make a person somewhat skeptical.

But the uneasiness did not relent when He spoke to her. Here He was, a lone Jew in a Sychar, asking a Samaritan woman for a drink from the well. How brazen this man was! From her perspective, this Jew performed in complete accordance in His role as the stereotypical bigot – have nothing to do with the “lesser class” citizens of the land until he needed something. Her reaction displays to us the frustration in her heart. How dare this man ask her for a drink when under other circumstances He would shun her? But as

He continued to speak to her of living water, her first impression faded. Confused by the situation in the first place, and then aggravated by His request, the woman soon found herself intrigued by the words He was relaying to her. He claimed to be able to provide a kind of water that would forever quench one's thirst. Though strange, bold, and unbelievable, there was something remarkable about His statement – or perhaps the manner of His speaking – that piqued her interest.

And so the skeptic surfaced. She pressed this odd man to prove His claim – to lay it all on the table, so to speak. "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." (John 4:15). Like any true skeptic, she demanded proof. Skepticism is the refusal to believe something unless it has been shown to be reasonable. Skepticism pokes, prods, and questions to get to the heart of the matter. His response to her prodding was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. He revealed to her other "unbelievable" truths that convinced her, not that He had "living water", but that He had insight and knowledge beyond what a normal man (Jew or Samaritan) should have. The skeptic began to believe that this man was likely a prophet.

What made her believe? He told her of her life. She had been married five times previously, and was now living in a state of fornication. This Jew knew this. He wasn't familiar with her or the town. It was highly unlikely that anyone else could or would have told Him all these things. The only reasonable conclusion was that He was gifted by God with special knowledge.

This sparking of belief led her to investigate Him further. However, this time, she was willing to listen with ears, not only of the skeptic, but also of the infant believer. Then He told her of God. He answered her question in such a way that displayed His wisdom and put all the pieces of the puzzle into place. Her suspicions regarding this Jew needed only to be confirmed by His admission that He was indeed the long-awaited Messiah.

Her rapidly maturing faith leapt into action at that moment. Leaving her waterpot behind, she ran into the city, convincing the men of Sychar that the Messiah was in their midst. Trepidation turned into courage as her doubt melted away, and she plunged into faithful service to God, convinced by the knowledge she had gained. Her faith stemmed from an honest investigation into the personhood of Jesus.

Belief gives way to doubt...

Not all who claim to believe in Christ have such a vibrant and living faith, however. Initial belief in Jesus as the Son of God sometimes fades, not because it was unfounded in the first place, but because it was not fed and nurtured to grow. Consider Jesus' own disciples in this same chapter. Here they were, believers in Christ who had acted on their faith. They had been converting and baptizing more disciples alongside their Master (John 4:1-2). Once they had arrived at Sychar together, these followers had gone to get food for themselves and their Lord (John 4:8). But they wavered in their faith.

When they returned from fetching food for Jesus, they found Him engaged in a discussion with this Samaritan woman. This astonished them, though they had seen Him in the company of "untouchables" on several occasions. Though they were somewhat confused by this event, none of them dared to ask a question about it (John 4:27). Perhaps they thought they should know better than to address this issue. Perhaps they had seen Simon speak up too often and didn't want to be scolded in front of their peers. Possibly they were just too embarrassed to ask a question about what they did not understand. Whatever the reason, their failure to ask questions, to seek the truth, is evidence to us of the beginning of their disbelief and doubting.

Once the woman had left, the disciples broached the subject of food. "Rabbi, eat" they said (John 4:31). But He had already taken His fill of food for the moment. Again, the disciples wondered about His statement, though they didn't dare ask Jesus directly (John 4:32-33). Yet Jesus addressed their bewilderment by putting their lack of faith on display. While they were busy about finding physical food, He was busy feeding Himself on the harvest of God. His satisfaction was not governed by morsels moving from His mouth to His belly but by His fulfilling His calling from God. While their faith was faltering due to their inactivity in the things of God, others were acting on their faith and reaping a harvest in the kingdom of God (John 3:34-38).

Interest grows into true belief...

One of those "others" was the Samaritan woman the disciples had wondered about, but dared not question. Notice the response of people to her faith. The Samaritans of Sychar were coming out of the city to see Jesus because of the things she had told them. (John 4:30). They had become interested in what they heard and wanted to know more. As they listened to the words of

Jesus over the next couple of days, their initial belief grew and matured into a life-giving faith in Jesus as the Savior of the world (John 4:39-42).

Another person whose interest grew into faith was the Royal Official in Cana (John 4:43-54). He had developed an interest in what he had heard about this Jesus. Quite possibly, He knew about the instance of Jesus changing the water into wine. Evidently, he had heard about Jesus' healing. For these reasons, he wanted Jesus to come with Him. His son was ill and dying and he needed a miracle to save him. His initial belief in Jesus' ability to heal grew into pure faith as he returned home to find his son alive and well – healed at the very hour Jesus had given the word. His whole family believed as well, undoubtedly convinced by the words the official related to them about his encounter with the Messiah.

Where are we in our faith?

Without continuing to hold fast to the truth we find in Scripture, ever learning and reminding ourselves of them, our faith will begin to waver, and we will eventually die. Such an end need not be the case, however. We know that the disciples learned and grew in faith after these experiences and later went out and changed the world with the word of the gospel. If we do continue to learn and apply the truth, our faith will grow more and more, resulting in the reward of eternal life.

Each of us needs to take inventory and evaluate our own faith at this moment...

Do I believe Jesus was a good man, but question His Deity? Do I believe that Christianity is one of many paths to God, but question if it is the only way? Do I believe the Bible is a good book, but question whether it is true? Each of us must search the Scriptures to find reasonable answers for ourselves. Questions are good if they lead to seeking answers. The only dangerous questions are those we refuse to address whether due to fear of embarrassment or lack of diligence (John 4:27,33).

Do I take it for granted that I am a Christian? Have I become immune to Christ by “Jesus Vaccinations”, taking Jesus in such small doses that I never become infected with an enthusiastic, excited faith? Do I remember each day that I was purchased by the blood of Christ? We can prevent ourselves from falling from grace by continuing to search the Scriptures daily, renewing our faith through hearing God's Word. We must not trust that our relationship with Christ makes us impervious to falling. Dig into the Bible

with interest so that we may harvest for the Master (John 4:35-38).

**Unless our faith is growing,
and the evidence is showing;
hot air we're merely blowing
when to heaven we say we're going!**

Let's not be guilty of blowing hot air!

--Stuart N. Tullis
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Plan of Salvation
The Plan of Salvation
By Jon W. Quinn

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*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.

***God: Blue or Pink?***  
***(Special Topic)***  
***By Jon W. Quinn***

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, whenever reference is made to God, a masculine pronoun is used (He, His, Him, etc.). Especially today, when the world is so gender conscious, often seeking to remove all gender distinctions as if both genders can do all things equally well, it goes against the tide to employ masculine pronouns with reference to God.

Some social and religious leaders and writers have attempted to adopt a more gender neutral way of referring to God. Using “He/She” is distracting and quite awkward. “It” certainly does not work and is inaccurate. The U.S. Council of Churches changed the word for Christ's relationship to God from “Son” to “Child.” That's O.K. as long as one does not have much faith in the Bible as God's revelation to begin with, but it just does not work for those of us who believe that all Scripture is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16,17). While it is true, as shall be explained, that the masculine pronouns referring to God are not for the purpose of establishing gender, we should be aware that to speak of Him differently than He has revealed Himself is a dangerous thing. In fact, it would not be the first time people have sought to exchange God as He has revealed Himself to be into something of our own choosing. God does care about that!

**What God Has Revealed**

We must not simply accept that which is politically correct at the expense of Biblical loyalty. Remember the Proverb: “There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). Speculation and presuming what may be pleasing to God is unnecessary and dangerous. We can know for certain what pleases God in this regard without having to guess. If we just refer to God the way the Scriptures do, then we know we are right (1 Corinthians 2:10-14).

Remember; God is far beyond our abilities to grasp all that He is, so we must not give Him attributes we wish or think He might have, else we



give Him attributes He neither possesses or desires (Isaiah 55:8,9; Psalm 50:21; Romans 1:21-23).

Of the proper names with which God has identified Himself to us, every single one of them are masculine. There is Yahweh (or, Jehovah); Elohim, Shaddai, Sebboath, Adonai; Kurios and Theos). There are no Scriptural exceptions to this.

Also, masculine metaphors are frequently applied to God, such as “Father” or “King”. Jesus likened God to a loving father. And Jesus, Himself, God incarnate, is the Son; Prophet, Shepherd, King, Priest and Bridegroom. However, it must be admitted that in describing His attributes (such as His ability to comfort) sometimes feminine metaphors are used (“like a mother”). But again, the pronouns (He, His, Him) are exclusively masculine when used referring to God outside of metaphors describing His attributes.

### **Those Feminine Metaphors**

The Bible plentifully uses all kinds of metaphors. For example, Jesus is the Lamb of God (John 1:29). This is a metaphor. Jesus is not a literal Lamb. He is also the door (John 10:9). We understand that though a door is an “it” that referring to Jesus by the metaphor does not mean He is an “it”. Metaphors do not work that way.

In the Civil War, there was a confederate general called “Stonewall” Jackson. A stone wall is an “it” but that did not mean the general was an “it”. He was still a “he”. A single parent might be referred to as “both mother and father” to a child, but this does not tell us the gender of the parent.

Metaphors are not used to identify gender in everyday life and neither do they in the Bible (see Isaiah 42:14; 46:3; 49:15; 66:13 and Luke 15:8-10). We remember Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem and saying: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.” But Jesus was not here identifying Himself as female poultry. But that is the reasoning some use today who want to refer to God as “she”.

### **Gender is Biological, Not Spiritual**

Gender is a strictly biological characteristic. God is not biological. He is not male. The use of masculine pronouns are not for the purpose of establishing a sexual identity. God is neither male nor female, God is God. He is eternal. He is our eternal spiritual uncreated Creator (Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 102:27; 1 Timothy 1:17). He is not of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). God is not a man (Numbers 23:19).

So then, why does God so consistently describe Himself with masculine pronouns? And why are other masculine terms so often used, and masculine proper names always used? God has determined that “Fatherhood” best describes in human terms what He did in creation. He did not “give birth to” creation, but “begat it.” It was not created within Him, but He created it.

### **Honoring God By Accepting His Choice**

“He” or “She”... Does it matter? Absolutely. Why? Because faith accepts the things of God as He gives them. It is entirely accurate for me to say that God comforts His children as a mother comforts her young ones, but not for me to refer to God as “she.” It is not man that chose to use masculine pronouns and names for God, but God has done so. It is a matter of Divine inspiration! It is God breathed! God has revealed Himself on the pages of Divine inspiration with these names He has chosen and with the use of masculine personal pronouns.

Something else here: God did not choose masculine pronouns for Himself because men were better than women. Men of faith understand that we are sinners in need of a Savior in exactly the same measure as women. Neither gender can save themselves and neither are without need for the grace of God. There is no room for pride that God chose “He” and “Him” to refer to Himself. This is not a commendation of the goodness or worthiness of men as opposed to women.

One final point: Jesus is our example. We are to follow Him as His disciples. We are to learn from Him how to please God. It is correct to address God and talk of Him the way Jesus did. It is right to go to God in prayer with thee words, or ones similar to them: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.' (Matthew 6:9; see also Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 16:25-28).

The best defense I can make for referring to God with these names and pronouns has nothing to do with gender recognition but rather with inspired revelation. One of the greatest evils is to take God as He has revealed Himself and change it to something else. That is where idolatry came from, and the worship of sun, moon and stars. Far better to worship the true and living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

## *Final Page*

### *How Do You See Yourself?*

*Warren E. Berkley*

A.W. Tozer was precise and scripturally correct when he said: “Self-knowledge is so critically important to us in our pursuit of God and His righteousness that we lie under heavy obligation to do immediately whatever is necessary to remove the disguise and permit our real selves to be known.”

Central to all your character and conduct is your self-concept. This simply means how you see yourself, knowing who you are. You must avoid an unhealthy preoccupation or obsession with self. Subjective distortions can be detrimental. But there is an awareness of yourself and perception of who you are that is central to your potential. It is important to be strong and clear about who you are. Perhaps these inquiries will find a place in forming and maintaining clarity in your knowledge of who you are.

**Do you see yourself as a giver or taker?** Actually each of us are takers (receivers), for we are the unworthy recipients of the generosity of God evident in our very existence (Acts 17:28). Christians are recipients of the grace of God and Christ, “through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life,” (Titus 3:5b-7). Each of us, therefore, are takers (receivers, partakers). But in another sense the question ought to be weighed: *Do you have greater interests in taking than giving?* That goes to character. The teaching of Acts 20:35 is germane to this. “...And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’.” The generosity of Jesus’ character & teaching ought to become our purpose, so that we are focused on giving not taking. (See also Rom. 12:8; Isa. 32:8; 2 Cor. 8:2).

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

*JOHN WESLEY (1703–1791)*

**Do you see yourself as a victim or perpetrator?** There is a bothersome grumbling seen in people, always blaming others, pointing to circumstances and claiming to be victims. The cry (spoken or implied) is: “Everybody else is wrong. Everybody else is incorrect. Everybody else should take responsibility. Everybody should see and acknowledge my purity and know how unfairly I’m treated!” This is childish. It will help us – when things happen and generally in life – to prayerfully and cautiously evaluate if we were victimized or did we perpetrate the event or events. If you fall into the habit of dogmatically claiming to be the victim, this reflects an absence of humility. Assuming you never do anything wrong is a wrong approach. We are not always victims! We must not always and immediately come to our defense. Sometimes we are perpetrators! In fact, we are all perpetrators in this sense: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Rom. 3:23). There is great value in humble self-examination.

**Do you see yourself as a servant or a master?** The Lord’s disciples, in their early days of coming to grips with the truth, sought greatness and vanity. Jesus responded by using a child to teach these grown men the humility they hadn’t yet embraced (Matt. 18:1-5). A few days later, the same ambition showed itself. Jesus responded again: “And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many,” (Matt. 20:27,28).

Oswald Chambers has said: “If you are going to live for the service of your fellowmen, you will certainly be pierced through with many sorrows, for you will meet with more base ingratitude from your fellowmen than you would from a dog. You will meet with unkindness and two-facedness, and if your motive is love for your fellowmen, you will be exhausted in the battle of life. But if the mainspring of your service is love for God, no ingratitude,

no sin, no devil, no angel, can hinder you from serving your fellowmen, no matter how they treat you. You can love your neighbor as yourself, not from pity, but from the true centering of yourself in God.”

Ultimately, all our inquires into self need to answer the question: Am I a child of God, or a child of the devil? Because of what Jesus Christ did, you can become a child of God; you can use the Word of God to know yourself, improve yourself and give of yourself to the Creator, to the Savior, to your family, your brethren and your fellowman.