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RESTORATION TIMES

THE SPIRIT WORLD EXPLAINED

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MODERN WORSHIP HAS LOST ITS WAY

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FRONT COVER: Photo of spiritual Monk representing the misunderstanding of spiritualism. iStock photo

Restoration Times expounds the close ties between the Old and New Testaments. We teach the continuity and harmony that extend from Yahweh's actions anciently down through His present activity in Yahshua the Messiah. This was also the conviction of the early New Testament Assembly.

This publication is sent free of charge, made possible through the tithes and offerings of those who desire to see the truth of Scripture restored in our day.

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Modern Worship Has Lost Its Way

by **Alan Mansager**

A spiritual malaise is plaguing many ministries today, which is leading to a widespread decline in church attendance.

Eighty percent of churches are stagnant or losing membership. A 2013 Pew Research survey found that only 37 percent of Americans attend church regularly. Three in 10 say they never or rarely go. Ask most pastors what percentage of inactive members they have–they'll say anywhere from 40 percent to 60 percent.

When I was a youth it seemed as if everyone went to church. The result of that general religious environment was a more law-abiding society and a culture in which people showed more care and concern for one another.

User Friendly 'Worship'

In treating the symptoms of declining attendance rather than the cause, many ministries are switching from Bible-based teachings to pleasing the congregation any way they can just to fill their pews.

Today's church culture has tried to become user friendly through milquetoast teachings. It's called seeker-sensitive. The aim is to find ways to make attendance attractive and entertaining–competing with Disneyland, Hollywood, and Broadway.

Many larger ministries are turning to consumer business models. They take surveys to give the congregation what they want. And what they want is a Starbucks in the vestibule. And to hold services at Buffalo Wild Wings, as one church has started doing. Provide youth areas with Xboxes and three-tiered playgrounds, and run live social media feeds during worship. Many ministries today have lost touch with their whole purpose.

The Apostle Paul was very concerned about today's lack of Bible teaching. He prophesied about it to the young Timothy in 2Timothy 4:2:

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Fables is *moothos* in the Greek, meaning a fictional tale.

Clearly we are seeing the fulfillment of this prophecy today. How many churchgoers are truly interested in the pure, unadulterated Word in our culture? How many hunger for sound doctrine and desire above all to conform to it?

Many Reasons for Today's Attendance

Motives for church attendance are all over the map. Most of them have little to do with the Scriptures.

The following are seven key reasons people attend church today.

- A majority go to church because it is all about them. They go to feel good, and feel good about themselves. Many are looking for entertainment, and if they find their church getting boring, they shop around.
- A second reason many attend is to socialize. They go to touch base with friends or to find new ones. They see it as a

club or like a stop at the corner cafe.

- A third reason is all about the pastor: they like his charisma, or his speaking style, or maybe he's a good singer. Or else they are drawn to his friendliness. Or to his family. Or they like the prestige of going to his big, impressive church building.
- Many attend for the sake of their children. They like the youth programs. For many it is all about youth activities. If the youth program changes or dies, they go church shopping.
- For others it is all about networking. They go for business contacts, or to schmooze with prospective employers who attend there.
- Some simply have never been anywhere else and do not know any different. They grew up in their church, have always attended there, and will die going there. Others attend a church half-heartedly only because a spouse or friend wants them to. Some go just to ease their guilt. They show up a couple times a year, usually around the pseudo-holy days.

Most all of these are self-centered reasons for worship in the 21st century: it's all about me. Does this church fit me and how do I look in it. Like shopping for a coat.

- The last reason some attend church today is to find truth. Not meaning to be cynical here, but I call this the last reason not just because it's last on my list, but because it is fast becoming the least popular motive for weekly attendance.

Those in this category sincerely want to honor, serve, and please the Creator they worship. They know that their salvation depends on it and are willing to make whatever life changes are necessary toward that end, even hard things like humbly repenting of their sins and living a different life as shown in the Word.

Those with hearts desiring to serve Yahweh are the ones who will one day serve as priests in His Kingdom, if they stay faithful to Him.

Considering the popularity of all the other reasons, going to church in an earnest desire to find and follow truth probably will never rise above its last-place status today. Not until Yahshua returns, at least.

Dedication Soon to Be Enforced

When that time comes this list will be turned on its head as everyone will worship in sincerity and truth–or else. All other self-centered, superficial reasons will be unacceptable.

Yahshua said in John 4:23: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. Yahweh is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

True devotion that pleases Yahweh is serious business. It is not about the worshiper but all about the One who is worshiped. It is about giving Him the honor

He demands by living His Word.

Back in the day, attending services for the sole purpose of worship would not even be a question. Only a few decades ago many more churchgoers searched the Scriptures in a sincere desire to get their lives and worship right. They read their Bibles and knew intuitively that devotion was all about truth and conforming to it.

Far more had hearts hungering to learn what the Bible taught and especially–and this is key–to change their lives and follow what Yahweh expected of them.

Today that kind of conviction is dying. Paul warned about this very thing that was also happening in his day. He said, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Messiah unto another good news: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the good news of Messiah. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other good news unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Galatians 1:6-8.

Note that Paul was so resolute about this problem that he repeated it to make sure his point was clearly understood. Verse 9: "As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other good news unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

The prophet Jeremiah, thousands of years ago, also pinpointed this issue in an amazingly accurate prophecy for our day. In 5:31 he writes, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

This dedicated prophet says that both prophet and priest falsify the Scriptures and the people love it. They tell the people what they want to hear, not what they need to hear. And then he asks, what are you going to do when it's all over? What's going to happen when you are held to account and made to answer for yourselves?

Never neglect to preach and teach the unadulterated Word, he says. Don't abandon the very reason you minister. Paul speaks directly to ministries in our day in Galatians 1:10, "For do I now persuade men, or Elohim? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Messiah."

Right worship is not supposed to be easy. It is supposed to change hearts and behavior from sin to righteousness. The Assembly is a refuge of truth in a desperate world. It's a hospital for the ailing spirit.

Don't be a people pleaser and don't

let public pressure change your message. We are called to preach the Word when it is convenient and when not. It is Yahweh who draws willing hearts. It is up to Him to summon the obedient into His family.

Paul said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but Yahweh gave the increase." Yahweh determines who will be called to hear and obey the message.

For Many, Progress Stops at Conviction

We are facing an age-old dynamic. Many who hear our message on television, online, or in our publications are intrigued by what we teach. But just like the Greeks listening to Paul on Mar's Hill, a majority are only curious and once their curiosity is satisfied, they fade away.

When it comes to taking newfound understanding of truth to heart by putting the Bible's clear teachings into practice, that's where dedication typically nosedives. We counsel people at baptism that they now must be faithful to the Sabbath and Feasts the rest of their lives. They are making a permanent commitment and living a new and different life now, with Yahweh coming first in everything. It is a covenant they make with Him. This is basic, and only those willing to do that are going to be chosen for the Kingdom.

No Lasting Satisfaction in World

Many find their fulfillment in this present world. Paul had a short-term follower named Demas who also had too much love for this world. Love not the world, John wrote, nor the things in it. If you do, then the love of Yahweh is not in you.

Yahshua's parable of the sower is a reprimand for the weak of will. The seed sprouts but then dies out. It requires too much sacrifice to change their lives. They are happy with the status quo. They are comfortable in their sins. Or at least not uncomfortable enough to repent of them, which means change their lives, and be blessed by Yahweh.

But when things begin to heat up, worldly pursuits will mean nothing. That day will reflect the same short-term change in attitudes in our nation that followed the attacks on 9-11, when people feared the future and frivolities faded fast.

A lack of commitment to Him leads Yahweh to say, "I never knew you, depart from me. You have no deep regard for me. You never took me seriously when you had all the opportunity to do so. You didn't have time for me when you pursued your worldly goals."

False teachings have led millions to count on winning the Prize by doing nothing but believe. They want salvation but apparently not enough to run the race. Yahshua hates the something-for-nothing attitude. He was clear when He said that to live by the Word would not be a walk down Easy Street. He said those who follow the Scriptures would not win any popularity contests. He promised, "In the world you will have tribulation."

Today's popular perception is that you can be blessed with health, wealth, and prosperity just by claiming a belief. As 2Timothy 4 tells us, that is fiction. Only in the life to come will true blessings reign. Yet, the trials that always come with obedience are nothing compared with the blessings in Kingdom life. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," Romans 8:18.

Paul wrote in 2Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live piously in Messiah Yahshua shall suffer persecution."

Committing Your Life Is the Whole Key

If the whole point and purpose of learning truth is to apply it, as the Scriptures abundantly teach, why the lack of commitment to do that today? Learning without doing is just a mental exercise, in Yahweh's eyes a waste of time.

If you agree that the Sabbath is the seventh day, but continue doing your chores, shopping, and golfing on Saturday, then you are no better off than the heathen. If you agree with Scripture that the Feasts are the only holidays commanded by Yahweh and kept in both Old and New testaments, and made for all His people in every era, but you never observe them with His body of believers, then your endorsement is pointless and useless.

Knowledge without real-life application will get you nowhere.

If you have proved the sacred Names of the Father and Son and correctly recognize that only in His Name do you find salvation, Acts 4:12, but you don't commit to calling on, and worshiping in, His Name, then you may as well disavow it.

If we really respect Yahweh, if we actually serve Him as we say, then we will honor His Name as He commands: "I am Yahweh: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images," Isaiah 42:8.

His name appears in the Old Testament's source manuscripts 6,823 times. That should be enough to prove its importance, shouldn't it?

James in 4:17 says enlightenment is serious business: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Knowing Yahweh's word and not following it is tantamount to sin.

Take the Responsibility

Once you cross the threshold of understanding, and know in your heart what is right and true, you are then held responsible for it. Yahweh from that point forward holds you accountable for following it. That includes all of the Ten Commandments and His laws.

If after conviction you turn back, Hebrews 6 equates it to sin for which there is no remedy. If you have seen and proved the truth but do nothing further with it, you bury the gift of understanding Yahweh gave you. And He will hold you accountable.

We must walk in all the light Yahweh gives us. Obstacles and roadblocks keep many of the easily discouraged from following truth. Our culture itself breeds laxity and nonresponsibility.

Making bad choices leading to alcohol abuse or nicotine addiction is excused by the popular rationalization that it is not your fault; you can't help it, you have a disease.

Many lack the integrity to take responsibility for their actions. Today's society contributes greatly to that irresponsibility. We have no-fault insurance, no-fault divorce, and no-fault attendance policies. A denial of responsibility is followed by a lack of commitment. Nowhere is this more serious than in serving Yahweh.

But the biggest impediment to repentance and the need to put into practice what Scripture commands lands squarely in the laps of the clergy. The assault on biblical teachings of obedience saturates pulpits everywhere.

Faith Alone?

Church after church will tell you that all you need is faith. Nothing more. If salvation truly comes from faith alone, then 99.9 percent of the Bible would be unnecessary.

One verse stating such belief could replace all 31,102 verses in Scripture. Yet, no such verse exists.

Forget hundreds of passages of New Testament instruction and example in righteous obedience to Yahweh's Word. Never mind the Savior's three and one-half years of teaching how to live according to the Word, as well as His own example of obedient living while He walked this earth. Forget all that He taught His disciples and us as well, about how to live, "As the Father gave me commandment, so I do," He said in John 14:31.

Yahshua plainly said that only the one who does the will of His Father will enter the Kingdom of heaven, Matthew 7:21. In Matthew 19:17 He said if you seek everlasting life, then keep the commandments.

A favorite "proof" text for belief alone is Romans 10:9: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Master Yahshua, and shalt believe in thine heart that Yahweh hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." You see, confession and belief—that's all you need, many say.

If that's true, then why obey? Because of the next verse: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

When you believe to the point of righteousness then you put your belief and understanding into daily practice. That is what righteousness means. It is from the Greek meaning holy, set apart. How? Through obedience. He said the same thing in John 3:16, where "believeth in Him" entails "committing to" in obedience. See Hebrews 5:9.

Paul wrote in 1Corinthians 15:34: "Awake to righteousness and sin not." Sin is disobedience. Sin is breaking of the law, 1John 3:4. Righteousness means not sinning. It means obedience.

Luke 1:6 tells us that John the Baptist's father and mother were both righteous. Does that mean they just had faith alone? Let's see: "And they were both righteous before Elohim, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of Yahweh blameless." Obedience to the commands makes one righteous.

Yahshua told a woman in Luke 11:28 who was trying to educe His blessing for His mother Miriam, "Rather, blessed are they that hear the word of Elohim, and KEEP it." Keep means to observe, obey. The obedient are those who are blessed.

You can't be a sinner and righteous at the same time. You can't be doing righteousness but thinking wickedness. Or thinking obedience but living a life of disobedience.

Yet millions are under the illusion that it can be done. You can live for yourself and still have everlasting life awaiting you just because you claim you believe.

Others think they can go halfway and still be saved. James 2:10 tells them, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

One way or another we all will face the One who inspired the Book. Now is the time to make the most of the opportunity each of us has been given to worship Him in truth and live for Him.

They are served a smorgasbord of warm and fuzzy preaching. Nothing controversial.

Religious Hucksters Everywhere

A lot of megachurches pander to the selfish interests of their audiences. They set a low standard for many ministries to emulate.

Their audiences just want to feel good, so they are served a smorgasbord of warm and fuzzy preaching. Nothing controversial.

- Throw in lots of psychology and sociology.
- Spin a never-ending web of low-impact yarns with a visual circus on jumbo-tron screens. That way they'll keep coming back for more feel-good entertainment.
- Don't ever say anything life-impacting.
- Never make the listeners feel bad about their sinfulness. Don't even mention sin or repentance. The last thing they want is conviction that leads to obedience to the one they claim to worship.
- People just need to feel good about themselves. Tell them Yahweh just wants them to be happy, and they deserve to have joy no matter what.
- Live for today and have your best life now.

The prophets and apostles would be aghast at all this flim-flam, which is designed to pull in numbers and a full offering plate. Teachings about conversion and obedience never proceed from the speakers' lips. Neither does the subject of sin and its destructive work.

Today we see rampant spiritual malpractice at the highest level. It was one of the hot topics that Yahshua and the apostles railed against.

In the Scriptures, Israelites came to the temple for one thing: to worship Yahweh as He demands. They worshiped regularly and learned lessons in how far they had strayed from Him. It was all about discovering ever more of Him, and serving Him, which is the most important purpose in our worship and life.

Soon all will be obediently honoring Yahweh. Yahshua said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him," John 4:23.

Why would anyone waste their time subjected to teachings not based on the Word? Why would anyone want to go backward? Anything other than worship taught in the Scriptures is idolatry, whether it be a metal image or a vaunted self-image desirous of personal gain.

Many ministries today just want to be social clubs, with watered down, low-impact, nonjudgmental teachings that have no connection with New Testament worship. The modern church has ranged far afield from apostolic instruction and life.

What changed? Was it the Bible? Scripture says that both Yahweh and Yahshua are the same yesterday and today and forever. So it wasn't they who turned aside. From the very days of their ministries in Acts, the apostles were confronted by those who deviated, having less than pure motives.

Do as the New Testament writers did: follow the Word closely every day and you will never go wrong. Observe its teachings faithfully. A crown of everlasting life in a never-ending kingdom awaits those who have Yahweh at heart and are willing to live their lives for Him.

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SUCCEEDING as a Believer

by **Randy Folliard**

Most would agree that the trends we're seeing in the world today are troubling. Radical Islam is on the rise, and Bible believers are being persecuted throughout this world. Many western and democratic countries are passing laws, including the United States, restricting freedom of religion. In addition, traditional marriage and values are under attack, along with many other unfavorable developments.

What we're witnessing today will only get worse with time. It's entirely possible that these current trends will usher in the Tribulation and the Second Coming of our Savior, Yahshua the Messiah.

For this reason, now is not the time to be spiritually asleep or negligent with our faith. It's more important than ever before that we strengthen our faith and devotion. Even though many are facing different challenges and trials, few know the meaning of true persecution.

If and when this day comes to our time, as believers we must be strong and courageous. To achieve such discipline, we will be reviewing the following lessons:

- First and foremost, we need to know and understand the One we worship;
- We must be strong in faith and courage;
- We must be willing to make a distinction in our behavior and worship; and,
- We must keep life in perspective and always maintain proper balance. Each of these points is crucial to remain strong and overcome as a believer. They will provide us the strength and character to persevere.

Discover Yahweh's Splendor

To begin with, let's consider the greatness and immensity of the One we worship. The Old Testament in 1Chronicles 29:11-13 provides a glimpse of Yahweh's splendor: "Thine, O Yahweh, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Yahweh, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our Elohim, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name."

Our Father Yahweh is above all! He is the greatest and all power, glory, and majesty on earth and in the heavens belongs to Him. Possibly the best illustration of our Father's awesome power is this universe.

For thousands of years man has looked to the heavens to understand Yahweh's creation. Today we have massive telescopes, but even with these we comprehend only a small fraction of what this universe offers. Its complexity is far beyond man's comprehension.

Consider the following: it's believed the number of atoms in the universe is

somewhere around 10 to the 78th power. This is 10 with 78 zeros after it. Such a number is beyond our grasp.

The believed diameter of the known universe is 93 billion light years. A light year is the distance light travels in a year. In miles, this number is 5.87849981 x 10 to the 12th power. It's estimated that the Milky Way galaxy contains 200-400 billion stars. Overall, it's believed that this universe contains around 100 billion galaxies.

This should give all reason to pause and consider the greatness of our Father in heaven. It's important we realize that all of this came into existence through the power of our Creator, Almighty Yahweh. If He can design and create such a vast universe, surely He's capable of seeing His people through life's problems.

Saying that, it's important also to realize that sometimes it's His will that we suffer. The Apostle Paul had a "thorn in his flesh" and prayed three times that Yahweh would remove it. Yahweh never did and Paul soon realized that he was made strong through that thorn or weakness.

The fact remains, though, our Father in heaven is bigger than anything in this universe; He is in control of the smallest atom to the largest galaxy.

Even though this world can be a chaotic place, as long as we remember that we serve an awesome El, nothing should discourage us or pull us away from the faith. There's nothing beyond His power or control – He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.

Obedience Brings Blessings

Another way of succeeding as a believer is by obeying our Father in heaven. Deuteronomy 30 says that we're blessed when we follow His commandments.

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love Yahweh thy Elohim, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and Yahweh thy Elohim shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it," verses 15-16.

As believers, it's imperative to understand that there are consequences for how we live. If we live a life of righteousness after Yahweh's commandments, we'll be blessed and prosperous in this life and more importantly, in the life to come. However, if we choose to rebel and ignore His Word, we will not find life, but death.

Yahweh's commandments are for the good of mankind. As our Creator, He's established a natural order in this universe and His commandments are the guide to achieving success in this order.

For example, He's given commandments regulating our diet. He tells us to avoid things such as shellfish and swine, which medical science is now finding are a detriment to human health.

Dr. Rex Russell in his book, ***What the Bible says About Healthy Eating***, says, "One reason for [Yahweh's] rule forbidding pork is that the digestive system of a pig is completely different from that of a cow. It is similar to ours, in that the stomach is very acidic. Pigs are gluttonous, never knowing when to stop eating. Their stomach acids become diluted because of the volume of food, allowing all kinds of vermin to pass through this protective barrier. Parasites, bacteria, viruses and toxins can pass into the pig's flesh because of overeating. These toxins and infectious agents can be passed on to humans when they eat a pig's flesh," pp. 76-77.

As Yahweh designed, these meats are a detriment to man's health. So in this case when we obey Him, we're more likely to maintain better health.

Yahweh also established marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman, Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:6. If you consider the impact of divorce that we're seeing in this nation, whether that be single parent homes or broken families, there should be no wonder why He says what He does.

Based on data from the 2010 census, one-third or a total of 15 million children are without a father in the home. Statistics have shown that a child suffers emotionally and socially without the influence of a father. Consider the following statistics:

- 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes – 5 times the average (U.S. Dept. of Health/Census).
- 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes – 32 times the average.
- 85% of all children who show behavior disorders come from fatherless homes – 20 times the average (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).
- 80% of rapists with anger problems come from fatherless homes –14 times the average (Justice & Behavior, Vol. 14, p. 403-26).
- 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes – nine times the average (National Principals Association Report, thefatherlessgeneration.wordpress.com).

Everything our Heavenly Father says in His Word is for our good. The problem is most people are simply too stubborn to listen. It's amazing, though, how many of these same people will ask, "Why are these things happening?" Even though the truth is obvious to the sincere seeker, they're blind to it.

He's established a natural order in this universe and His commandments are the guide to achieving success in this order.

Acts 5:32 provides another benefit for obedience. It reads, "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Spirit, whom Elohim hath given to them that obey him."

The Bible declares that the *ruach ha qodesh*, i.e., Holy Spirit, is given to those who follow Yahweh's Word. Now what benefits do we find through our Father's Spirit? It brings us into deeper truths and helps us change from whom we are today into how we should be based on Yahweh's will. It also gives us wisdom to rightly apply our Father's Word. Finally, it offers encouragement and strength in times of need and trouble.

Blessings Through Faith

Succeeding as a believer also demands faith. Before we explore why faith is important, let's first understand the meaning of faith.

Hebrews 11:1 states, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The author of Hebrews tells us that faith is believing or having a conviction in something that can't be seen. In this case, it's a conviction for our Heavenly Father, Yahweh, who Scripture says is invisible and immortal.

Verse 6 goes on to explain why this characteristic is so important: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to Elohim must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

We can't please Yahweh without faith. We must believe in Him and His promises, including His promise of everlasting life in His Kingdom. If we don't believe in these promises, then our faith is not genuine and not pleasing to the One we worship.

Because faith is a belief and conviction in our Creator, it should be obvious why it's essential in remaining strong as a believer. Without the promise of the resurrection and His Kingdom, what would be the motivation to follow Him? Yahweh has promised all this and much more in His Word; all we must do is believe and follow Him.

Have Courage to Overcome

Another important attribute in succeeding as a believer is courage. John Wayne once said, "Courage is being scared to death... and saddling up anyway." In essence, courage is responding even in those moments when we're afraid. In other words, courage is not allowing fear to control our response.

In the first chapter of Joshua, Yahweh commands the Israelite leader to remain strong and courageous: "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for Yahweh thy Elohim is with thee whithersoever thou goest," 1:7-9.

Yahweh told Joshua to obey His commandments so that he would have success. As confirmed in Deuteronomy, when we follow His commandments we're going to be blessed.

Second, Yahweh tells Joshua to be strong and of good courage and not to be afraid. There's a connection between faith and courage. To achieve either one we must believe in Yahweh and in His promises.

If we have a deep faith in our Heavenly Father then even death should not concern us. The Bible promises that for those who lose their lives for His sake will find them in the life to come.

Like faith, courage requires that we are resolute in our conviction of Yahweh and willing to do whatever is necessary to remain true to Him. If we allow fear to control us, then we may never achieve the goal of everlasting life.

Yahweh gave this key message to Joshua, the son of Nun. This man had the task of not only leading a nation, but doing so during a time of conquest. He was going to war for the nation of Israel and for Almighty Yahweh. Yahweh knew that this would require strength and courage like never before. He would risk everything to obey the One he worshiped.

If indeed Yahshua's coming is closer than what many realize, we as believers will require this same level of courage and faith as this time approaches.

Yahshua in His Olivet Prophecy stated that the Great Tribulation would be the worst time this world has ever and will ever see. Nothing will rival the sin, depravity, and the persecution that this world will experience prior to Yahshua's coming. The challenges that we go through today are nothing compared to the tribulation we might see in the days to come. Joshua showed courage and strength against nations and peoples greater than he. Can we do the same?

Show a Difference

Another key in succeeding as a believer is to show a distinction. Paul conveys this message in 2Corinthians 6: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Messiah with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of Elohim with idols? for ye are the temple of the living Elohim," verses 14-16a.

The Apostle Paul asks, "What concord has Messiah with Belial?" The word "Belial" here is a euphemism for Satan the devil. There is no greater contrast than that between Yahshua the Messiah and the Evil One.

We don't have to look hard to see sin in the world today. In the last few decades we've seen a lot of change in this nation. Many no longer know what is morally right in this day and age. The concept of absolute morality has been thrown out the window. Today's belief in diversity and political correctness has replaced biblical standards.

It seems that everything we read in the Bible regarding immorality is happening today, including the acceptance of sodomy and a complete disregard for Yahweh's commanded standards.

As we find in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, they now call evil good and good evil. We may very well be witnessing the final collapse of biblical values in this nation. This is why it's so important that we make a distinction between us and this world.

Just because we live in the world doesn't mean that we live like the world. We must show a difference in what we watch, what we listen to, how we behave, and most importantly, how we worship! We will not be found worthy if we don't come out of this world.

As believers we can physically do all the right things and yet in the end fall short.

Never Lose Perspective

Another key in succeeding as a believer is keeping a right perspective. In Psalm 103:15 we find a fact about life that is true for all people. It reads, "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."

David compares the life of man to a flower in the field. For some, 70 or 80 years seems like a long time. Truth be told, man's life goes by very quickly. Before we know it, we're at the end of our days and there's no way to get that time back. There's no way to rewind the clock or to redo what we did.

For this reason we must keep in mind that this life is not the only life. While this life is short and transitory, the life to come is forever.

How many decisions do we make every day with this thought in mind? Many people are so caught up in the day-to-day that they completely forget about why we're here and what's most important.

Is it more important that we work to excess to get ahead, or spend time with our families? Is it more important that we take a vacation or attend Yahweh's appointed Feasts? Is it more important that we buy that big screen TV or support our Father's work through our tithes and offerings?

Life is all about setting priorities and keeping perspective on what's most important. Yahweh remembers what we put first in our lives. Before we know it our days will be over and the record of our lives will be established for all eternity.

What should the believer be focused on? Solomon, in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes, provides one answer. He says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear Elohim, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For Elohim shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," 12:13-14.

How does Solomon define the whole of man? Obey the commandments and fear our Heavenly Father. To be found worthy as a believer we must obey Yahweh and always remember to show Him fear and reverence. If we do these things, not only will we overcome this world, but we'll find blessings in this life and in the life to come.

Maintain Proper Balance

Now the last key in succeeding as a believer is maintaining balance. In the Old Testament, Solomon prayed for divine wisdom. Because his heart was right, we know that Yahweh blessed this man with incredible wisdom. The Bible says that he had more wisdom than all those in the east and in Egypt.

Solomon in Ecclesiastes 7:16 speaks about balance. In the ***New International Version*** it reads, "Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise – why destroy yourself? Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool – why die before your time? It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. The man who fears [Elohim] will avoid all [extremes]."

The word "overrighteous" here likely refers to self-righteousness. What are some of the attributes of a person who is self-righteous? To name a few: arrogance, a lack of compassion, a sense of entitlement, an unwillingness to admit wrong. The online ***Merriam-Webster Dictionary*** defines this word as, "convinced of one's own righteousness especially in contrast with the actions and beliefs of others."

In essence, this is why our Savior reprimanded the scribes and Pharisees in the New Testament. These people had the written law down to a science, but through their self-righteousness they lost that which was most important. They forgot about things like love, mercy, and faith, and because of that Yahshua chastised them for their hypocrisy.

As believers, it's not only our actions by which we'll be judged, but the motives behind our actions. As believers we can physically do all the right things and yet in the end fall short. We must ensure that our life is balanced according to our Father's Word.

Solomon closes here by saying that the man who fears Yahweh will avoid all extremes. In other words, we should not venture to the right or left, but remain on that narrow path. While we are to obey, we must not be pharisaical in that obedience. It's all about striking a balance in our walk as believers.

This world is becoming worse by the day. We're seeing an increase in crime, sin, and immorality. If we're going to succeed as believers and please Yahweh, then we need to be resolute in our faith and devotion. If we find something in our Father's Word that we're not doing now, we must make that change. It's about serving Him, following Him, obeying Him, and making Him the center of our lives.

As Yahshua told the Laodicean assembly – be either hot or cold, but not lukewarm. Going part-way as disciples of Yahshua will never be enough. Either we're all in or we're all out. Yahweh will not accept half-hearted commitment. He has big plans for His people and He wants only those with total dedication who will one day rule in His Kingdom.

Rearing *Righteous* Children

by **Randy Folliard**

Today's youth are facing a growing pandemic. Current statistics show that today's young people encounter challenges that were unheard of decades ago. They are not learning the same core values that were impressed upon their fathers and grandfathers before them. The recent tragedy in Ferguson, Missouri, involving an African-American teenager and a city police officer is one of many recent examples of a lack of parental guidance. Consider the following statistics:

- More and more children and teens are sexually active. By the time they graduate from high school, 7 out 10 girls and 8 out of 10 boys will have been sexually active.
- The physical and spiritual consequences of teen sexual activity are severe. More than one million teenage girls in the United States become pregnant every year. Over 2.5 million new adolescent cases of sexually transmitted diseases occur every year.
- Rates of substance abuse among children and teens are skyrocketing. Not surprisingly, 38 percent of all eighth graders have experimented with illicit drugs. Over 80 percent of today's graduating seniors will have used alcohol, 42 percent will have used marijuana, and 52 percent will have used illicit drugs.
- Teen violence is on the rise. Between 1988 and 1992, the arrests of juvenile homicide offenders climbed 93 percent. An estimated 270,000 guns are carried to school each day.
- The pain of growing up in today's world has left many youths hopeless. Suicide rates among American high school students have quadrupled in the last four decades. Sadly, 10 percent of adolescent boys and 18 percent of adolescent girls have made some attempt to take their own lives (parentingministry.org).

The preceding statistics speak volumes when it comes to the decline of today's youth. The increase in illicit behavior should be concerning to all parents.

While it may not be possible to help every child, we can take steps to ensure that our children and those children within our influence understand the difference between right and wrong. They are the future of this nation.

Knowing that this world will likely only become worse with time, our children must be strong in the faith and remain faithful through many more challenges than faced by earlier generations. So as parents, how do we ensure that they are ready for such a time as this one? We must instill within them a love for Scripture and our Father's moral values and precepts.

Be an Example

Deuteronomy 6 provides a method for achieving morally and spiritually upright children. It reads, "And thou shalt love Yahweh thy Elohim with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," verses 5-7.

In Hebrew, this passage is called the *shema*, meaning, "to hear." Our own good examples are the best ways to teach our children. As believers and parents, we are to love Yahweh with our heart, soul, and might. That means with our entire being. Yahweh should always come first in our lives. This includes fully obeying Him and following in the examples of His Son, Yahshua the Messiah.

John in his first epistle says that it's impossible to know Yahweh if we ignore or refuse to obey the commandments. So as parents, we must first set the example. Then we're to teach Yahweh's Word "diligently" to our children. This word comes from the Hebrew *shanan*. ***The Brown Driver and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*** defines this word as, "to sharpen or to teach incisively."

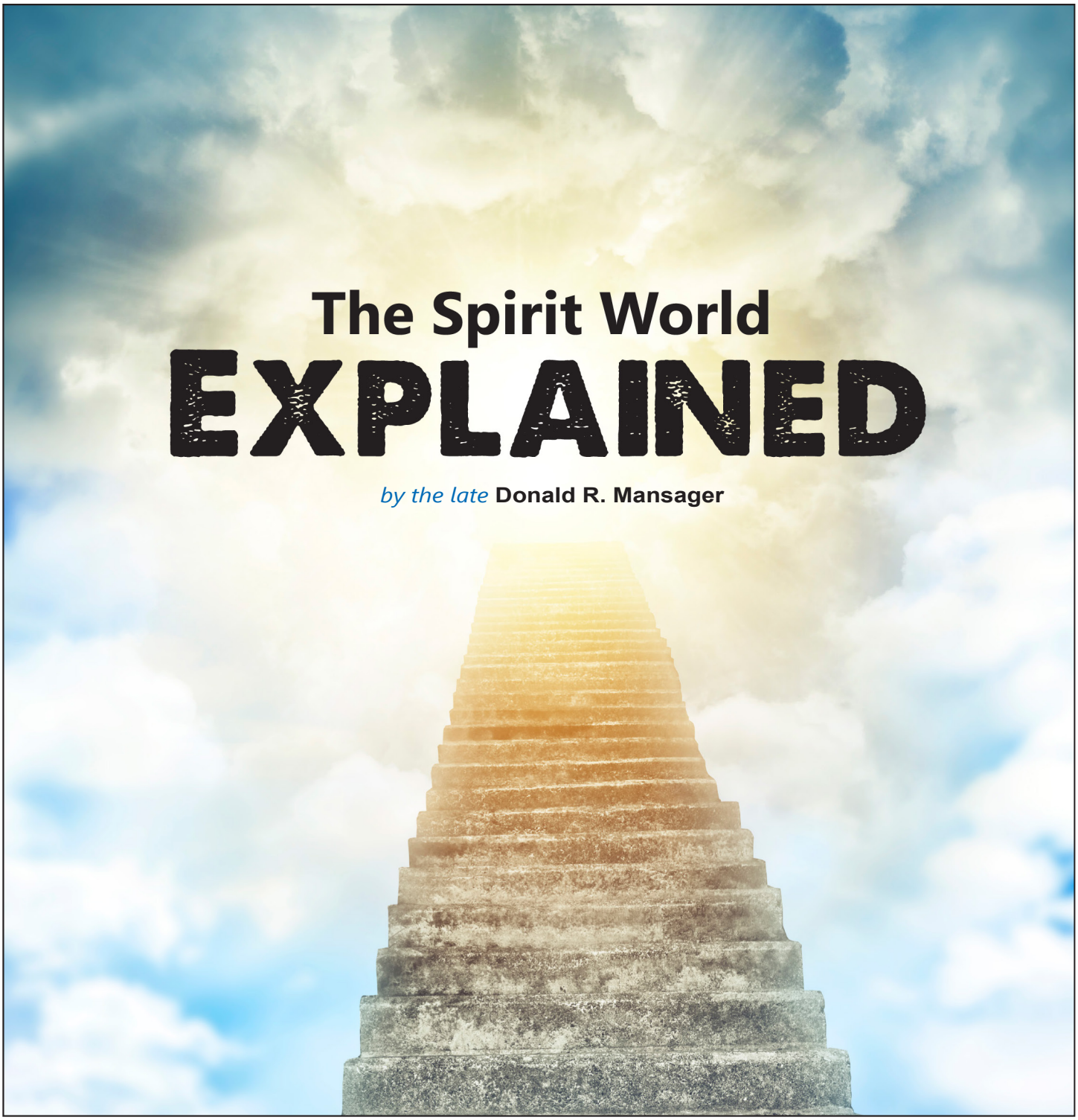
This means to be active and not passive when it comes to teaching our children Yahweh's Word. We're to spend time daily with them in the truth of our Heavenly Father. If we're not doing this now, we're falling short as parents.

As Scripture commands, we're to be teaching them all day long in various ways and circumstances. If we follow these instructions, Yahweh promises that our children will continue in the faith.

We find this promise in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." If we raise our children in Yahweh's Word, Scripture confirms they will not forsake His truth. This is a promise upon which we can rely.

The question is, how is it accomplished? The answer is in the *shema.* We're to spend time with them daily, teaching them diligently, i.e., incisively, from Yahweh's Word. For those parents who are negligent

(please turn to p. 19)



The Spirit World EXPLAINED

by the late **Donald R. Mansager**

Through either fear or ignorance, some Bible believers are reluctant to discuss the spirit world. The Bible, however, has much to say about the spirit realm because our Heavenly Father Yahweh dwells there.

The saints will also one day with spirit bodies join Him in this spirit realm. His only Son "which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen, which our hands have handled, the Word of Life" (lJohn 1:1) has come down to the physical, material world and manifested Himself to mankind.

Fear of the spirit world exists because we have been conditioned to think primarily of demonic or satanic activities of evil associated with spirits. In fact, the Adversary is an evil spirit and captain of the fallen angels who also rebelled, Jude 6. Peter warns us to be alert and aware of the Adversary's intentions: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1Pet. 5:8).

Being ignorant of Satan's devices can work great harm to the believer who is striving to withstand his temptations. We can be more vulnerable to his schemes if we are unaware of how he operates. We should have a healthy regard for the power and influence Satan and his demons wield. Paul warns that our real battle here on earth

is spiritual, in our mind, our demeanor, our beliefs, and our worship.

Spirit World Is Real

Some, like the Sadducees of old, do not believe in the existence of the spirit realm. But we can have an inkling of its existence by a simple experiment that was shown by a college physics professor. He prompted the class to select at a distance someone in a large audience and focus their attention on this person. They were told to concentrate on him, saying his name to themselves. Within a short time the targeted person wriggled in his seat and begin to look around as if someone were calling him.

Just staring at someone and concentrating on him can bring similar results.

Somehow our thoughts can transmit distances and be picked up by another individual. (If not, how can Yahweh read our minds or hear our unspoken prayers?)

We have learned of incidents where a loved one was in a desperate situation halfway across the world, and the one at home was awakened out of a sound sleep, becoming aware that something was amiss. Later, the incident was confirmed.

The danger here is that Satan will use the power of spiritual things to deceive and convince people to dabble in spiritism for his own unholy purposes.

The spirit realm, which the Bible refers to as the "third heaven," is where Yahweh dwells. The first heaven is where the birds fly and the clouds form. The second heaven is where the sun, moon, and planets are. The third heaven is the realm of energy that permeates the universe. It is where Yahweh exists (Rev. 9:1, 2Cor. 12:2).

The third heaven could exist right here on this earth, but in a different dimension invisible to humans. The spirit realm is unaffected by matter or substance.

Spirit Is Like Energy

There are a number of energy forms we cannot see, yet we are aware that they exist. Anciently, the invisible wind was thought to be related to the spirit realm.

There are other forms of invisible power. We cannot see electricity, but we know it exists. Even though we cannot see what scientists refer to as "the flow of electrons," still man has harnessed electricity and made it work for him.

We cannot see magnetism, but as youngsters our experience with magnets and iron filings taught us the drawing power of magnetism. We cannot see gravity, but know that it is a force that pulls matter to the center of the earth. While we cannot see these forms of energy, we see results of what they can do.

It is only since Einstein's day that scientists have come to understand the power that is packed in each atom. This awesome power is unleashed in the splitting of the atom, creating the atomic bomb.

Einstein showed that time exists only where there is matter, and that time and space are interrelated.

Matter can be converted to energy, and energy to matter. The existence of matter is not static and had to have a beginning. Genesis 1:1 reads, "In the Beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth ..." Our Bible tells us that the One who created everything was Yahshua the Messiah, Ephesians 3:9. He created the microworld of neutrons, protons, and electrons, and put them in their place. By His power these all stay in their fixed places.

He also created the solar systems and constellations. He fashioned the moon to revolve around the earth; the earth to go around the sun along with the other planets. "And He is before all things and by Him all things consist" (Greek = all things hold together), Colossians 1: 17.

The reason that our cosmos does not fly apart and disintegrate or that the planets and suns don't go flying off in different directions is because Yahshua is holding them all in their places by His power, according to this verse in Colossians.

Not only is the third heaven where Yahweh dwells, but it is also the abode of spirit beings, both good and evil. Spirit beings can be all about us, but we would never be aware of it. Angelic beings have at times manifested themselves to mankind as did the three celestial beings who appeared unto Abraham on the plains of Mamre, Genesis 18. Two of them continued on to Sodom to destroy that city, chapter 19.

Upon His resurrection our Savior was restored to His former glory, again becoming spirit. He could appear and disappear at will. He appeared before the disciples as they sat in locked rooms, John 20:19, and He would vanish out of their sight (Luke 24:31). Just because we cannot see the spirit realm does not mean that it does not exist (also verses 36-37).

Yahweh Is Our Protection

Paul warned the assembly at Corinth to be aware of the tactics of the Tempter: "Lest satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2Cor. 2: 11). Peter wrote that the obedient are under the watchful care of our Heavenly Father: "For the eyes of Yahweh are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of Yahweh is against them that do evil" (lPet. 3:12).

If we fear Yahweh, we need not fear the spirit world. Even though we are not able to see the invisible realm about us, Yahweh and His angelic host also dwell in that world, and His power is many times greater than the adversary's. Furthermore, Yahweh has put limits on the sphere of Satan's activities, and has put a hedge or barrier about His people.

Yahweh upheld the integrity and character of Job and challenged Satan to consider his reputation. The devil's sneering retort was, "... does Job fear Elohim for nought? Have not you made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he has on every side? you have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land" (Job 1:9-10).

Chapters 1 and 2 show that the devil did much harm, but was limited in how far he could go. He could not take Job's life, but he did make his life almost unbearable. After proving that he would not be shaken in his principles, patient Job was rewarded with double that which Satan had taken from him, Job 42:10.

Demonic Activities

When counseling those sincerely interested in the Bible, we have at times been called upon to unravel problems people had before conversion. These include obsessions with astrology, horoscopes, illegal drugs, sexual sin, habitual rebellion and negativism. All of these are driven by demonic influences around us today.

Even Mary Magdalene had seven demons cast out (Mark 16:9) before she was converted to the Savior and became one of Yahshua's most trusted and dedicated followers to the very end.

Our interests and activities determine whether we are dabbling in the realm of the demonic spirits abounding around us, or whether we are seeking those things above to pursue the Spirit of Yahweh and

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overcome the forces of evil.

Satan continually strives to convince us that his ways are easier and more enjoyable; that we should do ourselves a favor and accept his ways. However, he cannot tempt us beyond the limits Yahweh has set:

"There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but Elohim is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it" (l Cor. 10:13).

The Bible says humans have body, soul, and spirit (1Thess. 5:23). We are familiar with our fleshly, material bodies of bone, flesh, and blood. The soul can be thought of as being life, the essence of being alive or living.

Our spirit is our mind, our attitude, our thinking.

Nowhere in the Bible does the word spirit (*ruach,* Hebrew, or *pneuma*, Greek) refer to the departed dead. Spirit beings are either the angelic beings of Yahweh or the minions of Satan.

We are offered the opportunity to become spirit beings in contrast to human, fleshly beings. It is only then that we will no longer be corruptible, but incorruptible; we will no longer be mortal, but immortal, spirit beings:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal [must] put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1Cor. 15:51-54).

Possessed or Deceived

We are surrounded by attitudes of evil on the one hand and the spirit of good on the other. The spirit of man is our mind, our thinking, our disposition and attitude. We do not act by instinct as do animals and birds.

Man exercises free will and generally acts according to his decisions and habits. Man's spirit can be influenced by either the good or the evil of the present visible world or the invisible spirit world.

An important difference exists between demon possession or demon influence and being manipulated or deceived by Satan. Demon possession means Satan has complete control over an individual, even in determining his behavior. The possessed individual is not acting according to his own spirit, his own mind. He is driven by the satanic spirit. He is controlled by Satan.

Deception is built upon untruth. To deceive is to influence one to believe error or do something contrary to fact, to act in a certain way because one's thinking is muddled.

One can be misled to believe error and consequently act contrary to the facts. This comes from the adversary and his demonic cohorts: "Satan is a liar and the father of it," said our Savior (John 8:44).

Satanic Influence

The adversary is able to instill thoughts and desires into our minds by his powerful influence and tireless efforts. If we are not alert and watchful he can overpower common sense and implant his deceptive schemes into our minds by playing upon carnal desires and passions.

We are not always aware that Satan is influencing us through his subtlety. Drawing closer to Yahweh alerts us to Satan's schemes:

"Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2).

Paul warned that Satan was dominating some of mankind to the point they were bent upon seeking and fulfilling the carnal desires of the flesh and mind. They were filled with vanity, lust, and pride. Through their egotism they concentrated on things that called attention to themselves, either exalting themselves in their minds or having worldly or sensual pleasures of the flesh.

Peter was once influenced by the Adversary, and said to Yahshua that He would not have to undergo any problems with the religionists of His day. Yahshua recognized that Satan was putting arrogant thoughts into Peter's mind. He therefore rebuked him severely:

"But He turned and said unto Peter, Get behind me Satan, you are an offence unto me, for you savor not the things that be of Elohim, but those that be of men" (Matt. 16:23).

Apparently Satan took advantage of Peter's vanity, prompting him to speak in a boastful manner, contradicting Yahshua's deeper knowledge and understanding. Satan seeks opportunities to bolster human ego. As he did with Peter so had he influenced David to take a census of Israel, "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel" (1Chron. 21:1).

We also have the example of Ananias and Sapphira who hoped to deceive others into believing that they were really sacrificing to help the assembly get off the ground, but had secretly retained a portion of the sale of their property, Acts 5: 1-11. Peter could discern that Satan had filled their hearts with greed, verse 3.

Demon Possession

Demons can act religiously and appear to be righteous, but have ulterior motives. Paul became weary of the damsel who annoyed the True Believers by following them. Empowered by Satan, she was a prophetess and therefore was financially valuable to her masters. Paul soon demanded that she leave, however, even though she apparently spoke the truth:

"And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high Elohim which show unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:16-17).

Mark 5:1-15 tells of a classic case of a man having an unclean spirit who abode among the tombs. He continued to cry and cut himself with stones. When he saw Yahshua, he ran and worshiped Him. He begged Yahshua not to torture him, feigning to be victimized by Yahshua. When the unclean spirits were driven out of the man, he was found clothed and in his right mind.

Demonic spirits possess a human by influencing the mind and desires of the individual. By instilling irrational thoughts and concepts into the thoughts of their victims, the evil spirits deceive those who cannot discern truth from error.

Theirs is a world unrelated to reality. They hear voices and acquire an entirely different personality. With their minds and will weakened, they are often unstable and

difficult to convince of truth. They seem to be increasingly negative in their thinking.

There are also those who are not totally under the full influence of demonic spirits, but in their weakened physical or spiritual condition are susceptible to the whims of unclean spirits. Often it is through selfishness, worldly desire, coveting, lust, resentment, envy, and growing hatred that the demons entice the weakened ones.

Guard Your Mind

Be aware that just because someone is knowledgeable in the Bible does not guarantee that he or she is honest or truthful with Yahweh's Word. Satan can quote the Scripture with the very best. His ploy is to use Scripture to twist the truth by misapplying its true intent. Some of his tricks are to omit from or add to the Word. Toying with the tools of the devil is a sure way to be trapped by his superior knowledge and cunning. Dabbling in hypnotism, psychic or horror movies, horoscopes, ouija boards, television psychics, and New Age phenomena takes us farther from Yahweh.

So-called deeper or new truths are often nothing more than an attempt by Satan to undermine our thinking and assassinate our spiritual integrity. Being separated from the truth of Yahweh's Word gets us off track and awash in a spiritual quagmire.

Avoid putting yourself in a situation that invites demonic involvement. Channelling, rap music, pornography, violence in movies and violent video games and reading material are tempting opportunities for the evil spirit world to move in on an unsuspecting person.

If you have doubts about whether you should participate in a questionable activity or even be in a certain place, ask yourself whether you would feel comfortable in that situation if Yahshua were at your side.

Opening the Door to Satan

One of the most obvious and enticing opportunities for demonic activity is in the use of cocaine, marijuana, heroin and mind-altering drugs. The drug lords are out to sell their wares to whomever they can entice.

The misuse of alcohol opens our minds to unholy influences. Drug abuse allows Satan to gain access to our thinking and actions, and can lead to serious crimes like robbery, muggings, and even murder.

"A sound mind in a sound body" is a slogan credited to physicians of long ago; it is still sage advice. If we are tired and run down, we become susceptible to whatever illness is making the rounds such as colds, influenza, and other infections. In addition, our thinking can be foggy. This is the time to be on guard.

When we feel defeated, or succumb to thoughts of regret and hopelessness, we are more open to the forces of darkness.

We should always keep our emotions under control. Seek Yahweh and not give way to the forces of spiritual darkness. Being positive in outlook is good for our spirit and health. Continued anger, bitterness, frustration, and rage can lead to physical problems.

If this is a problem with you, you can overcome it. First, take it to Yahweh in prayer. At such times, read your Bible, especially the Psalms. Physical exercise can help as well. Take a walk. Get out of your rut. Do something different. Talk to a friend.

When we feel defeated, or succumb to thoughts of regret and hopelessness, we are more open to the forces of darkness.

One of the most cherished of our memories is attending the Feasts and helping brethren with their personal problems. Oftentimes others have faced the same dilemma. Solutions they have found shed new light on our own trials.

A good attitude of His people is beneficial to His will. Notice one time that the Savior Himself felt that the Holy Spirit was stifled:

"And He [Yahshua] could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And He marvelled because of their unbelief. And He went round about the villages, teaching" (Mark 6:5-6).

Yahweh's Spirit can accomplish more among people whose minds and hearts are right. A prayer offered among faithful brethren on the Sabbath is of inestimable value. Paul speaks of this and joins them in spirit with the same petition:

"In the name of our Sovereign Yahshua Messiah, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Sovereign Yahshua Messiah" (1Cor. 5:4).

The power of the prayer is multiplied by the faith of the dedicated brethren who are joined "in spirit." Yahweh's Spirit can work more effectively when an air of righteousness prevails. The Bible teaches us not to be self-serving, seeking what we can gain for ourselves, but to be unselfish and helpful to all, especially those in need:

"Pure religion and undefiled before Yahweh the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Protection Comes from Yahweh

Paul warns that our real battle here on earth is spiritual, in our minds, our beliefs, and worship. We not only should live a clean life, eating proper and clean foods for physical health, keeping the Sabbaths and Holy Days, but also be alert to other influences that affect our emotions, attitudes, and thinking.

Make no mistake, Satan uses all available resources to take advantage of us. Through avenues like advertising, a form of mind control, he creates a desire for the pleasures of this world.

The demonic forces are also trying to sell their wares of pleasure, excitement, thrills, ego-building or whatever it takes to "sign you up" as one of their initiates. Twisting your mind to accept what they have to offer is the name of their game.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6: 12).

We are promised that if Yahweh's Spirit abides in us, we have nothing to fear from the spirit world, for: "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" 1John 4:4.

Draw near to Yahweh in prayer. "Submit yourselves therefore to Yahweh. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

We are in a spiritual battle. The Evil One is ramping up his efforts against this world and Yahweh's people. We need all the defenses Yahweh provides to the faithful who seek to serve Him, including regular prayer.

ARE YOU IMMORTAL?

by **Alan Mansager**

Nearly every funeral sermon that is preached today claims that the "deceased" is now up in heaven. The notion is based on 2,000 years of tradition. But how accurate is that tradition?

The word soul is derived from the Hebrew *nephesh*. Here is how *nephesh* is defined in the Bible by usage: "self, life, creature, person, appetite, mind, heart, body, living being, desire, emotion, passion, the breathing creature, the inner, living being of man (with life in the blood), seat of the appetite, seat of emotions and passions, activity of the will, activity of the character." These are all synonyms for the biblical concept of soul.

None of these uses of *nephesh* describes a separate, misty, immortal part of man that wafts away at death. It simply expresses "being" in various ways.

"Soul" even applies to animals, all flesh-and-blood creatures. In fact, it predates man. *Nephesh*, or soul, is used of lower life forms prior to ever being used for man in the Bible. Read Genesis 1:20 where *nephesh* is rendered, "moving creature with life," verse 21: "living creature," and verses 24-25: "beast," meaning all varieties of animals, including reptiles and sea animals. See Genesis 2:19.

How can a separate part of us called a soul waft off to heaven at death, when we ourselves ARE a soul? The news reported an explosion and said three souls died. (Apparently they didn't go to heaven!) Actually, these were simply people who died, referred to as "souls" even in today's vernacular.

If the soul of man is immortal, then by the definition of *nephesh*, animals must also be immortal.

When the second angel pours out his vial on the sea, Revelation 16:3 says all the souls in the sea will die. Should we assume that immortal souls of people will be living in the sea? That's absurd! Soul here means creatures that live in the sea.

In Numbers 19:20 we read of the unclean man who doesn't purify himself. That soul (that person, that individual) "will be cut off from the congregation." In verse 22 we read that the soul that touches anything unclean will be unclean till dark. Imagine an immortal soul being banished from an assembly, or a soul that has become unclean till sundown! Obviously soul speaks of the person, not an immortal, ethereal vapor.

If souls are immortal, then they don't die, and it's either the immortal soul doctrine or the Bible that is not telling the truth. Ezekiel 18:4 reads, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The same word *nephesh* or soul is rendered "dead body" in Numbers 9:6, 7, and 10.

USES OF SOUL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

From *psuche*, we find the human soul:

- **can be seen, Matt. 2:20**
- **can be destroyed, Matt. 10:28**
- **is able to eat, Luke 12:22-23**
- **can be jeopardized, Acts 20:24**
- **can be laid down for others, John 15:13**
- **can be risked for Yahshua, Acts 15:26**

In addition,

- **Jezebel wanted Elijah's soul, Rom. 11:3**
- **Fish have souls, Revelation 8:9**
- **Souls can be physically saved, Matt. 16:25**

In John 11 Mary and Martha summon Yahshua because their brother Lazarus had died four days previous. Popular teaching would aver that Lazarus had an immortal soul that wafted away to heaven. But Yahshua commanded, "Lazarus come forth," not "Lazarus come down here and get back into your body."

Paul tells us that when Yahshua returns He's going to call the LIVING and the DEAD from the EARTH, not heaven. He wrote in 1Thessalonians 4:15-17: "For this we say unto you by the word of Yahweh, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Master shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Master himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of Elohim: and the dead in Messiah shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Master in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Master."

Here Paul calls death a sleep. The dead here "rise." Nowhere do the dead ever descend from heaven. Yahshua descended from heaven, but we do not.

What about when Cain killed Abel? Yahweh said the voice of Abel cried out to me from the ground (Gen. 4:9-10). Yahweh didn't say to Cain, "Your brother is up here in heaven with Me, and you should not have murdered him."

The Greek equivalent to *nephesh* is *psuche*. *Psuche* is translated "soul" in the New Testament. You find *psuche* 105 times in the New Testament, and it is capable of nearly as many applications as is the Hebrew word *nephesh*, even used of man's moods, passions, and feelings. *Psuche's* basic meaning is the life force that animates the body. As in the Old Testament, nowhere is immortality associated with the soul in the New Testament.

Many are confused by soul and spirit. In the New Testament spirit is *pneuma*. Spirit is the breath of life that Yahweh breathed into Adam to make him come alive. It is the breath of life that goes back to Yahweh, not an immortal soul.

Paul in 1Timothy 6:16 said the Father Yahweh is the only one with immortality. We don't have it naturally within us. If we at some point are granted immortality it is only because He gives it to us, just as He gave it to Yahshua. But that doesn't happen until Yahshua returns and initiates the resurrection.

Ecclesiastes 3:19-21 shows us the universal nature of physical life: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit [the breath of life] of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"

Give Thanks

by **Joel Wirl**

Helen Keller once said, "I cried because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet." Is this not human nature, to forget about or take for granted what we have? And then we get a jolt back to reality when we see someone going without or when what we have is wrenched from us.

Even those with so little have been blessed immensely by Yahweh, and a woman such as Helen Keller had to remind herself of the blessings she had despite her inability to hear or see. A little reminder can go a long way to appreciating and being thankful for what Yahweh has given to us.

Priceless Gifts

Have you ever considered just how amazing our bodies are? You didn't pay for yours, save your money for several months to receive it, or do anyone a favor to get it. Your fully-functioning body was just given to you. The five senses that most have been born with are our avenues for exploring the world around us, and are amazing enough by themselves.

With your eyes you see the colors of creation, the words on a page to learn and understand ideas, the faces of loved ones, and the ability to observe the glorious world around us. Without your eyes you couldn't see the colorful palette of a sunrise, the rapid fluttering of a hummingbird, the countless stars spread over the night sky, or so many other magnificent things.

With your ears you hear the sounds of life and creation, the voices of others in your communication and your own voice, the beautiful melody of the song bird, the words "I love you" that strengthen your heart, your favorite song that inspires and plucks at your emotional strings, and all the sounds around us. You would miss even the noise of an irate customer who is yelling or a crying baby if all you ever heard was silence.

There are three other senses I could mention, yet I will leave it to your imagination to think of a reality without any one of those or to think of all the many uses you have for them. It really makes you appreciate what you have when you think about what it would be like not to have them. I used to wear glasses and contacts till I paid for Lasik corrective eye surgery when I was twenty-one. Although my vision was extremely blurred before that time, I am thankful that I at least had sight, as there are many who do not.

And let's not forget the incredible minds that Yahweh has given us. Although I'm sure we all know of some who decide to not use very much of their faculties in the reasoning and thinking department, the brain is quite impressive. A recent study done by Japanese and German scientists showed that one of the most powerful supercomputers with a total of 83,000 processors in it was able to mimic only one percent of a second's worth of human brain activity within a 40-minute period. Now that's what I call amazing. And you can't compare the price of the two either. The Titan supercomputer, one of the fastest in the world, cost $100 million in comparison to the brain with all its incredible functions, all for free.

And as marvelous as are the other gifts from Yahweh previously mentioned, they all pale in comparison to the greatest gift Yahweh has given, which is His son Yahshua our Savior. In John 3:16-17 it says, "For Yahweh so loved the world that he

gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For Yahweh sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

You could have all that you ever need in this world and have all the blessings you could conceive of, but if you don't have Yahshua your blessings will be very short lived in comparison to the length of eternal life. The thought of eternal life and to be saved from our current sinful state is hard to comprehend, and yet Yahweh offers this as a gift for us through Yahshua.

If you count up all the blessings that Yahweh has given you from the smallest item to the largest, you would be writing for a very long, long time. Yet he gives these things to us generously and without any strings attached. He gives as such because he is a loving Elohim.

Give Thanks to the Giver

Just as you like hearing a thank you for a deed you've done for another, Yahweh also likes when we say thanks to Him. In Luke 17:11-19 we find an instance where some were thankful and others were not. "And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Yahshua, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed."

Pondering the power and authority that Yahshua had is really quite extraordinary. His very words healed lepers. What a fantastic thing it must have been for these men to be walking to the priests and to be healed on their way. In case you're wondering why Yahshua asked the lepers to show themselves to the priests, it is because in Leviticus 14:2 it says to do so on the day of the lepers' cleansing, which makes sense as Yahshua had cleansed them that day.

The passage continues, "And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified Elohim, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Yahshua answering said, were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to Elohim, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

The ten men followed Yahshua's command, which was great, but only one of them of his own free will chose to thank Yahshua for the gift of healing he had received. This is truly what Yahweh wants from us, for us to respond to His giving with thanks to Him.

Leprosy is a terrible infection of the body that causes disfiguration, an inability to feel pain, a loss of certain body parts, and other terrible symptoms. For all ten of these men to have received a wonderful healing such as this they should have all sprinted back to Yahshua and thrown themselves at His feet in thanks. Yet only one of them did.

Which of these describes us? Are we, like the one leper, in the habit of thanking Yahshua and recognizing that all good things come from Yahweh when we receive the many blessings that He gives us daily through His provision and great power? Or are we prone like the nine others to forget to say thanks to our Father in heaven and to keep walking on in life as if it's not a big deal? The choice is up to us.

In Everything, Give Thanks

In 1Thessalonians 5:18, Paul says, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of Yahweh in Messiah Yahshua concerning you." I don't know your financial situation, nor do I know what you have or don't have or what trouble you may be going through, but I do know that there is something for you to be thankful for. Paul says to give thanks in all things, and this means during the good and not so good seasons in our lives.

We cannot always choose what happens to us. In fact most of the things that happen are out of our control. Yet the one thing we do control is how we react to the problems and challenges we face. It is to be thankful despite problems. It really is a paradigm shift in our thinking by creating this attitude of gratitude, because instead of looking at what we don't have or on our problems, we are putting the focus upon Yahweh and what He has done and will do for us.

I know we all have problems. If you're alive, you have problems. Yet this doesn't mean that we have to let them make us forget the many blessings from Yahweh. Give thanks to the Creator of this universe, to your Father in heaven, and tell Him how much you appreciate what He has done for you. He loves you, and so we ought to love Him through our words of thanks and praise.

(*continued from p. 11*)
in this, understand that if we take a passive approach, the likelihood of that child's accepting and following the faith is greatly diminished.

This information is not intuitive, but learned.

The sad reality is that many adults today, including countless parents, have little understanding of virtue and integrity. For this reason their children also lack this knowledge. People are asking today, why are children killing children and behaving in such violent ways? The answer lies with their parents and the fact that today's generation is ignorant of simple morality.

With so many now supporting gay marriage and abortion, how is it possible for today's youth to accept Yahweh's truth? This is why Deuteronomy commands that we as parents must first love and follow Yahweh with all our heart, soul, and might. If we're going to help the next generation, we must ensure our generation is first living up to those standards.

Abraham More Than a Prophet

One man who understood this, and more importantly lived it, was Abraham. Not only was this patriarch faithful to Yahweh, but as we see in Genesis 18:19, he was also a good father. It reads, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Yahweh, to do justice and judgment; that Yahweh may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Scripture recognizes Abraham for many achievements. He left his family and home; he believed Yahweh when others would not, and he was a prophet. One of his greatest accomplishments, however, was his parenting. The Bible says that he taught his children to walk in the way of Yahweh and to follow in His justice and judgment.

Walking in the way of Yahweh is the same as obeying Him. If we as parents don't impress upon our children the sanctity and holiness of His Word, then there's little hope for their spiritual future. If they don't learn how and why it's important to honor the Sabbath, then they will likely never understand the sanctity or holiness of this day. The same applies to marriage and all other moral principles in the Word.

In the fourth chapter of Proverbs, Solomon explains why it's important that our children follow Yahweh's Word.

"Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."

Solomon is speaking to the children. He says that children are to listen to the instruction of their father. He gives four key benefits they will reap from it: understanding or knowledge of Yahweh's Word; good doctrine or teaching; wisdom or discretion; and blessings.

When we obey our father we'll be blessed and free from many of life's other problems. This assumes that the father is living a life of righteousness. If the father is rebellious, then he will not be equipped to pass on these values to his children.

There is one inescapable truth that impacts all men and that is that sin has consequences. For example, when we commit fornication, not only do we dishonor our own bodies, but we run the risk of pregnancy, STDs, and other life-changing factors. It's amazing how one sin can change a person's life forever. Contrary to what many want to believe, sin has real consequences.

The simple truth is this, if we follow Yahweh and teach our children the same, we and they will be blessed. However, if we refrain from this parental responsibility, they will likely never have a love and concern for the Bible when they are grown. It's amazing what we as parents can do when it comes to influencing our children. We have the ability to impress upon them the standards of Yahweh's Word or the standards of this world.

Be Available for Questions

Be honest and forthright in answering your children's questions. In Exodus 12:26-27 is an example of this principle: "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Yahweh's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped."

This principle applies far beyond the Passover. If our kids ask us about Yahweh's Word, we're to use that as an opportunity to ingrain a love and interest in Scripture. If a child understands the reason why Yahweh says what He does, they are more likely to follow it. As parents, we're not only to take time out and read to our children, but also be available for questions.

The mind of a child is like a sponge, soaking up everything it encounters. Having two girls of my own, I'm often surprised at their ability to process and understand information. They often grasp much more than we realize. It's for this reason that we must be actively teaching them Yahweh's Word.

Admonition of a Father

In Ephesians 6:4 Paul speaks specifically to fathers when he says, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Master." The NIV reads, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of [the Master]."

This is a reference to the father as the disciplinarian. Regardless of what some people want to believe, there are differences between mothers and fathers. One difference is how they respond and relate to their children. While mothers are normally more nurturing by nature, fathers are more inclined to be the disciplinarian.

This is why Paul addresses this passage to the fathers. Fathers must not discipline excessively or abusively. This type of correction is not only counter-productive, but often creates long-lasting animosity between the child and parent.

Adam Clarke, in his well-known commentary, provides this insightful observation, "Avoid all severity; this will hurt your own souls, and do them no good; on the contrary, if punished with severity or cruelty, they will be only hardened and made desperate in their sins. Cruel parents generally have bad children. He who corrects his children according to [Yahweh]

and reason will feel every blow on his own heart more sensibly than his child feels it on his body. Parents are called to correct, not to punish, their children. Those who punish them do it from a principle of revenge; those who correct them do it from a principle of affectionate concern."

Parents should never forget the reason for correcting their children. The motivation for correction should be rooted in love, not anger or hatred. The goal is to see that the child repents and changes his or her ways.

Paul goes on to say that parents are to bring their children up in the training and instruction of Yahweh's Word. The ***King James Version*** calls it, "nurture and admonition." So along with correction, fathers should be active in teaching them Yahweh's Word. Remember that Abraham was praised for instructing his children.

Nurturing of a Mother

From 2Timothy 1:5 we learn that mothers, too, have a responsibility of imparting Yahweh's Word to their children. "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

Paul praises Timothy's mother and grandmother for Timothy's devotion. Some people view the role of full-time mothers as degrading and unneeded. Those who hold this opinion could not be more wrong. Full-time mothers should be praised for their commitment to their families. Being a full-time mom isn't easy and it's no less important than any other position.

A full-time mom might possibly have the most important position in the family. Mothers spend the most time with their children and have more opportunities to share Yahweh's truth and be an influence. Their role in the development of that child is enormous. It wasn't a coincidence that Paul praised Lois and Eunice for their nurturing and guidance of young Timothy.

As seen from the Bible, both the father and mother have pivotal roles in the upbringing of their children. This is why children often suffer in single parent homes. Fathers and mothers fill different needs in a family and when one parent is missing there is going to be a deficiency in the raising of that child.

The story of Timothy continues in 2Timothy 3:15. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Messiah Yahshua."

Paul says here that Timothy knew the Scriptures from a child. It was his childhood that made him the man he was. This goes back to what Yahweh says in the *shema* and what Solomon says in the book of Proverbs.

If parents teach their children Yahweh's Word early, they will retain that knowledge when they are grown. Timothy's success can be traced back to the devotion of his mother and grandmother. If not for them and Yahweh's Word, his life may have been vastly different.

We can impact our children in ways that will follow them all their days.

Many children suffer today simply because they lack the nurturing that Timothy had, as well as others like him. It cannot be impressed upon parents enough the impact and influence they have on their kids. If we use our time wisely, we can impact our children in ways that will follow them all their days.

Two Examples, Two Outcomes

In closing, let's consider two examples of parenting. In 1Samuel 2:18 we find the example of the boy Samuel. It reads, "But Samuel ministered before Yahweh, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice…And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with Yahweh, and also with men."

Who was this extraordinary boy? He was the son of Elkanah and Hannah. The Bible says that Hannah was barren or unable to have children. One year when Elkanah and Hannah went to Jerusalem to worship Yahweh, Hannah prayed for a son and promised Yahweh that if He would answer her prayer, she would dedicate her son to His service.

Yahweh answered Hannah's prayer; she kept her word and gave her son to Eli the priest. From the beginning, the Bible confirms that Samuel's parents were people of devotion and integrity. It says that they would go up every year to worship and sacrifice unto Yahweh. The Bible says that Samuel grew in favor with both Yahweh and men.

In the end, Samuel proved to be one of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament. He never deviated or forsook Yahweh's truth; he remained strong and was a beacon of light for those who served Yahweh. It's important to realize that Samuel's walk began as a child; he served Yahweh as a child, and continued serving Him when he was grown.

The same cannot be said about the sons of Eli. "Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make Yahweh's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against Yahweh, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because Yahweh would slay them," 1Samuel 2:22-25.

The Bible states that Eli's sons were wicked and rebellious. They defiled Yahweh's worship and caused Israel to sin. While the Bible doesn't provide much detail as to how Eli raised his sons, he obviously fell short. However, with the exception of his sons, Eli was a good man and served Yahweh faithfully.

The sad reality is, parental neglect by ministers isn't all that uncommon. Many ministers are so concerned about others that they become complacent with their own families. Even though it's often difficult, those who minister must achieve a balance between the ministry and their families. They cannot neglect the one for the other. Consider this, if a minister has problems in his personal life, how is it possible for him to effectively minister to others?

Raising children is an enormous responsibility, but well worth the work and effort. There is nothing more rewarding than to watch your children grow up as respected adults with a love for you and their Heavenly Father.

Answers in Scripture

Q Will there be a second chance for non-believers, like for those who are Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and atheist?

A The Scriptures tell us that Yahweh desires all to repent and come to the knowledge of the truth. That is possible only if He allows them to at least hear the truth and have a chance to accept or reject it. For most it is not a second but a first chance. Yahshua said many are called now, but only few are chosen. He did not say all are called. Unless they are incorrigible, others later will have a chance to accept the truth, and a small number who will rise at the coming of Yahshua, while others at the second resurrection, which is to physical life, Rev. 20.

Q I would really like to hear your take on hell/lake of fire, trinity, and the counting of the omer as all I want is [Yahweh's] truth and nothing else, and I would safely assume you are on the same page as me. Am I correct?

A The quick answer is that hell is *sheol* in the Old Testament, *hades* in the New, and both mean the grave. The lake of fire is what Satan and the incorrigible will be thrown into and destroyed, not live forever in torment. The divine majesty is made up of Father and Son. The Holy Spirit is *ruach/pneuma*, their divine power likened in Scripture to the wind. The count to the Feast of Weeks is 50 days, beginning during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Our Web site has online booklets explaining all of those topics and much more. Also see p. 16 in this issue.

Q Where does Yahweh draw the line between Christianity and Judaism, specifically in Acts 15.

A Yahweh made a covenant with Israel only. Others not of Israel can be grafted into that covenant promise, however, as Paul explains in Romans 9 and 11. The issue in Acts 15 was whether the new convert had to first convert to Judaism through circumcision before becoming a believer in Messiah. James explains in verses 19-21 that for now they must quit their worst heathen religious practices. They would in time learn the laws given by Moses as they came together each Sabbath day. They did not need to convert to Judaism first as the Jewish religious leaders were telling them.

Q I go by the black moon for the new moon because the month starts with the conjunction. What do you say?

A In the scriptural calendar, the conjunction does not begin the month. At the conjunction no moon is visible. Deuteronomy 16:1 in the Hebrew tells us to "watch narrowly for the month (new moon) of green ears [of grain]" (***RSB*** note). How can you watch closely for a new moon that cannot be seen? Often two or even three days of a dark moon precede the appearance of the crescent. Which invisible moon do you declare is the "right new moon"? Yahweh makes finding the first day of the month simple – it falls on the night you first sight a thin lunar crescent. No calculations necessary.

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Reflections on the 2014 Feast of Tabernacles

"Thank you so much for hosting the Feast of Tabernacles and inviting all believers. What a blessing it was for our family to join you this year. We understand firsthand how much work it takes to put on such an event. It was wonderful meeting all of you; thank you for making us feel welcome. I especially loved the music. How awesome to see so many talents!" *-C.L., CA*

"I had a great time at your Feast of Tabernacles. I loved meeting other people who also follow the Old Testaments feasts. I enjoyed the services and workshops. I am really glad you had games that we could play. Everyone was happy and having fun. The food was absolutely delicious. I really like the potluck meals. Thank you very much for putting all of this together. I hope I can come next year."

H.L. (15 years old) *CA*

"I wish to thank you for creating a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles experience. I have been keeping the feasts my whole 17 years of living, but this was the first time I spent it with a different group other than my own family and friends. It was encouraging to see others holding the feasts and possessing beliefs very similar to mine. I will never forget the people I have met or the lessons I have learned. Thank you so very much again for your setting up and hosting of the feast." *-H.L., CA*

"I would like to thank you for inviting me and my family to the Feast of Tabernacles. My family and I had an awesome time! We usually have our own with several others. Thank you for your effort; it was worth it. I liked the games, services, food, and music you offered. It was a long trip from California, but it was so worth it. You have given me and my family hope that there are still people who keep the high days. So, thank you, YRM, for having us at your feast and I hope that you keep doing it." *-L.L.* (13 years old) *CA*

"Thank you for putting on the Feast of Tabernacles. It was very nice and relaxing for my family and I to go to the Feast of Tabernacles and not have to worry about anything. My favorite part was the men's BBQ and the volleyball tournament. Thank you once again for everything." *-M.L.* (13 years old),*CA*

I Want to Get It Right

"I am 60 years old and spent 60 years in (a major church)...that's 60 years of getting it wrong. You are helping me immensely and I want to get it right in the time I have left."

- S.S., MT

Never Bored with the Restoration Times

"What a wonderful Restoration Times Nov.-December magazine. Read it twice and it was new to me the second time! I Could read it and read it, maybe recognizing something once in a while. I never get bored!. YRM is definitely teaching the Old Covenant and New Covenant. By the way, I definitely want the new RSB and please don't forget." *- S.H., IL*

RSB Insightful

"I have read through the Bible that I received from you folks a year ago. I have enjoyed it and its teaching. It has brought a lot of things to mind that I hadn't noticed before." *- G.L.*

Troubled By Man's Traditions

"I just wanted to thank you for all the resources you have provided here. I have always gone to [nominal churches] since my youth and I am troubled by all the pagan traditions I'm now learning about and seeing within the church, what seems to me to be false teachings and counterfeit faith. Thank you for helping me in my search for the truth and in guarding my heart." *- A.J.*

Fourth Grader Teaches Teacher Truth

"I substitute taught in a 4th grade classroom today and one student and I discussed how she does not celebrate Christmas. I was very curious so we discussed YRM and I've been reading a lot on your website." *- L.R.*

Seeks Fellowship

"Thank you so much for your ministry. I wish you had a church here, but I know Yahweh is here with me. I'm thankful someone is still holding the truth of the Old Testament."

- A.A.

Looking for Local Worship?

Our latest initiative for satellite Sabbath worship is in the Los Angeles area. We plan to have weekly services (starting February 7) each Saturday at 1:30 pm at the Follow Your Heart Center, 21835 Sherman Way, Canoga Park, California.

Our other outreach meeting initiatives are in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Tottenham in south central Ontario, Canada.

Please call YRM beforehand for details about meetings in these cities. Tele. 573-896-1000

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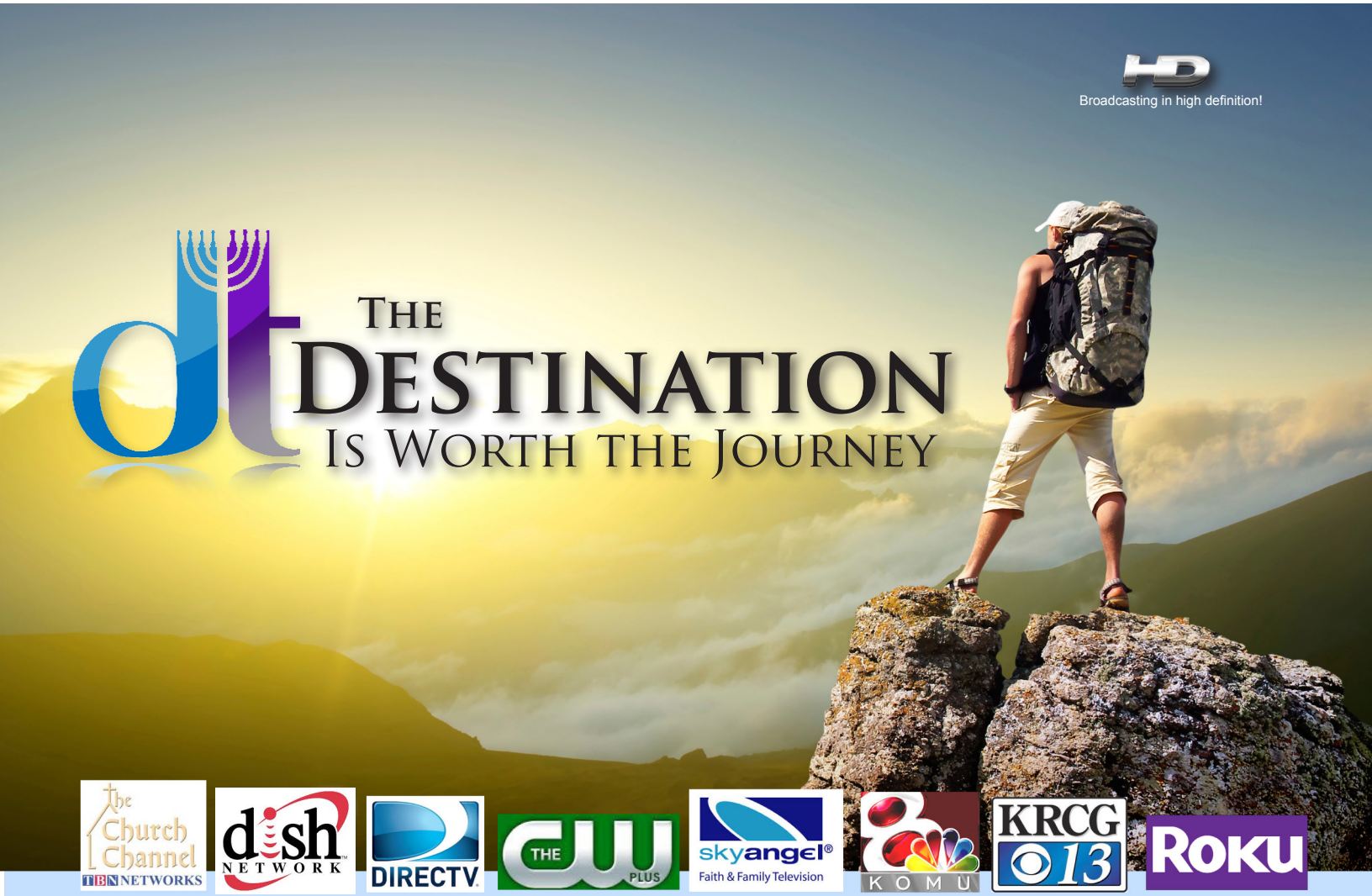

Watch the Discover the Truth Television program nationwide every week as we bring back historic biblical truths that have been lost or ignored since the 1st century CE. The truths are rooted in the Old Testament and continue today through the New Testament revelation brought by the Messiah.

Visit DiscovertheTruth.tv to watch all the latest programs.

Church Channel "Nationwide" (DirecTV channel 371, Dish Network channel 258, various Cable outlets) Saturdays 6:30 pm CT (7:30pm ET, and 4:30 pm PT)
Angel One Channel "Nationwide"(Dish Network channel 262) Sundays 11:00 am CT (12:00 pm ET, and 9:00 am PT).
CW-Plus "Nationwide" (on various channels, see channel guide for your area) Sundays 6:00 am CT, MT and 7:00 am ET, PT
Mid-Missouri CW (Digital 8.3) Sundays 9:00 am CT
Mid-Missouri KOMU, NBC (Digital 8.1) Sundays 5:30 am CT
Mid-Missouri KRCG, CBS (Digital 13.1) Sundays 6:30 am CT
Roku- "Worldwide" Roku boxes are available at most major retailers, including Walmart, Target, Best Buy, Sam's, and online merchants like Amazon. Our Discover the Truth channel on Roku is free.
Youtube Channel- "Worldwide" Watch all our latest programs from your computer or smart phone: *youtube.com/yrmstaff* Subscribe and get all the latest updates!