

# Expository Files

Editors: Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley

---



EF 14.3  
March 2007

Front Page

## *Grieving Without Leaving* *by Warren E. Berkley*

{Hand a copy of this article to people you know who have “left the church” because of their disgust or disappointment over a member who failed.}

Every group is composed of people who may or may not live up to the principles or ethics generally held by the group. The failure of a member does not mean the principles of the group are invalid. It only means the guilty member has failed to live by the principles.

If a plumber commits murder, we should not suspect all plumbers. Nor should we think that the plumbing business or industry no longer has any credibility. {When the water runs out all over your kitchen floor, you’ll probably still call a plumber.}

If a government official is caught in scandal, we are not justified in thinking that government no longer has any place in society. Or that all this man’s associates are wicked. We understand, one person failed.

If an educator turns out to be perverse and evil, there is no reason to think the guilty teacher represented all educators in the crime. If a mother kills her children, it is not reasonable to think any less of motherhood. When one astronaut acts out irrational fury, that doesn’t reflect on all others who have that profession.

If a local preacher or elder commits adultery or otherwise brings disgrace on himself, can we conclude that all the principles taught and practiced by that group suddenly have no value? The misbehavior of one member of a group does not mean the ethics/principles of the group are worthless.

We should learn to appropriately grieve over the sin of individuals, without leaving what is good and right. With every failure in character we witness or hear about, our response really shows our character, our objectivity and our commitment.

Our commitment is to God! In fulfilling that commitment, we are brought into relationship with people united with us in that commitment, but they are creatures of choice, fallible and sometimes hypocritical. That sad reality doesn't argue against the principle of the group.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified,” (Acts 20:32). {See also, Acts 26:18; Rom. 6:17; 14:12; 1 Thess. 1:9 & 4:1.}

Additional Note - If you think “conservative” or “non-institutional” congregations have some common allegiance or unity that yields corruption, you are simply wrong, in my judgment. When preachers or elders fail, they didn't fail because they were once committed to New Testament authority. They failed because they abandoned that commitment in their personal lives. And if you think “we” are the only “groups” suffering with this, you are reasoning from the sin of a few against the righteousness of many. Denominational churches, institutional churches and every religious group witnesses cases of hypocrisy, fraud, exits from the closet, etc. It always shows the failure of the individual. Our challenge is to learn godly grief, help the sinner in every proper way, and not just leave. The later behavior is like the proverbial, “pick up my marbles and go home.” That's typical of children, but too often of adults.

***Hunger And Thirst?***  
***(2 Cor. 11:27)***  
***Warren E. Berkley***

Though it was utterly distasteful and against his preferred use of ink and time, Paul responded to the charges of his critics in Corinth. And in that defense of his apostleship he said that he acted in response to his Lord “in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and third, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness...,” (2 Cor. 11:27).

When I came to that passage recently, preparing for a Bible class, I stopped and made an immediate assessment of my blessings. It was cold and wet outside, but I was in my warm home/office. I had a cup of cold water on my desk (with coffee available); a nicely bound Bible in front of my keyboard, using one of the latest Dell desktop computers. And a few minutes after my study session, I went to meet someone for lunch, invited to order anything I wanted on the menu. I drove to that appointment in a late model van.

I should be well aware, I’ve never suffered hunger or thirst. Water, food and warmth is relatively easy for most of us (exceptions granted).

How many preachers in this nation today, are persecuted to the point of starvation? What about hostile mobs following preachers, seeking to kill them? (I understand, in other societies today and in many third-world countries, these sufferings may be real, though not common.) In our existence in America, few if any preachers are suffering to the extent that was real and daily for Paul.

Thank God for that. But never assume it will always be this way.

“You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin,” (Heb. 12:4).

### ***“ARE WE BLIND ALSO?” (John 9)***

***Kevin Kay***

That was the question that the Pharisees asked Jesus after He healed the blind man (Jn. 9:40). A careful study of John 9 reveals that there were several “blind” people in this story.

The blind man was physically blind. However, he moves from physical blindness to physical sight to spiritual insight. In the beginning he knew that “a man called Jesus” had healed him (v. 11). When the Pharisees questioned him, he declared his belief that Jesus must be “a prophet” (v. 17).

Later on he implies that Jesus must be a man from God (vv. 31-33). Finally he comes to see Jesus as “the Son of God” and as “Lord” (vv. 35-38), and he worships Jesus. What about you? Have you come to see Jesus as, not just a prophet or a man from God, but as the Son of God and Lord?

The apostles were blinded by their own preconceived ideas. When they saw the blind man, they didn’t ask “Why was this man born blind?” Instead they asked “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (v. 2). Their question was based on the presupposition that all suffering is the direct result of sin. Now, it is certainly true that all suffering is the indirect result of sin (i.e. Adam and Eve’s sin in the very beginning). It is also true that much of the suffering in this world is the direct result of sin (cf. Pr. 23:29-35). However, it is not true that all suffering is the direct result of sin, and Jesus’ response, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned...” (v. 3), confirms this truth. It is perhaps impossible for us to be completely unbiased, but we all need to recognize the fact that preconceived ideas can blind us to the truth. “ARE WE BLIND ALSO?”

Some of the neighbors were blinded by an anti-supernatural bias. Even though they had seen the blind man countless times, some had trouble recognizing him after he was healed (Jn. 9:8-9). Why? Evidently they didn’t believe in miracles. This is still a problem today. The British evolutionist, Sir Arthur Keith admitted perhaps more than he realized when he said: “Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable!” What about you? Have you thrown the miraculous out the window before you even begin to investigate the claims of Jesus? “ARE WE BLIND ALSO?”

The Pharisees were blinded by their own man-made traditions (Jn. 9:13-34). Because Jesus had healed the blind man on the Sabbath, the Pharisees just knew He couldn’t be from God. However, it was not God’s law concerning the Sabbath that Jesus had broken, but their man-made traditions. Yes, God had forbidden work on the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-10), but the Pharisees went to ridiculous extremes in defining just what activities constituted work. Yet even they believed that some activity was permitted on the Sabbath, like rescuing an animal from a pit (Mt. 12:11-12; Lk. 14:5) or circumcising a male baby (Jn. 7:22-23). Furthermore, it was certainly right to do good on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:12). What about you? Do you have religious traditions that come from men and not God? “ARE WE BLIND ALSO?”

The parents were blinded by fear (Jn. 9:19-23). When the Pharisees interviewed the blind man's parents, they admitted that he was their son and that he had been born blind, but they refused to admit anything about his healing. John explains that they did this because they were afraid of being "put out of the synagogue." What about you? Are you ever blinded by fear? Do you ever do things (that you really don't want to do) or fail to do things (that you know you really should do), because you're afraid of being "kicked out of the church"? "ARE WE BLIND ALSO?"

The Pharisees were further blinded by arrogant certainty. They refused to believe that the blind man had been healed, simply because it didn't fit their man-made traditions (Jn. 9:13-16a), and they interviewed the blind man's parents and the blind man once again (Jn. 9:18-34), hoping to find some plausible way to explain away an obvious miracle. Their arrogant certainty is evidenced by the following statements: "We know that this Man is a sinner!" (Jn. 9:24b); "You are His disciple, but we are Moses disciples" (Jn. 9:28); "We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from" (Jn. 9:29); "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" (Jn. 9:34). What about you? Could you be blinded by arrogant certainty? Do you ever dismiss the teaching of others without even giving it a fair hearing, because you know that you're right and you couldn't possibly be wrong? "ARE WE BLIND ALSO?"

***How to be Useless Without Really Trying***  
***Matthew 25:14-30***  
***By Jon W. Quinn***

Perhaps the title should be "How To Be Useless By Not Really Trying." Jesus teaches us that weak efforts in His kingdom produces weak results and no reward. This is certainly one of the lessons of the "parable of the talents" which is going to be the focus of this article. Here's how Jesus put it:

*"For it (the kingdom - J.Q.) is just like a man about to go on a long journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. And he gave to one five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. Immediately the one who had received five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. But he who had received the one talent went away*

*and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. And the one who had received five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one who had also received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.' But the master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore, take the talent away from him, and give it to the one who has ten talents.' For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 25:14-30).*

### **So, What is a "Talent?"**

"And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on a journey." (Matthew 25:15). Which weighs more; a talent of feathers or a talent of gold? The answer is that they both weigh the same. They both weigh a talent. Many mistakenly think a talent is money, but actually it is a weight. You can have a talent of copper, silver or gold. A talent of gold is worth far more than a talent of silver, which is worth more than a talent of copper. We are not really sure (despite some figures people give to estimate the value) what the monetary value of these talents that Jesus is talking about is because He does not tell us if they are silver talents or gold talents. But that's fine because the monetary value isn't important other than to say that these talents were worth a lot either way.

## **Identifying the Symbols**

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to...For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his own possessions to them." (Matthew 25:1, 14). Jesus is describing some aspects of the nature of the kingdom of heaven in the previous parable and verse 14 shows that this parable is about the same thing. Specifically, Jesus has been speaking of the importance of being prepared for His return. Given that background, it becomes easy to identify the different parts of this parable:

1. The Master would be Jesus. He has left us but will come again. He expects certain things of us, loyalty and dedication to name two of them.
2. The talents would be the opportunities we have to serve the Lord. Not all of us have the same opportunities or abilities. Jesus does not expect performance out of us of which we are incapable, but He does expect us to do what we can.
3. The slaves would be us. We owe everything we are to the Lord. We belong to Him.
4. The accounting would be the judgment. Notice how quickly the Lord commends and rewards the dedicated slaves. He is eager to exalt us to glories now unimaginable. However, He is also capable of judgment and wrath if we are content to waste our lives for whatever reason.

## **Pondering the Parable**

"To everyone that has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one that does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away." (Matthew 25:29). Now, taken out of it's context, the above verse does not seem very fair. But taken in context, we find that it is pretty much the way things always work. "Use it or lose it." some would say today. "I'm outa practice." explains the athlete who has just dropped the ball. "I used to know how to play this song." says the piano player sitting down at a piano for the first time in a long time. I am afraid there are a lot of "outa practice" members of the church! Can anyone in that situation read this parable without it hitting home like a sledgehammer? "And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

**There are several other points worth elaborating on:**

1. The first two slaves belong to the same group. They are both good and faithful. That is an important point to make. One had more ability and therefore was given more opportunity. His responsibility increased with his increased ability, and because of his success even more opportunity was afforded him. But the master was equally pleased with the two talent man. Why? Because he also did the best with what he had. They are both commended and invited to enter into the joy of your master. The Lord requires more out of those whom He has given more. Men are not equal in ability, but they can be equal in effort! How much has He given to you?
2. The third man failed not because he only had one talent but because he did not try. He wasted that with which he had been blessed. Though only given one talent, he could have acted heroically by taking a little and doing a lot. Have you ever noticed how much even the world admires a man or woman who overcomes the odds and struggles on to victory? God loves to do things like that with His people to His own glory and honor. To take the weak and poor and do wonderful things. But to not to try is to fail.
3. Defending the indefensible will fail. Can one stand before God on the day of judgment and win a debate on why he or she should be allowed to go to heaven in spite of laziness, neglect and waste? Will any of us be able to plead that we were much too busy with things more important that we couldn't pray, study, assemble with the saints, encourage others, teach, assist, give, work as much as we should have. The one talent man said he was afraid. Will we say that we were afraid? Ignorant? Misguided? Foolish? Unable? Quite simply, there is no excuse for wasted lives made up of wasted moments when we were too busy with other things and not busy enough with His.
4. God has placed His trust in you. Often we talk of placing our trust in God. But in this parable the master is told, "Master, you entrusted five talents to me..." What has the Lord put in your trust? What abilities and opportunities? What associations with others such as family and neighbors? All these things are ours because God has confidence in us. If we respond as we ought to His trust, then we will find eternal victory. We, too, will one day hear the words that will far exceed in importance all others: "enter into the joy of your Master."



***The Importance of the Death of Christ in the Plan of Salvation***  
***Hebrews 2:5-18***  
***By Wayne S. Walker***

The writer of the book of Hebrews begins his argument that the New Testament system of Christ is superior to the Old Testament law of Moses by pointing out in chapter 1 that because Christ is the divine Son of God He is so much better than the angels through whom the Old Testament law was given to Moses. However, in chapter 2, he goes on to point out that this One who was so much better than the angels was made lower than the angels. In verses 5 through 8, he quotes from Psalm 8 that man was made a little lower than the angels, then points out that Christ was also made a little lower than the angels. In other words, He became a man, a human being.

Why? "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (verse 9). The reason given here is "for the suffering of death." The inspired writer is setting up the basis for his later argument that the sacrifices of animals in the Old Testament were insufficient to forgive sin, so it would take the sacrifice of something greater. Basically saying that Jesus became a man to die for our sins. Thus this passage emphasizes the importance of the death of Christ in the plan of salvation.

First, in verse 9, it says that Jesus had to die for everybody, "that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Jesus Himself had pointed out that God would give His Son for the whole world, telling Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). Why was this necessary? It was because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). What makes this fact even worse is that there are severe consequences to sin. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). Yet, even as Paul mentions the gift of God, the Bible teaches that God loves us enough to have had Jesus lay down His life for the sins of everyone. "By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us..." (1 Jn. 3:16). This is why it was necessary that He by the grace of God should taste death for everyone.

Second, in verse 10, the passage says that the aim of making the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings (referring to His death) was for Him to bring many sons to glory. This may refer to the fact that all human beings are the offspring (sons or children) of God, physically speaking, because He is the Father of our spirits (Acts 17:28, Heb. 12:9). This would mean that God wants to make a way for all His offspring or all human beings to be saved from sin. It might also refer to the fact that those who are saved from sin are born again through the word of God and hence become the spiritual children of God (1 Pet. 1:23, 1 Jn. 3:1-3). However, either way we look at it, we must understand that the death of Jesus Christ was necessary in order for this to happen because it was He who "loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. 1:4-6). Just as one goal of the captain of a ship is to bring the passengers to safety, so Jesus as the captain of our salvation has as His aim to bring many sons to glory.

Third, in verse 14, the passage says that through His death, Christ has destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. After Adam and Eve had sinned, it had been prophesied that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:16). This has universally been understood as a prophecy of the Messiah who would come to destroy the devil. Jesus Himself understood that His mission involved conquering Satan. In Matt. 12:22-29, He said that His power over the demons demonstrated that He had first bound "strong man." In Lk. 10:17-18, when the seventy returned having cast out demons, Jesus said that He saw Satan falling as lightning from heaven. This was not something that had taken place before the world began but was going on right then as Christ was involved in conquering Satan. Both Jn. 12:27-31 and 16:7-11 also make reference to the casting out or judgment of the prince or ruler of this world that was soon to come. This is exactly what Jesus did "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn. 3:8). The devil's power over mankind, which brings the fear of death, is through sin, but by His death Jesus makes possible the forgiveness of sin, thus destroying the power of death and releasing those who receive His forgiveness from the fear of death.

Fourth, in verse 17, the passage says that His death has made reconciliation or propitiation for the sins of the people. The verb translated "make reconciliation" in the King James Version or "make propitiation" in the New King James Version was used among the Greeks to mean to make

the gods propitious or to appease them, since their good will was not conceived as their natural attitude but something to be earned. This use of the word is foreign to the Bible. In the Old Testament, the concept was related to the atonement that was made for the sins of the people with the animal sacrifices (cf. Lev. 16:8-22). Of course, these sacrifices pointed forward to the time when Christ would come to make complete atonement for the sins of the world. Thus, in the New Testament, the concept of "propitiation" always refers to the fact that God is propitiated through the provision that He made in the sacrifice of Christ to show mercy and make possible the remission of sins. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood..." (Rom. 3:24-25). We must conclude, then, that the death of Jesus Christ was what made it possible for the scriptures to call Him "the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 2:1-2, 4:10). Because He made propitiation for our sins, we can have reconciliation with God

God created us to be in fellowship with Him, but all of us have sinned and broken that fellowship. Yet, God--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--loved us enough that, even though we deserved eternal punishment for our sins, God sent His Son, who was so much better than the angels, to be made lower than the angels that He might die for our sins, bring us to glory, destroy the power of the devil, and make propitiation with the Father. However, while God's gift of salvation is free in that He does not require us to do anything to make atonement, it is not unconditional. He has revealed certain commands in His word that we must obey to show that we are willing to submit our wills to His in accepting His offer of remission of sins. This is why the Hebrew writer goes on to say about the death of Christ, "Though He was a son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:8-9). Have you obeyed Him?

wswalker310@juno.com

Topic Page:

***Saved by Falling?***

***Warren E. Berkley***

“Anxious, but still not panicked, he began to backtrack, but slipped and fell on the rock scree. Stumbling, he fell again. Far from hurting him, the falls might have saved his life because they woke him up to the seriousness of his situation,” (Field & Stream, Feb., 2007, p.#52).

This excerpt is from the Field & Stream cover story about Bill Helfferich, as told by Keith McCafferty. Last October (2006), Helfferich went into the Idaho White Cloud Mountains on an elk hunt for the day. He didn't come out until almost a week later, “and if it weren't for his level head and remarkable survival skills, he probably wouldn't have come out at all.” When the lost hunter fell, he considered that stumbling to be helpful, in alerting him to the seriousness of his lost condition.

It should never be your purpose to fall, to sin or fail. Your resolve should be aimed at walking upright with God every day and moving closer to Him. “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble,” (1 Pet. 1:10).

If you do fall, that can become your moment of alert. The fall tells you that you are in trouble. The fall can cause you to soberly assess location and execute a better plan, seek help, do better. Someone has said, the failure is not in falling but in staying down.

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall,” (1 Cor. 10:12).

## **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.

## Final Page

### The Resurrection Foretold By Jon W. Quinn

Ancient prophecies had foretold of both the death and the resurrection of Jesus. Seven hundred years before Jesus' birth the prophet Isaiah had stated that the Messiah would die, and yet, that His days would also be prolonged after His death. Consider some excerpts from Isaiah's prophecy: "His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death... He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand... My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great... Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:9-12).

It was difficult for God's people before Christ to reconcile all these statements - a Messiah who was put to death and yet whose days would be prolonged and prosper. The Psalmist had added that He would not remain in the grave very long (Psalm 16:7-11).

Jesus Himself got very plain about the events that would occur at Jerusalem - He would be killed but He would also rise from the grave (Matthew 16:21). These prophecies from Isaiah, from the Psalmist and many others, as well as from Jesus Himself came to pass.

It is the resurrection of Christ that is the foundation of the Christian's hope and confidence. The Scriptures state that Jesus "was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead." (Romans 1:4). The Christian has not committed his love, loyalty and trust to a corpse, but to a living Savior. Jesus' death proved His great love for us, and His resurrection proved His great power. We have good reason to submit our lives to His will. The Bible says, "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all... that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.." (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

The same prophets of old who spoke about the Redeemer's resurrection also spoke of the spiritual resurrection, or renewal to come. If we are truly confident in our Redeemer, then our faith will be seen in our lives. The Bible says, "... knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him... Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:9,11).

A full faith in the resurrection is strong motivation to transform one's life according to the gospel. It is not enough just to pretend to believe. We must be compelled by the love Christ has had for us to make His will our own. How sad to settle for less than the full measure of the blessings of God in Christ.